

**FACTORS INFLUENCING QUALITY ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN BUSINESS
STUDIES AT TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
COLLEGES**

By

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ABSTRACT

Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges (formerly known as Further Education and Training colleges) in South Africa have undergone many changes since 1994. In 2007, a new curriculum, the National Certificate Vocational, was rolled out. The new curriculum brought an approach of outcome-based teaching and learning to continuous assessment, with a National Summative Examination set by the National Department of Higher Education Examinations and Assessments, and programme certification conducted by Umalusi (Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education). When the National Certificate Vocational was introduced in 2006, lecturers attended training prior to the implementation of the new curriculum. However the training was inadequate, as it was a once-off; after the implementation of the National Certificate Vocational, new lecturers never received training. Umalusi reports from 2009–2013 stated that the implementation of Internal Continuous Assessment needed attention, highlighting challenges faced by lecturers regarding its implementation. The purpose of the study is to explore the factors that impact on the quality of Internal Continuous Assessment practices in NCV Business Studies. The constant comparison analysis developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used in analysing the data collected during the interviews.

A qualitative research approach was employed, specifically a case-study research design. Purposive sampling was used to select lecturers as participants of this study. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Findings revealed that there was lack of standardisation and uniformity in all four campuses, poor-quality assessment tasks were set using old exam papers and textbook exercises, designing of assessment tools was limited to the use of few tools and the colleges gave little attention to the policies and documents regarding implementation of Internal Continuous Assessment. Recommendations have been formulated that may add value or make an educational contribution to the growing body of knowledge by strengthening Internal Continuous Assessment processes and ensuring quality of assessment practices at these colleges, to significantly enhance students' academic performance, competence and throughput rate.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my parents, for teaching me to persevere even when times are hard.

I thank my family for their continuous, encouragement, inspiration and moral support, and must not forget the support and love given by my adorable children, Lehlogonolo, Khuthadzo and Khathutshelo.

Many thanks must go to my life partner, Muthige, for his support during my studies. I appreciate your contribution towards the success of my studies.

May God bless you abundantly.

DECLARATION

I, Patience Kelebogile Nkalane, hereby declare that this dissertation, submitted for the Magister Education in DIDACTICS: “Factors influencing quality assessment practices in Business Studies at Technical Vocational Educational Training Colleges” is my own original work and has not been previously submitted to any institution of higher education. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

May God bless you abundantly.

Patience Kelebogile Nkalane

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DISSERTATION

B-Ed	Bachelor of Education
B-Tech	Bachelor of Technology
DoE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
ICASS	internal Continuous Assessment
ISAT	Internal Summative Assessment Tasks
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NATED	National Accredited Technical Education
NQF-	National Qualifications Framework
NQFL	National Qualifications Framework Level
OBA	Outcomes-Based Assessment
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
POE	Portfolio of Evidence
POA	Portfolio of Assessment
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SABS ISO	South Africa Bureau of Standards International Standard Organization
SKVA	Skills, Knowledge, Values and Attitudes
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
STD	Secondary Teacher's Diploma
TQM	Total Quality Management
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVET colleges), previously referred to as Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, have an important role to play in South Africa. In 1994 the government initiated a policy development process for Further Education and Training (FET), laying the foundation for the transformation of the Further Education and Training college (FETC) sector with the publication of the Education White Paper 4 DoE (Department of Education 1998a), resulting in the FET Act 98 of 1998 (DoE: 1998b), followed in 2001 by the new Institutional Landscape Document (DoE, 2001a).

In 2006 FET colleges were recapitalised through massive government investment in order to improve their infrastructure, introduce a more relevant curriculum, retrain lecturers and assist college students financially to access learning programmes. The transformation agenda stipulated in the FET Act of 1998 was realised through the merger of 150 former technical colleges into 50 new public (TVET) colleges.

One of the recommendations of the new Institutional Landscape document (DoE: 2001a) was to reform technical education and align it with the objectives of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which would include creating a national framework of learning achievements, facilitating access to and progression in education training and career paths, enhancing the quality of education and training (SAQA, 2001:9). To achieve the above, in March 2006 the Department of Education (DoE 2006a) introduced a new curriculum/qualification, the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) for Further Education and Training colleges, which was implemented in January 2007.

TVET colleges are regarded as a core component of the national skills development strategy of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2014a). The

experience of the past few years has made the government appreciate that TVET college programmes are essential for the improvement of the skills base of the country. This is evident in the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013, xii), stating that the expansion of the TVET college sector is its highest priority).

TVET colleges offer two streams of training. On the one hand, National Accredited Technical Education (NATED) courses (known as the N1-N6 courses) have students enrolling after they have completed Grade 12. On the other hand, National Certificate Vocational (NCV) courses are offered to students who have completed Grade 9 and intend to continue with their FET phase at college level, focusing on vocational education and skills training. The vocational programmes are intended to respond directly to the priority skills demand of the modern economy in South Africa (ETDP SETA Public Further Education and Training Sector Skills Plan 2013-14 Update). The masses of unemployed youth are looking to colleges to equip them with the skills needed for the world of work. The working industry expects the young people who join the labour force to be competent so that the employer can polish the existing knowledge.

The new curriculum represents an approach of outcomes-based teaching and learning, with continuous assessment and moderation and a national summative examination set by the National Department of Higher Education Examinations and Assessments, with programme certification conducted by Umalusi (Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training). The change of curriculum was necessitated by, among other things, the need to focus attention on skills development, so that TVET colleges in South Africa could offer skills programmes to meet the country's developmental challenges (Akoojee, 2008:297)

Graven (2002:3) asserts that the implementation of a new curriculum is not merely about following instructions and rules, but that the success of such change depends on whether the implementers internalise it and make it their own, especially with regard to assessment, which is crucial to the framework.

The move from teacher-centred to learner-centred approaches necessitated preparatory training of lecturers when the new qualification was introduced. The training took place per level introduced in the year from 2007 to 2009 (as phases L2, 3, and 4 were gradually introduced). However, the training was insufficient, as it was only held once, and lecturers struggled to absorb changes in the process. There was confusion between the teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches, and on the other hand new lecturers joined the sector and no training was offered to them.

Quality is central to teaching, learning and assessment. The concept of quality assurance refers to the process that ensures that agreed standards are met, and that steps are taken to improve quality where problems are identified (Pahad, 2000). Quality is defined as the achievement of a specified degree of excellence. It is also imperative to note that quality is not a condition, but ongoing: a process of assuring that the degree of excellence specified is actually achieved (Hattingh, 2003). The notion of assurance refers to emphatic declarations, guarantee or certainty, and it is crucial that quality of educational assessments, which are defined as a formal attempt to determine learners' status with respect to educational variables of interest, is assured (Popham, 2005). Umalusi reports from 2007 to 2009 have constantly referred to the fact that lecturers still need training in the assessment planning and methodology. The Umalusi report (2014) emphasised the importance of and need for training on assessment planning and methodology.

In the researcher's view, supported by Umalusi's report, lecturers have inadequate skills to develop and implement assessment practices that are in line with the national policy. Ultimately this lack of skills contributes to inadequate quality of assessment practices; there is a need for a thorough research into the factors that influence the quality of assessment practices. The rationale for this study was to provide a background and a further perspective on the reports by Umalusi and DHET, by presenting the personal viewpoint of some lecturers involved in assessment at TVET colleges, as well as analysing relevant documents.

1.2 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The implementation of high-quality assessment practices in Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) at TVET colleges has since the inception of the NCV posed a challenge. When NCV was introduced in 2006, lecturers attended training prior to the introduction of the new curriculum, but the training was inadequate as it was a once-off training and lecturers who subsequently entered for the first time were never trained. As a result, lecturers often implement new assessment procedures but their philosophies are still embedded in the traditional paradigm of assessment. Even with the new assessment policies in place, traditional methods remain dominant and are difficult to change. This is partly because lecturers received their initial training in traditional assessment practices during their training as educators. Umalusi report findings (2009–2013) raised concerns on how lecturers understand and implement ICASS and the quality and integrity of the practices and processes. There is a perception that the ICASS component is not taken seriously by the lecturers and students. The reports from Umalusi, as mentioned, make constant reference to the fact that the lecturers still need training in assessment planning. The researcher is motivated by the statements that the quality of assessments is being affected by assessment practices. Therefore there is a need to explore the factors influencing the quality of assessments practices in the NCV, in particular Business Studies.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempts to respond to the issues in terms of the procedures suggested by the national bodies involved in quality assurance, such as SAQA and Umalusi. This study on assessment practices is conducted from a quality assurance perspective, investigating whether reforms suggested by the various quality assurance bodies are in place and being executed, and exploring the factors that hinder the effective use of assessment practices.

According to Martin and Stella (2007:23-27), quality assurance is the extent to which:

- Excellence is specified and implemented
- Quality is managed in schools, and the processes used to ensure quality can be considered effective

- Activities are executed to ensure the quality of the products
- Quality of the service is measured and quality control is carried out

It is clear from the above that there are concerns related to the quality of assessment practices in the NCV and this concern has raised the main research question:

What are the factors influencing the quality of assessment practices in the NCV Business Studies programmes at Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges?

The main question above raises specific sub-questions that are formulated for the purposes of conducting this study.

- What are the philosophical and theoretical paradigms which foreground a high-quality approach to assessment?
- How is assessment planned in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges?
- How is assessment implemented in NCV Business Studies to ensure high-quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?
- What are the strategies employed in ensuring the quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?

1.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to explore factors that influence the quality of assessment practices in Business Studies at TVET colleges.

The following goals were formulated on the basis of the study:

- To explore the paradigms which foreground quality assessment practices in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges
- To determine the processes followed when planning assessment in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges
- To explore the processes followed when implementing assessment in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges

- To investigate strategies employed in ensuring quality of assessment practice in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges

1.5 ASSESSMENT

1.5.1 Definition of Assessment

SAQA (2001:16) defines assessment as “a structured process for gathering evidence and making judgements about an individual’s performance in relation to registered national standards and qualifications”. Lombard (2010:43) points out that the word assessment has its origin in the Latin word *assidere*, which means to sit with, meaning that when assessing, the educator/assessor should sit with the student.

Assessment benefits the student and the lecturers; it informs students about their progress and helps lecturers make informed decisions at different stages of the learning process. Depending on the intended purpose, different types of assessment can be used. NCV assessment guidelines (DoE 2007b:5) distinguish the following as types of assessment.

- **Baseline assessment**

At the beginning of a level or learning experience, baseline assessment establishes the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (SKVAs) that students bring to the classroom. This knowledge assists lecturers to plan learning programmes and learning activities.

- **Diagnostic assessment**

This assessment diagnoses the nature and causes of learning barriers experienced by specific students. It is followed by guidance, appropriate support and intervention strategies. This type of assessment is useful to make referrals for students requiring specialist help.

- **Formative assessment**

This assessment monitors and supports teaching and learning. It determines student strengths and weaknesses and provides feedback on progress. It determines whether a student is ready for summative assessment.

- **Summative assessment**

Such assessment gives an overall picture of student progress at a given time. It determines whether the student is sufficiently competent to progress to the next level.

1.5.2 Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS)

The NCV Business Studies programmes have different speciality fields in which students enrol for seven subjects: three fundamentals and four vocational subjects based on the area of speciality. Business Studies subjects are vocational subjects that have different fields. Figure 1.1 below depicts the different fields.



Figure 1.1: Fields of Business Studies.

ICASS provides the opportunity to assess students on an ongoing basis in the normal teaching and learning environment; it is an integral part of teaching and learning.

Students are continually assessed in their classroom environment for each subject they are enrolled for. Students are expected to complete a number of assessment tasks for each subject in an academic year. Marks achieved in these tasks will be used to compile an ICASS mark per subject. Internal assessment provides lecturers with a systematic way of evaluating how well students are progressing on a level and in a particular subject (ICASS 2015:6).

Internal assessments tasks include tests, practical tasks, and assignments. These assessment tasks form part of a year-long assessment programme in each level and comprise the ICASS component.

Table 1.1: Number and spread of tasks which make up the ICASS component across levels 2, 3 and 4.

Subjects	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Total
Language	2	3	2		7
Life Orientation	2	2/3	2/3		7
Mathematics or Mathematics Literacy	2	3/4	1/2		7
Vocational subject	2	2	1		5
Vocational subject	2	2	1		5
Vocational subject	2	2	1		5
Vocational subject	2	2	1		5
Total	14	16/18	9/11		41

NCV assessment guidelines (DoE, 2007b:3) stipulate that in implementing assessment, skills, knowledge, values and attitudes must be assessed throughout the year using assessment instruments like projects, tests, assignments, investigations and so forth.

ICASS is the first phase of continuous assessment leading to the final mark for promotional decisions. This is followed by the ISAT (Integrated Summative Task), which integrates the theory into practice, and the examination is the summative assessment of all learning that has taken place throughout the year. ICASS conducted at the colleges ideally allows for assessment to take place in the learning environment, and, more importantly, should ideally allow such assessment to be integrated into teaching.

1.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance refers to the process of ensuring that the specified degree of excellence is achieved, through the sum of activities that ensure the quality of the products and services at the time of production or delivery. Quality assurance also refers to the way in which organisations ensure that the proper standards are met throughout the process, right up until the end product (Hattingh, 2003:5). Quality in education refers to the following (adapted from Martin and Stella, 2007:23-27)

- An educational system that prompts and accepts social change
- A curriculum and teaching methods that encourage critical analysis of social power relations and the ways in which formal knowledge is produced and transmitted
- Active participation by learners in the design of their own learning experience
- Learning that moves beyond the boundaries of the classroom/school through non-formal and lifelong learning activities

Umalusi undertakes the quality assurance of the national qualifications through a rigorous process of reporting on each of the assessment processes and procedures. The quality and standard of assessment is judged by the adherence to policies and

guidelines designed to deal with the critical aspects of administering credible national assessments and examinations (Umalusi, 2014:5).

The moderation of internal assessment is one of the most important processes used by Umalusi to ensure quality and credibility of assessment that contribute to the final examination mark.

When conducting evaluation, Umalusi focuses on the whole assessment for NCV; this research study focuses on the NCV Business Studies ICASS.

The study will not aim to confirm or disprove the Umalusi findings but rather simply identify the factors affecting the quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges.

1.6.1 Umalusi findings on ICASS (Internal Continuous Assessment)

The following were indicated in the Umalusi Report 2014 during its monitoring and evaluation process.

1.6.1.1 Assessment Tasks

According to the moderators, the assessors did not appear to know how to set appropriate theoretical and practical tasks. In 78% of cases, the DHET guidelines had not been used; it was worrying that an assessment frame work or grid had been used to set the task in only 56% of the assessments. A number of lecturers therefore did not appear to understand Bloom's taxonomy. This is an indication that assessment tasks developed by lecturers showed flaws and would lead to inauthentic assessments (Umalusi, 2014:60).

- **Moderation**

In 2012-2013, during both the monitoring visits in May and October external moderators pointed out that there was a general lack of effective internal moderation of tasks, whether pre- or post-moderation. Moderation plays a crucial role in ensuring

quality of assessment practices, but most of the tasks were rubber-stamped, disregarding all errors and weaknesses such as poor language (Umalusi, 2014: 62).

- **Internal Moderation**

It was reported that there was a general lack of effective internal moderation for both tasks and student performance on tasks administered and marked .Very little had been done to rectify this, as the situation remained unchanged from the previous year's report (Umalusi, 2014:60).

- (a) Pre-moderation (Internal pre-moderation of tasks)**

The report indicated that there was no evidence that the pre-moderation had been used effectively. There was lack of evidence of qualitative feedback on the task to the assessor. In Umalusi's opinion, lecturers do not use this pre-moderation process as expected. It is only seen as more work for them and even when the feedback is given in the form of reports lecturers do not use the information to assist them to improve their skill in task development.

- (b) Post-moderation (Moderation of marking)**

It was reported by moderators that in most cases moderation had not taken place; where internal moderation of marking had occurred, it was just a formality using shadow marking. No changes had been made apart from errors (Umalusi, 2014:62).

The standard of marking was poor, and no or little qualitative feedback was given to students, even though this is the most important reason for assessment.

Based on the evaluation report, TVET colleges are still not in order. In addition there are clearly challenges that TVET lecturers may be experiencing in relation to NCV internal assessment.

It was on the basis of these findings that the researcher conceptualised the research topic and consequently the main research problem, which is to explore the factors that

influence the quality of assessment practices in Business Studies in TVET colleges (Umalusi, 2014:60).

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is used in research to outline possible courses of action or to present a preferred approach to an idea or thought. Theory is regarded as a tool to address an immediate practical problem and is evident in the collecting, organising and interpreting of evidence. As a result, the theoretical framework should be regarded as being conjectural or hypothetical and therefore there are systematic ways to organise inquiry (Shields and Tajalli, 2006:315).

The study follows a Social Constructivist theory and Total Quality Management theory. The following section explains how the theories are applied; social constructivist and total quality management theory will be discussed later.

1.7.1 The Social Constructivist theory

The study was guided by a Constructivist theory, which is learner centred, as it postulates that learners construct knowledge themselves as opposed to acquiring it from the teacher (in this context the lecturers). According to Anderson, Cardinale and Martin (2011), constructivist assessment monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching. It is used to inform teachers and learners about their progress so as to improve teaching and learning. It happens continuously and helps learners to think constantly about how to improve their performance. Constructivist Assessment is both formative and summative, which is supported by ICASS; therefore constructivism plays an important role in assessment.

1.7.2 Total Quality Management theory

The study was also guided by the Total Quality Management Theory (TQM), which has been adopted by the education sector to achieve quality education. According to Vinni (2011), Total Quality Management theory is considered to be essential to change, customer orientation, communication, continuous improvement, corrective

measures and organisations. TQM is a theory that can be used by TVET colleges in improving and correcting measures in their assessment practices. TQM will create within the organisation a climate in which all the resources are used creatively and efficiently and which gives the staff confidence in management.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODS

1.8.1 Research paradigm and methodology

This study emanates from a **constructivist-interpretivist** paradigm. The rationale (main motive) for choosing this combination paradigm was to enable the researcher to explore critically the assessment practices of Business Studies lecturers at TVET colleges through the use of document analysis and interviews (qualitative research method) to collect data.

According to Silverman (2006), research methodology refers to the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis and the like in planning and executing a research study. Thus, your methodology defines how you go about studying any phenomenon. It begins with knowing what you, as the researcher, want to find out. The research design for this study used the **qualitative research methodology (constructivist-interpretivist paradigm)**, in which document analysis and interviews are employed to collect data from participants and analysed in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the information collected. In this case the information concerned how Business Studies lecturers were designing and implementing quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges. The research methodology followed a case study on the TVET colleges wherein document analysis and interviews with lecturing staff aimed to get to the root cause of factors affecting the quality of the assessment practices at these colleges. The qualitative research provides insights into lecturers at TVET colleges in their everyday lives and when going through the assessment practices.

A single case study, according to Yin (2014:3), is a way of investigating a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context may not be clearly evident.

The case study focuses on one of the TVET colleges in Tshwane Municipality; semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather the data. Semi-structured interviews typically are much more like conversations than formal events with predetermined response categories (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:29). The open-ended semi-structured questions for the interviews were treated more like a conversation, with a genuine interest on the researcher's part to know what really affects the quality of assessment practices and the lecturer's perspective on implementation assessment. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006:217), during semi-structured interviews the researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant's views, but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses.

1.8.2 Sampling

The targeted population in the study was the TVET college NCV lecturers involved in the programme in Gauteng, in particular Business Studies programmes. For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was utilised to obtain lecturers' perceptions on the quality of assessment practices. Purposive sampling was used in this study to develop a detailed understanding of the topic under study (Creswell, 2007:206)

Purposive sampling participants are selected according to what they already know about the field and because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic of the study (Creswell, 2012). The reason for choosing purposive sampling was because qualitative research is more concerned with detailed and in-depth analysis than with statistical accuracy (Okeke and Van Wyk, 2015). Lecturers offering NCV Business Studies who had been trained during the inception of the NCV in 2007 were selected, as they had been implementing the assessment practices for some years and would be able to provide useful data.

There are eight TVET colleges in Gauteng province. Permission was sought from the Department of Higher Education and the principal of the TVET college in Tshwane to use the college as a research site. The researcher then sent letters to campus managers to arrange for the site visits where interviews and document analysis (College Assessment Policy, Portfolio of Assessment (PoA) and Portfolio of Evidence (PoE), moderation policy, assessment guidelines) would be conducted. According to

Creswell (2012:146), a general rule of thumb when selecting participants is to select as large a sample from the population as possible, as this lessens the potential error that the sample will be different from the population.

The NCV Business Studies programme has five fields of study. Samples of PoA and PoE files across the Business Studies fields were analysed. The sampling was based on Office Administration, Finance Economics and Accounting, and Generic Management and Marketing NCV programmes. These are the programmes of NCV Business Studies in the TVET college.

1.8.3 Data collection and analysis

For the qualitative data phase of the study site visits were conducted at four campuses. TVET colleges usually have four to five campuses which are spread over a few areas within a particular municipality, with one centralised office as head office. The data was collected through interviewing eight lecturers (two per campus) and the documents (College Assessment Policy, PoA files, PoE files and moderation policy) were analysed in relation to the national policy of assessments and ICASS guidelines (2015 documents).

- Document analysis: Analysis of PoA and PoE files, college assessment policy, moderation policy, in relation to the National Assessment Policies and ICASS guidelines of DHET.
- Semi-structured interviews consisted of face-to face-interviews (interview schedule). The researcher identified eight lecturers at Tshwane North TVET College.

The constant comparison analysis, also termed the method of constant comparison developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used in analysing the data collected during the interviews and document analysis. The constant comparison analysis is characterized by three major stages. The first stage called 'open coding'; the data collected are chunked into small units where the researcher attaches a descriptor or code to each of the chunked units.

The second stage (axial coding) follows, where codes are grouped into categories or what can simply be termed as grouping of like-terms or where all the codes that has some similarities are put together into a single category. The third and final stage (selective coding) comes in when the researcher systematically develops one or more themes, out of the categories, that express each of the participants.

1.8.4 Trustworthiness

Schwandt (2007:299) defines trustworthiness as the quality of an investigation that makes it noteworthy to audiences. In the current study, trustworthiness was established by applying four criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (2000:296-300): credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The study ensured trustworthiness through the engagement of the data collection used by adhering to the four criteria for naturalistic inquiries.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study adhered to the ethical requirements, noting the areas of ethical consideration as espoused by Newton (2010): protection of subjects from harm, and informed consent. In terms of protection of subjects, the manner in which this study was conducted would not cause any physical, mental or social harm to the research participants. For informed consent permission was sought as indicated in the Appendices.

1.10 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The TVET college sector has eight public colleges in Gauteng. The colleges are in various municipalities: Ekurhuleni, Tshwane, Johannesburg and West Rand. This study was conducted in the Tshwane Municipality, at a TVET College .The selected TVET college was chosen for the study because it offers most of the Business Studies programmes offered in the NCV, its campuses are spread over the greater part of Tshwane, and it caters for students from various provinces who prefer studying in Gauteng. So the college chosen should provide a broad and relevant analysis.

The research focus for this study was the Technical Vocational Education and Training sector (TVET), with specific reference to colleges within this sector, and further reference to the specific curriculum and Umalusi as the Quality Assurance body within the sector. This study was conducted within the Department of Curriculum Studies located in the College of Education, University of South Africa.

1.11 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

This section provides a general view of the study and methodological considerations.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter reflects on the available literature related to the study: the assessment practices taking place at TVET colleges.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This chapter describes the research design, including methodological considerations.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS.

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the data, thus showing the interpretation of the study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The outcomes are summarised with a view to providing recommendations for addressing the factors impacting on quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges.

The next chapter is a continuation based on the literature study in which the researcher will dwell in detail on assessment, in particular ICASS and quality assurance at TVET colleges.

1.12 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 served as an introduction to the study: the purpose of the study and an overview of the rationale for the research. The statement of the research problem outlined the impact of the paradigm shift in education in terms of teaching, learning and quality of assessment practices in the learning environment in Business Studies at TVET colleges. The rationale for the research was to explore issues that underpin the TVET assessment quality assurance strategies employed. Thereafter the chapter briefly covered the aims of the study and also outlined the research question, addressed by each aim of the research question

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter referred to the research problem and questions and the conceptual framework and gave a brief outline of the research process. In this chapter, the focus is on assessment planning and quality of implementation of assessment in general terms. The study then proceeds to deal with assessment and quality assurance specifically in the TVET sector, within the context of the relevant policy framework. A literature review assists the researcher to identify what has been established and the gaps in previous research, thereby establishing the relevance, importance and usefulness of the proposed study.

The literature review focuses on assessment practices that integrate assessment into teaching and learning, the incorporation of assessment that focuses on assessment of and assessment for learning, with the aim of narrowing down the main research to internal continuous assessment (ICASS), focusing on the quality of assessment practices and quality of implementation of ICASS assessment. The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act No. 25 of 2011 and the NCV assessment guidelines give clarification of assessment. This sub-section is included in the literature review with various other literature sources in terms of their contributions to assessment and its practices.

Many infrastructural investment and curriculum renewal measures have been added to the sector since the inception of the new curriculum in the last decade, as indicated by Akojee (2008:298). However, lecturers in the TVET sector as key role players in the assessment implementation were not given sufficient training to ensure that they implemented assessment effectively.

The study is influenced by social constructivist theory and total quality management theories, which foreground the study. The theories are discussed below.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

2.2.1 Social Constructivist theory

Social Constructivist learning theory is based on the assumption that students actively construct, create, invent and develop their own knowledge, skills and values by solving problems, usually in cooperation with others. Constructivism is a theoretical perspective that appreciates that people continue to construct knowledge as individuals and in groups (Berk, 2007).

In the constructivist perspective, the mind is viewed like a lens. When we look through our lens, some aspects of our experience are in sharp focus, some are fuzzy and some cannot be seen at all. The assumption in the constructivist perspective is that knowledge is constructed by the knower and cannot be separated from the knower. In other words, the picture we see is determined by the lens we use (Niemand and Swanepoel, 1998:10). In the Constructivist perspective, learning is determined through the complex interaction between students' existing knowledge, the social context in which they find themselves and the problem or task that has to be solved or dealt with.

2.2.1.1 Constructivist Assessment

Shepard (2000:8) notes that good assessment tasks are interchangeable with good instructional tasks. In the constructivist perspective, assessment needs to be re-constructed from the means by which reward might be conferred to a source of insight and help for all involved in the teaching and learning interaction. This brings to the fore the idea of assessment *for* learning and assessment of learning as types of assessment. A vital prerequisite for creating a constructivist assessment process is that the course must be constructively aligned (Biggs, 1999:1). Biggs means that to achieve the learning objectives of education, teaching, learning and assessments methods should follow one another and be interrelated. The context of assessment should match learning outcomes and a broad range of assessment methods and instruments should be implemented. This is what Biggs refers to as constructive alignment in order to describe the process of taking strategic and integrated approaches to curriculum design, teaching and assessment tasks for alignment.

Vygotsky (1962) argues that knowledge and understanding of assessment processes, criteria and standards need to involve the same kind of active engagement and participation as learning about anything else. A further essential requirement of a Constructivist assessment process is to have clearly defined and explicit assessment criteria. The TVET colleges need to standardise their assessment criteria to be able to work on the same level linked to explicit learning outcomes.

For instance, a meaningful understanding of assessment criteria should be that lecturers at TVET colleges can work together as a team and collectively create the assessment criteria, rather than being given them by the college management. This would be a sensible start to the socialisation process, as this would help them achieve shared understanding and common standards. The following are the approaches to assessments that can be interlinked with teaching and learning.

2.2.1.2 Types of assessment

- **Assessment of learning (grades and marks)**

The purpose of this kind of assessment is summative and it is mostly done at the end of a task or unit of work. It is a process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarising learning at a given point in time, to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent quality. The information gathered may be used to communicate the student's achievement and performance to parents, other teachers, students themselves and other interested parties (Earl and Katz, 2006:144). According to Linn and Gronlund (2000:55), assessment of learning is the assessment that becomes public and results in statements or symbols of how well students are learning. It is important that the underlying logic and measurement of assessment of learning be credible and defensible. This means that the lecturers have the responsibility of reporting students' ICASS accurately and fairly, based on evidence obtained from a variety of contexts and applications. The ICASS report on student performance has a huge impact on final decision-making on their progress in learning; hence it has to be accurate. The information gathered may be used to communicate the students' achievements to parents, other teachers, the students themselves, government and

bursary sponsors. Marzano (2000:59) states that assessment of learning methods includes not only tests and examinations, but also a rich variety of products and a demonstration of learning: portfolios, exhibitions, performances, presentations, multimedia projects and a variety of other written, oral and visual methods.

- **Assessment for learning (formative and continuous feedback)**

Assessment for learning happens during the learning, often more than once, rather than at the end. It is an ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of determining where students are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there (Earl and Katz, 2006:144). Students should understand exactly what they are to learn and what is expected of them, and are given feedback and advice on how to improve their work. It is interactive, with the lecturer identifying particular learning needs of students or groups, aligning instruction with needs, selecting and adapting materials and resources, creating differentiated teaching strategies and learning opportunities for helping individual students move forward in their learning, and providing immediate feedback and direction to students. Earl and Katz (2006:30) propose that lecturers also use assessment for learning to enhance students' motivation and commitment to learning. When lecturers commit to learning as the focus of assessment, they change the classroom culture to one of student success. Assessment for learning should be intertwined with all the moments of the learning process and thus must be considered when planning. For this to happen, lecturers should define clear learning objectives or criteria and be able to share them with students in an understandable way. Along with this, students should be constantly reminded of these criteria or learning objectives during the learning process, their learning evaluated and feedback given to analyse their progress, and decisions taken according to this evidence.

Assessment for learning is constructive, fosters motivation and recognises all educational achievements in relation to the impact of assessment in shaping students' motivation, especially in terms of the nature of the feedback they receive. It is crucial that lecturers should be careful of what they say to students and try to give descriptive feedback exclusively centred on the quality and content of each student's work, rather than using value-laden terms such as 'good' or 'poor'. They should also suggest ways

for students to improve their work. In the context of assessment for learning, there is no excellence level that all must achieve in order to have recognition; any learning progress made by the student in relation to his or her previous state deserves recognition and positive feedback. As Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall and William (2002:5) emphasise, assessment for learning is of quality when a teacher is able to provide descriptive feedback.

Similarly, Davies *et al.* (2001) argue that students should be continuously motivated and stimulated, meaning that the feedback students get from their lecturers must help to ensure quality in assessment practices. This involves developing awareness in the student about his or her learning processes and increasing autonomy through practices of peer and self-assessment in order to support students in developing their own responsibility for their learning. Giving feedback to students on how to improve, and not just on their mistakes, also contributes to the development of autonomous thinking and learning. Constructivist assessment monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching; assessment is constructively aligned with the teaching and learning.

2.2.1.3 Lecturer as an assessor of learning

Emberger (2006:38) states that some critical shifts in thinking are needed if educators are to design realistic assessments to measure what students know and understand. In order to think and talk like assessors, lecturers at TVET colleges need to understand and have an in depth knowledge of assessment process of designing quality internal continuous assessment and external summative tasks. This requires them to understand what Stiggins (2007) defined as the difference between assessment *of* learning (summative/evaluative) and assessments *for* learning (ongoing, formative, and informative) assessment as learning. Lecturers as assessors must be able to design and manage both assessments in ways that are appropriate to the level of and purpose of the learning.

Similarly, Wiggins and McTighe (1998), cited in Emberger 2006:38, urge lecturers, teachers and educators to think like assessors, not activity designers. In fact, Emberger demonstrates that when teachers begin to think like assessors, they plan

backwards and design assessments based on what they want students to know before they plan their learning sequence. Then, the backwards planning process helps lecturers know if their students are reaching the objectives.

The most obvious approach is that assessment procedures need to be integrated entirely into the teaching and learning process, since informal assessment takes place in every lesson. Overall, the formative and summative assessments should be appropriate to the level of the students and be recorded adequately so that students get feedback and are able to work on their weaknesses.

In summary, it is vital that lecturers at TVET colleges think like assessors and be able to plan, organise and implement their internal continuous assessment. The researcher found it proper for the social constructivist theory to be applied in this study, as it incorporates assessment for, of, and as learning.

2.2.2 Total Quality Management theory

Quality Assurance originated in industry, where it was developed as a result of pressure of productivity after the Second World War. It was later adopted by services such as education (Bradley, 1993). Quality assurance became popular in the education and training sector in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Brennan and Shah, 2000). The emphasis was on designing assessment instruments that would produce quality results about student performances.

Quality assurance in education has become common worldwide, and can be described as the process of monitoring, evaluating and confirming whether an institution has achieved its goals (long and short term), whether they are individual goals or those set by the education department. Total Quality Management refers to the systems which are developed to monitor all processes that are part of the work of an organisation.

There are quality assurance models available from different parts of the world, namely:

- The South African Bureau of Standards (SABS ISO 9004-2)

- International Standard Organisation (ISO) 9000 system,
- European Foundation for Quality Management 1992 (EFQM),
- US systems of accreditation
- Total quality management systems

Below is a brief description of each quality assurance model. The description covers the definition and the main area of focus.

- The International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9000

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9000 series focuses on stimulating trade by providing assurance of an organisation/institution's ability to meet specifications and perform the negotiated standards. These standards are not intended to certify quality of a product or service or whether one is better than the other, but they relate to an organisation's quality system (Lamprecht, 1992). ISO 9000 emphasises principles, goals and objectives; however, the focus objectives are on meeting the customer's expectations and requirements.

- The European Foundation for Quality Management

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM, 1992) focuses on facilitating the achievement of best results by institutions, An educational enterprise has to take a more holistic approach, not limited by the process, product or service approaches of the industrial model (Harvey ,1995). This model is used mainly as a framework for quality management and as a conceptualisation of organisational excellence. The focus is mainly on improving the achievement of quality for the institution, but is not product oriented.

- The Total Quality Management system

The TQM system combines quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement and tends to go beyond traditional customer satisfaction by addressing the needs of internal customers, such as in this case students, parents and other stakeholders (Deming, 2000). The TQM system also aims at providing tools for

improving the quality of every aspect of our lives. It assumes that true knowledge of any system process can only arise from asking questions of those closest to the work.

- The SABS ISO 9004-2

The South African Bureau of Standards ISO 9004-2 guidelines (1991) note that all service elements, requirements and provisions incorporated in the quality system should be defined and documented as part of the service organisation's overall agents. The quality system documentation in this model includes quality manuals, quality plan, quality procedures and quality records. The quality manual sets out quality policy and objectives.

- The US System of accreditation

These quality assurance models often have some common principles, even though their mission and values are at times different. A model that has been influential in many parts of the world has been the US system of accreditation, established since the beginning of the eighteenth century (Brennan and Shah, 2000). Therefore, the US system of accreditation has some claim to be the forerunner of the quality agencies which were established in the 1990s.

2.2.3 The implementation of Total Quality Management systems

TQM philosophy is evident in various quality management systems that support TQM, are instrumental in setting standards and can even be regarded as a vehicle for achieving them. This study focuses on Total Quality Management. The following processes form an important basis for understanding these quality management systems. Doherty (1994:11) indicates them as follows:

- **Quality assurance** is a prevention-based approach and is about products working reliably in future and about service activities being dependable and consistent (Sallis 2012). Quality assurance has to give confidence that future activities will produce the desired end result. It is a means of ensuring that errors are, as far as possible, designed out. In education it examines the

aims, content, resourcing, levels and projected outcomes of modules, programmes and courses.

- **Quality control**, as defined by Juran (1988), involves operational techniques and activities such as measuring, examining, testing and gauging one or more characteristics of an entity and comparing these with specified requirements in order to determine whether each characteristic conforms to the requirements. It can also be regarded as a means of gaining information so that errors can be corrected. In education, quality control requires feedback from staff, students and even external customers. It also requires monitoring and review of modules, programmes and courses.
- **Quality audit** is the means whereby the organisation checks that the procedures are really being implemented. An audit checks that the system does what it says it is going to do and that there is written, documented evidence to prove it (Deming, 2000). Any documented process, whether educational or manufacturing, can be audited. The quality management system may be audited internally and/or externally.
- **Quality assessment** is the judgement of performance against either internal or external criteria. In education, assessment is a potential source of conflict, because quality criteria for education are so difficult to agree upon.

The TQM also aims at providing tools for improving the quality of every aspect of our lives. It assumes that true knowledge of any system process can only arise from asking questions of those closest to the work. The key element of TQM is its service orientation and its focus on the customer, who is considered to be the source of judgements that are relevant to the application of TQM.

This is why TQM is regarded as an important means in ensuring quality assessment practices, because it deals in this case with enhancing quality education. TQM is also more focused on the end-product from a corporate point of view, which can also be used in the college setting to produce quality teaching and learning as its results. TQM

also focuses on the customer, in this case the student, who has the right to quality education. In my opinion TQM theory, as adopted in this study, proposes that for TVET colleges, as institutions of learning, to achieve their qualitative objectives, there should be a structure for effective control, evaluation and improvement of quality throughout.

The next section discusses the applicable assessment policies in the TVET sector as outlined by the policy documents of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and Umalusi.

2.3 CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

McMillan (2011) describes assessment as the gathering, interpretation and use of information to aid teacher decision-making. Lombard (2010) asserts that assessment consists of six identifiable processes, irrespective of the intended purpose of the assessment. These include the processes of gathering, analysing, interpreting, recording, reporting and using the information about student achievement, and these processes are represented in Figure 2.1 below:

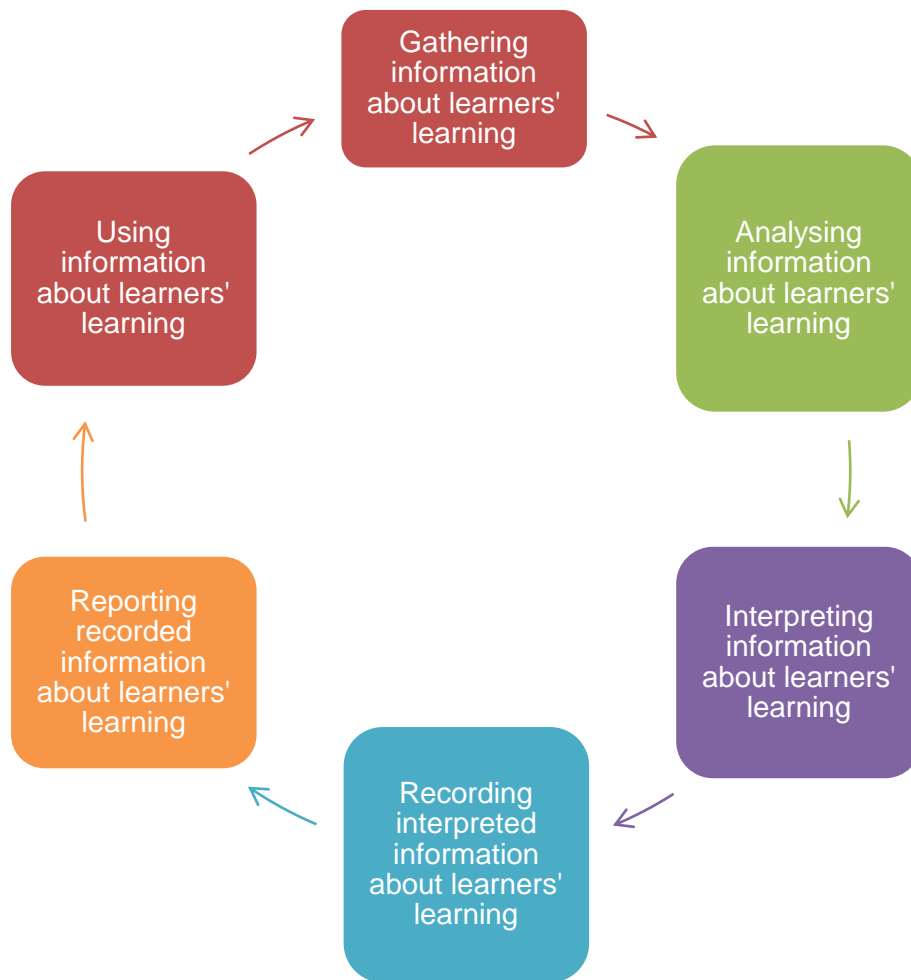


Figure 2.1: The cyclic process of assessment

Source: adapted from Lombard, 2010

2.3.1 Gathering of information about students' learning

The process of gathering information about students' learning involves gathering and collecting information by various assessment methods to be able to make decisions about student performance. The information gathered may be used to communicate the student's achievement and performance to parents, other teachers, students themselves and other interested parties (Earl and Katz 2006:144). The ICASS information-gathering on student learning is collected through various assessment tasks administered to students. The various assessment tasks are collected and filed as evidence, and marks are recorded in the record sheet provided by DHET that forms part of the decision-making towards the final decision on student progress.

2.3.2 Analysing information about students' learning

Assessment serves as a yardstick to measure student learning. The lecturers use information on students and analyse their results to see if the set learning aims or objectives have been achieved (Maphalala, 2015:130). The analysis therefore provides information the next level of learning.

2.3.3 Interpreting information about students' learning

There are various methods used in interpreting the students' learning that can assist in providing more information on a student's progress. The gathered evidence on student performance is analysed and interpreted based on the policies of the institution (NCV assessment guidelines 2007).

2.3.4 Recording interpreted information about students' learning

Recording refers to the assessment instrument or tools with which the assessment will be captured or recorded, therefore appropriate instruments must be developed. Records are important as a basis for future decisions about teaching, and for giving students feedback about overall progress. Recording of results should be done on a regular basis to ensure that current records of students' achievement are available (Maphalala, 2015:129). It is, however, very important that it should include supporting evidence as a justification. When recording performance in ICASS tasks, the marks are used to compile the final ICASS mark sheet provided by DHET for the submission of ICASS marks. Recording has to be informed by information recorded in the individual ICASS tasks which are in the PoE files and record sheet in the PoA files of lecturers.

2.3.5 Reporting the recorded information about students' learning

All the evidence is put together in a report to deliver a decision for the subject. It also involves reporting to various stakeholders in a way that is constructive and helpful to the student's learning. Maphalala (2015) state that reporting involves ensuring in the

course of teaching that the students receive oral or written comments on their work and advice on how to proceed with their tasks.

2.3.6 Using information about students' learning

The information or results of students' learning will be revealed through the information provided by the assessment tasks. The information will be used to take a final decision on the performance, which means the information paves a way forward towards the student's learning (Lombard, 2010).

All these processes of assessment make sure that the continuous assessment is in line with the principles of assessment and that there is equality of opportunity for all students. The next section elaborates on the four main principles outlined by Prinsloo and Van Rooyen (2003:34–36).

2.4 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, FAIRNESS AND PRACTICABILITY OF ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

Lecturers can employ four quality-aligned principles in order to achieve success in the assessment. SAQA (2001:16) expresses strong support for the principle that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and vital to the acknowledgment of students' achievements. Quality assessment practices are therefore crucial to the granting of credible certifications. SAQA (2001:16) confirms that quality assessment is assured through assessment procedures and practices being governed by the principles of fairness, validity, practicability and reliability.

2.4.1 Reliability

In a classroom environment and elsewhere, reliability is described as the degree to which an item displays internal consistency of assessment. Similarly, Brown (2004) defines reliability as the extent to which assessment produces consistent results. NCV assessment guidelines (2007:2) state that reliability assures that assessment practices are consistent, so that the same result or judgement is arrived at if the assessment is

replicated in the same context. This demands consistency in the interpretation of evidence; therefore, careful monitoring of assessment is vital.

Green and Johnson (2010) also state that internal consistency refers to the degree that all items in the assessment are related to one another and therefore can be assumed to measure the same thing.

Therefore, internal consistency of the assessment instrument is likely to be high if all items are strongly related to each other. One practical way of improving reliability is that the assessors need to be trained or experienced so that they know exactly how to find the desired information (Brindley, 2003).

Killen (2010:351–354) argues that the execution of reliability during assessment can be affected by the number of items involved, such as tests and examinations, as well as the level of difficulty, the environment, the interpretation of students' responses, and the formulation of the memoranda.

SAQA (2001:18) expresses strong support for the view of McMillan (2011:73-75), confirming that reliability in assessment is about consistency. Unreliable and inconsistent results have little or no value and meaning and do not provide a good foundation for further assessment. SAQA (2001:17) goes on to argue that to ensure reliability and consistency, lecturers as assessors must be qualified, competent experts in their subjects and be able to provide clear, consistent and unambiguous instructions. Only then will these lecturers as assessors produce reliable assessment items that are mostly free of errors and inconsistencies, thus delivering consistent and reliable results.

2.4.2 Validity

Validity in this context is regarded as a process of collecting data that aligns itself with the appropriateness of the inferences that are drawn from students' answers to precise assessment exercises (Killen, 2010).

Therefore, the scope of the assessment should be appropriate to assessing the intended outcome, and the type of assessment employed should be suitable for assessing a particular skill or outcome in order for the educator to arrive at the correct decision about learning.

However, the notion of content here refers to much more than factual knowledge. Criterion-related validity refers to the degree to which performance on an assessment procedure accurately predicts a student's performance on an external criterion (Popham, 2005). On the other hand, Stobart (2006) posits that validity is a built-in assessment result of the measures by which practical verification and hypothetical explanation bear the competency and correctness of conclusion and procedures found on assessment achievement and other methods of measurement.

Validity in assessment serves two major purposes. Validity testifies to, firstly, whether the means of measurement is accurate, and secondly whether the assessment is actually measuring what it is intended to measure. The NCV policy (2007:2) states that the validity of assessment ensures that assessment covers a broad range of SKVAs needed to demonstrate applied competency. This could be achieved by

- clearly stating the outcome to be assessed
- selecting appropriate or suitable evidence
- matching the evidence with a compatible or appropriate method of assessment
- selecting and constructing an instrument of assessment.

It is therefore essential that lecturers at TVET colleges consider validity when designing assessment tasks by ensuring that assessment criteria are made available beforehand. This means that lecturers should provide students with an assessment schedule that clearly stipulates the requirements of the assessment task, as well as the quality of work expected. In this way, assessment will be transparent to both parties, and students are likely to produce high-quality work, as they will be aware of the task requirements.

The focus is the extent to which assessment interpretations and uses can be justified. It is crucial that when setting and developing assessment tasks lecturers should ask themselves if their assessment measures what it is supposed to measure, the consistency in measurement and whether the assessment is biased or not.

2.4.3 Fairness

McMillan (2011:80-86) defines fairness as a process whereby all students are given an equal opportunity to demonstrate achievement during assessment. In contrast, an unfair assessment occurs when certain students have an advantage over others due to factors like race, gender, ethnicity, age, social class or disability. Killen (2010:360-364) explains that fairness is based on the two principles of equality and equity. Equality, especially in assessment, means that all students must be assessed in a standardised way. This can be achieved when lecturers employ the same assessment methods and activities for all students, thus contributing to consistent results. Equity, on the other hand, is achieved when assessment is based on the needs of the students. This implies that various learning styles must be accommodated in a multicultural classroom.

According to DoE assessment guidelines (2007), the TVET college can verify that no assessment process or method hinders or unfairly advantages any student. The following could constitute unfairness in assessment:

- Inequality of opportunities, resources or teaching and learning approaches
- Bias based on ethnicity, race, gender, age, disability or social class
- Lack of clarity regarding the learning outcome being assessed
- Comparison of students' work with that of other students, based on learning styles and language

2.4.4 Practicability

The fourth principle, according to SAQA (2001:19), and also confirmed by McMillan (2011:91-93), namely practicability, refers to the execution of assessment methods, instruments and tasks that include

- available financial resources
- facilities, equipment and the time factor.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to implement this particular principle at present in South Africa, for the following reasons:

- Not all lecturers in South Africa can ensure fair, reliable, valid and practicable assessment due to challenging circumstances and limited resources.
- Many colleges are still challenged by insufficient resources and electricity supply due to external factors like load shedding; most of the learning is done through practical experiments and demonstrations that need resources for all students.
- For an assessment to be practicable, it requires elaborate arrangements for equipment and facilities, which can be costly. Assessment practices that do not meet these requirements will therefore fail the system. McMillan (2011:91) affirms that high-quality assessment should be practicable and efficient. The NCV assessment guidelines emphasise that to integrate assessment practices within an outcome-based education and training system one must strive for cost-effective assessment.

2.5 THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK IN THE TVET COLLEGE SECTOR

In 2007 the Department of Education (DoE 2007a:20-21) elaborated on five aspects that are regarded as descriptions of assessment in the TVET colleges sector. The five aspects are discussed below:

2.5.1 Assessment as the gathering of evidence to make judgements about learning

McMillan (2011:5) views assessment as the gathering, interpretation and use of information to aid teacher decision-making (on student achievement). In the same vein, Black and William (2000) advocate that assessment in education must serve the purpose of supporting learning, for it is ultimately about whether the student is learning or not. Assessment has to do with the collection of information to form an opinion

about the progress made by a student (DoE 2007a:20). Heywood (2000:32) further states that it follows that assessment is a multi-dimensional process to judge what a student knows and can do. Based on the above statement, assessment plays a significant role in the lives of students, as some form of decision is taken which may have great influence on their lives.

From the above explanation, it is understood that assessment decisions that have to be made could be many and diverse; this means that various techniques may have to be used to arrive at those decisions. Hence Brookhart and Nitko (2007:4) suggest techniques like observation, questions, paper-and-pencil tests, research and projects, while the data collected through assessment for teacher decision-making covers a wide range of aspects like referrals, classroom accountability and outcomes.

2.5.2 Assessment must be linked to teaching and learning

The DoE (2007a:20) states that assessment must be linked to teaching and learning, and must not be viewed or used in isolation. Du Toit, Du Toit and Reddy (2008:36) emphasise this point when they explain that assessment is a crucial component of teaching and learning and must be aligned with all the components involved in the teaching and learning situation. In this sense, lecturers must understand that assessment should not be used or viewed as a stand-alone, but that it rather needs to be aligned with teaching and learning, where feedback from assessment informs teaching and learning and allows for critical reflection of outcomes and methodology. Vandeyar and Killen (2007:102) state that when educators make assessment an integral part of teaching and learning, it is because they view assessment as a useful means to gather data upon which to base decisions about teaching and learning. Such educators tend to have a view of assessment as a process that adds value to student learning, and not as a mere accumulation of marks, linking up with an understanding of formative assessment used to support learning.

NCV assessment guidelines also refer to formative assessment as a type of assessment that may be used by college lecturers, as it seems there are benefits that can be derived from its usage. For instance, when a lecturer uses formative assessment, it becomes easier to detect where students are experiencing difficulties in

the learning content, and then to devise means to assist students in those problematic areas.

Black and William (2004:14) have described other benefits of employing formative assessment, and these include utilisation of classroom dialogue by educators, which involves such educators allowing longer time after asking a question so that students will have time to think out responses. Additionally, benefits include educators understanding that summative tests may also be used for formative purposes, thus allowing for the positive aspects of summative assessment to come through in the learning process.

Summative assessment is understood as a summary of the student's achievements over a period of time, and in certain instances may provide no feedback to students; in this sense it is distinguishable from formative assessments, which are made as the student progresses through the course (Heywood, 2000:29). However, the point has already been made that both formative and summative assessments can be used to enhance learning, depending on how they are used.

2.5.3 Assessment must be inclusive

Assessment must be inclusive, creating opportunities for all students, including students who experience barriers to learning (DoE 2007a:20). In the instance of the inclusivity of assessment, two issues are noticeable. The first one is an understanding of assessment as including all students. This is stipulated as a requirement against the background of the much-emphasised selection function of assessment, linked to what has been described earlier as the psychometric testing model, where the main function of testing was to select people on the basis of what are regarded as innate abilities (Pryor and Lubisi, 2002:676). Hence in South Africa one of the provisions of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is to ensure that assessment is based on outcomes, allowing a learner to achieve such outcomes through multiple pathways. The second one refers to students experiencing barriers to learning, which must be understood as barriers that may be linked to disability of one form or another, but further, according to NCV assessment guidelines on barriers, may also be caused by race, gender, age or social background. Hence the NQF stipulates that assessment

must be underpinned by principles like promotion of access by addressing barriers to learning, facilitation of students' progress, fairness and transparency.

A single education system empowers students to become able and contributing citizens in an inclusive and diverse society, a notion which is in line with one of the objectives of the NQF, which is to contribute to the holistic development of the student by addressing social adjustment and responsibility (DoE 2007a:2).

2.5.4 Assessment of skills that cannot be assessed under examination conditions

ICASS should allow students to be assessed on a continuous basis, thus allowing for the assessment of skills that cannot be assessed under examination conditions (DoE 2007a:20). In some TVET policy documents (DoE 2007c:6), ICASS is defined as referring to college-based assessment which is conducted throughout the year, the evidence of which is collected by a student and kept in the PoE. The final mark, consisting of theoretical and practical assessments conducted during the year, accounts for 25% in each of the three fundamental subjects, and 50% in each of the four vocational subjects.

From the above it can be seen that ICASS can be used formatively as it is seen as continuous, being supportive of learning and focusing on providing constructive criticism to the student (Du Toit *et al.*, 2008:37), while Bloom (2008:6) argues that institution-based and classroom-based assessment is considered a key factor that supports learning, thus enabling improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process. However, it should be noted that according to SAQA, it is possible for summative assessments to be done on a continuous basis throughout the learning experience, thus allowing for the use of a range of assessment methods and a range of assessment instruments (SAQA, 2001:27).

The above conceptualisation of ICASS and its relation to formative and summative assessments can be represented schematically as in Table 2.1

Table 2.1: Relationships between ICASS, Formative and Summative Assessment

INTERNAL CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT	
FORMATIVE	SUMMATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Designed to support teaching and learning ➤ Assists in the planning of future learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Occurs at the end of a learning experience e.g. topic, programme ➤ To determine competence in input-based systems; usually occurs after a specified period of study e.g. one year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diagnoses the student's strengths and weaknesses ➤ Helps to make decisions on the readiness of students to do a summative assessment ➤ Provides feedback to the learner on his/her progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In outcomes-based systems, learner-readiness determines when assessments will take place ➤ Is largely judgemental, although can be put to use formatively

Source: SAQA, 2001:26

Table 2.1 is included to accentuate the relationship between ICASS and formative and summative assessment. (The original representation as it appears on the SAQA policy document does not have the heading "Internal Continuous Assessment", which this researcher included because of an understanding that when continuous assessment occurs, it can be put to both formative and summative uses.) At the same time, this table illustrates similarities and differences between formative and summative assessment. However, the point must be reiterated that formative and summative

assessment are not regarded as pulling in mutually exclusive or parallel directions. Rather the understanding is that the emphasis will fall on how they are used.

2.5.5 Assessment tasks aimed at addressing outcomes

Assessment tasks must be designed to address outcomes, and to provide students, lecturers and parents with results that are meaningful indications of what students know, understand and can do (DoE, 2007a:21). Reference to outcomes in assessment, or what the researcher has referred to as outcomes-based assessment in this study, must be understood against the past education system in South Africa. Generally, assessment in the past education system was heavily reliant on examinations, which favoured recall and the ability to reproduce previously learnt material exactly, where promotion to the next standard was based on a single examination.

Du Toit *et al.* (2008:27) state that outcomes are of high quality, culminating in demonstrations of significant learning in context. This understanding of outcomes implies that when students are assessed, they must be able to use knowledge, skills and values beyond the time when such knowledge, skills and attitudes were obtained. SAQA (2001:21) defines outcomes as demonstrable and assessable end-products of a learning process, which moves beyond the specification of subject content and may include knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as the criteria against which the stated attributes may be assessed. Therefore, when lecturers assess, it is expected that they will take due consideration of outcomes specified in assessment guidelines, as Table 2.2 illustrates:

Table 2.2: Example of information contained in an assessment guideline of core subjects of the NCV Business Studies, in particular the subject New Venture Creation.

<p>(SUBJECT OUTCOME)</p> <p>Demonstrate a understanding of the concept market as applied to a selected business sector</p>	
<p>ASSESSMENT STANDARDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principles of trade that define markets are identified at a basic level of understanding. 	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the basic principles of trade that define markets.
<p>ASSESSMENT TASKS OR ACTIVITIES</p> <p>Assessment tasks or activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment or a case study to evaluate knowledge, critical thinking and communication skills. • Class test (assessing knowledge) 	

(DoE 2007b)

In Table 2.2 above, there is reference to subject outcomes, learning outcomes, assessment standards and assessment tasks or activities. The subject outcomes are linked to critical outcomes in the sense that such outcomes are not directly measured. It is presumed that the achievement of learning outcomes in a specific topic automatically leads to the achievement of subject outcomes.

Du Toit *et al.* (2008:29) provide a description of learning outcomes as being what knowledge, skills and values students should know, demonstrate and be able to do. In our example, it is clear that students must recall definitions verbally and in writing; it is then understood that if they are able to do as indicated, they could be regarded as competent in that unit of assessment, and the assessment standard will indicate how well the learning outcome is achieved.

Biggs (1999:64) describes the relationship between learning outcomes and assessment when he explains his notion of constructive alignment. Constructive alignment involves expressing clearly what learning outcomes should be achieved, then designing assessment tasks to determine whether the outcomes are achieved or learnt, and then getting students to engage in activities that will encourage them to go about learning in ways that should enable them to achieve the stated outcomes. He further refers to this system as fully criterion-referenced, where the outcomes (Biggs uses the word 'objectives') define what should be taught, how it should be taught, and how lecturers get to know how well students have learned what they are supposed to learn.

According to the SAQA policy document (SAQA 2001:21), outcomes include subject content specification, but also include knowledge, skills, attitudes and values a student has to possess to demonstrate competence, and contexts for performance as well as the assessment thereof. This understanding is captured in the TVET colleges sector, where it is expected that when lecturers conduct ICASS, such assessments, especially the practical component, must be undertaken in a real workplace, a workshop or a structured environment or a simulation room that simulates a working environment.

The relationship between learning outcomes and assessment standards is provided by Du Toit *et al.* (2008:29-30), when they point out that learning outcomes ensure integration and progression in the development of concepts, skills and values through a set of assessment standards, regarded as criteria that provide evidence of what a student should know and demonstrate. Importantly, then, assessment standards denote the achievement level of the learning outcomes; in other words how well the student has achieved the learning outcome. It is for this reason that assessment guidelines also contain information on levels of competence as shown below.

Table 2.3: Example of a scale of NCV Business Studies programmes

RATING CODE	RATING	MARKS %
5	Outstanding	80-100
4	Highly competent	70-79
3	Competent	50-69
2	Not yet competent	40-49
1	Not achieved	0-39

Source: DoE 2007b

Table 2.3 provides an indication of how lecturers may determine the achievement of learning outcomes by students. The rating code is given on a scale of 1 to 5, and the rating code is matched with a rating as shown. It should be also be noted that the scale links ratings to marks, where a rating code of 1, showing a rating of not achieved, is linked to a percentage between 0-39, and so forth.

Table 2.4 below also shows that assessment in the TVET colleges sector has elements of criterion- and norm-referenced assessment. From this table, it is possible to rate a student's performance solely on the basis of how such a student is performing against set criteria, hence the assessment would be criterion-referenced, and it is also possible to compare a particular student's performance with others who may have taken the same assessment.

Criterion- and norm-referenced assessments are often further clarified by comparing them, as Table 2.4 illustrates.

Table 2.4: Comparison of criterion- and norm-referenced assessments

Criterion-referenced assessment	Norm-referenced assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes judgements by measuring students' work against set criteria • An individual student is assessed • Criteria are predetermined • Criteria are objective and attempt to be as clear as possible • Where grading is used, students are graded against criteria for assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes judgements by measuring student against one another • A group of students are assessed • Assessments are curriculum-based • Associated with grading and ranking of students • Associated with averaging of scores • Associated with adjustment of scores to fit the profile of the student group

The point has already been made that assessment in TVET colleges may be either criterion-referenced or norm-referenced, or both. This is made possible by the specification of assessment standards which lecturers have to keep in mind as they implement internal assessments, as well as exit-level examinations that are conducted on each of the three levels of NCV qualifications: levels 2, 3 and 4.

The preceding discussion has provided an overview of how assessment in NCV is described in policy documents. This discussion has included how various authorities also view assessment. In the next section, there will be reference to the specific implementation of ICASS at the Technical Vocational Education and Training colleges.

2.6 EFFECTIVE ICASS PLANNING

2.6.1 College Management Planning

Assessment should be well planned and coordinated to ensure quality assessment. Effective management and planning within the teaching and learning context plays a crucial role in determining the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that classroom practice is addressed. Sallis (2012:119) indicates that effective

management planning should take place on three levels in order to ensure quality. The DoE (2001:19) states clearly that planning should be done on three levels.

- **Immediate level.** Management and planning at this level is done by the lecturers at TVET colleges (classroom level) and involves the interpretation of the daily progress of students. Lecturers will interpret students' progress through daily assessment activities in class.
- **Short-term level.** Management and planning at this level is a form of quality control and is done by senior management in order to evaluate, correct and prevent under-achievement. Constant monitoring support and evaluation at TVET colleges are done through classroom visits and document checking of lecturers by the senior lecturers and heads of departments.
- **Long-term level.** Management and planning at this level is done by the government or government institutions (SAQA and Umalusi) and involves the overall monitoring and evaluation of the college system, as well as the development and implementation of policies, regulations and guidelines.

It can be deduced that when planning takes place through the different levels various stakeholders are involved to support discussions on the performance of the students; the levels of implementation of quality can also be identified. The inclusion of the three levels therefore allows for progression as well as determining any gaps within the quality assurance process.

2.6.2 Planning for ICASS

Assessment for learning forms an integral part of teaching and learning. It should be well planned and coordinated to ensure quality assessment practices. ICASS is a continuous process of assessment which happens in the process of teaching and learning.

The academic staff of TVET colleges comprises lecturers, senior lecturers, the head of department, the campus manager and the curriculum and or academic manager (who

oversees the smooth running of the curriculum). All these academics are involved in the planning of the ICASS and its implementation. Le Grange and Reddy (1998:13-14) suggest that lecturers on a given NQFL or level can plan and work together across different learning areas. In planning for ICASS, subject heads (senior lecturers) are responsible for compiling the subject assessment plan, while the subject lecturers are responsible for compiling subject assessment schedules for students. The subject heads and lecturers in all campuses of a college are obliged to meet and develop the assessment plan and the assessment schedules; they develop them collectively.

2.6.3 Subject Assessment Plan

ICASS planning starts with designing an assessment plan, which gives clear direction and planning of assessments throughout the year. Each subject head is required to draw up a plan indicating the lecturers responsible for setting and moderating assessment tasks and tools for the academic year for each subject at all NCV levels (NCV ICASS guidelines, 2015b:6). The subject assessment plan indicates the assessment tasks that should be administered, conducted and recorded in an academic year. The subject heads are then responsible for coordinating the development and moderation of assessment tasks.

2.6.4 Subject Assessment Schedule

A subject assessment schedule provides assessment tasks that will be administered in the academic year and must be provided to each student at the beginning of the academic year. This schedule should include the types of assessment task, the content to be covered, the time and mark allocation and the date of assessment. This is drawn using the information provided in the assessment plan.

2.7 ICASS IMPLEMENTATION AT TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

2.7.1 Composition and Implementation

In the TVET colleges sector, ICASS is made up of common assessment tasks that lecturers administer to students during the course of the academic year. Such tasks may include tests, demonstrations, role-play, practical experiments, research and assignments. The ICASS Guideline stipulates clearly that for a student to receive the complete subject results (at the end of the year) for vocational subjects, the marks of three assessment components are compulsory: internal continuous assessment (ICASS); internal summative assessment task (ISAT); and the examination (ICASS guideline 2015:2). If any one or more of these three components is not fulfilled, the student will receive an incomplete subject result. The accumulated ICASS marks serve as a year mark. It is therefore imperative that proper administration, management, conducting and reporting of student performance in the tasks make up the ICASS component.

ICASS provide the opportunity to assess students on an ongoing basis in the normal teaching and learning environment beyond the constraints of an examination process. It is integral to supporting the teaching and learning process (ICASS Guidelines 2015:6) that each student completes the stipulated number of assessment tasks for each subject in an academic year (cf. 1.5.2, Table 1.1). Only marks achieved in these tasks will be used to compile an ICASS mark per subject. Additional supporting tasks like class tests, quizzes, observations, discussions, practical demonstrations, informal classroom interaction and the like are used for daily monitoring of students' progress. According to policy (DoE 2007a), internal continuous assessment consists of tasks conducted by lecturers according to minimum requirements specified in assessment guidelines, and the following requirements are stipulated:

- (i) It is a compulsory component of the final promotion mark.
- (ii) The DoBE must provide guidelines on the composition of internal continuous assessment, and the method of assessment must be clearly outlined, achieved more or less through the provision of assessment guidelines.

- (iii) The internal continuous assessment mark must be subjected to a moderation process by the DHET and Umalusi.
- (iv). Absence of an internal continuous assessment mark will result in the student registered for that subject receiving an incomplete result.

There are various assessment guidelines for each subject in NCV Business Studies programmes. These guidelines are divided into three main sections, viz. Section A, dealing with the purpose of assessment guidelines, Section B, concerned with assessment in NCV, and Section C, which deals with specific assessment in a specific subject. Sections A and B are the same for all NCV subjects, and Section C is different for each subject, as it deals with assessment in a specific subject detailing subject topics, subject outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards (DoE 2007b). The purpose of assessment guidelines is to provide lecturers with guidelines for developing a coherent, integrated assessment system and to explain the requirements for internal and external subject assessment. An important feature of an integrated assessment system is assessment with a purpose, and it is therefore expected that when lecturers assess, they do in fact have a purpose as to why they assess. According to these assessment guidelines (DoE 2007b:5), lecturers are expected to plan assessment, and such planning must cover the following three main processes:

- *Collecting evidence*

An assessment plan must indicate which subject outcomes and assessment standards will be assessed, what assessment method or activity will be used and when this assessment will be conducted.

- *Recording*

Recording refers to the assessment instruments or tools with which the assessment will be captured or recorded, requiring the development of appropriate assessment instruments.

- *Reporting*

All the evidence is put together in a report to deliver a decision for the subject. The same guidelines also detail the use of assessment methods, referring in this instance to who carries out the assessment: this may include lecturer assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment, as Table 2.5 illustrates.

Table 2.5: Methods of assessment

Lecturer assessment	Lecturer assesses students' performance against given criteria in different contexts, for example individual work, group work, etc.
Self-assessment	Students assess their own performance against given criteria in different contexts.
Peer assessment	Students assess other students' performance against given contexts.
Group assessment	Students assess the individual performance of other students within a group or the overall performance of a group of students against given criteria

Source: DoE, 2007b

A variety of methods and instruments for collecting evidence are also detailed, and these methods and instruments may be chosen to give students ample opportunity to demonstrate the subject outcome attained and the end of learning. These are are represented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Methods and instruments for evidence collection.

Methods for collecting evidence			
Observation-based		Task-based	Test-based
Assessment instruments	Observation	Assignments	Examinations
	Class questions Lecturer, student, parent discussions	Projects Research Case studies Practical exercises Demonstrations Role-play	Class tests Practical examinations Open-book tests
Assessment tools	Observation sheets Lecturer's notes Comments	Checklists Rating scales Rubrics	Marks Rating scales

Source: DoE, 2007b (adapted from Vandeyar and Killen 2007)

The information illustrated in Figure 2.6 is also developed from Vandeyar and Killen (2007:102–103), although they have not represented it diagrammatically as it is done here. The point emphasised is that an assessment framework tends to influence how lecturers administer and conduct assessment, and this will influence how they practise assessment. It is also important to note that Vandeyar and Killen (2007:102) also point to the fact that while lecturers may hold a particular view of assessment, they may also hold multiple, interacting conceptions of assessment. For example, a lecturer might have an understanding that the purpose of assessment is to improve learning, but still use and see assessment as a valuable means of providing evidence for other measures of academic accountability.

2.7.2 Setting ICASS tasks

The ICASS tasks should be set and administered by the campus, or the tasks may be set by one campus and shared with other campuses of a college or other colleges. For a common approach, especially in campuses that share the same subject, it is proper that one campus should set a task and share it with other campuses (ICASS guideline

2015). The college has to make sure that measures are put in place to prevent information sharing by students.

The assessment tasks should be carefully designed and weighted to cover the subject learning outcomes and assessment standards. All forms of assessment used in setting the tasks should be appropriate to the subject and the developmental levels of the students on the particular level. The design of a task should also ensure that it assesses a variety of knowledge and skills. Tasks should give students opportunities to explore the subject in exciting and varied ways.

Lecturers are expected to compile an analysis grid as part of the setting process; this should accompany the task and its assessment tool for moderation. The grid provides an analysis of the assessment tasks with respect to the topics, learning outcomes and assessment standards covered and the time and mark allocation and conceptual level attached to each question of the tasks. This analysis grid assists the lecturer to set tasks that are of good quality. The ICASS guideline stipulates clearly that the assessment plan should provide details in respect of the sequence and pace with which the subject content is to be taught. It is also stated in the ICASS guideline (2015:12) that setting of ICASS tasks that are a replica of textbook exercises only serves to disadvantage students and should be rejected. Similarly, the use of old examination papers set by DHET does not constitute an authentic ICASS, nor does it facilitate the development of lecturer capacity to set good-quality assessment tasks.

The examiner (lecturer setting the task) should complete a checklist for the tasks to ensure that they meet the basic minimum criteria. This should be included as part of the moderation instrument and not as a separate document. The following are the instruments to be used for assessment:

- Tests

The main aim of the test is to assess theoretical knowledge. The test may include elements of application of skills and applied competence. A test could be a practical test or written test. The assessment plan should reflect a balance between practical and written tests where applicable.

A test assessment should cover a substantial amount of content and the duration should be 45 to 60 or more minutes. Furthermore, test questions or tasks should reflect different cognitive levels.

- Assignments

Assignments may be theoretical (written) or practical in nature. Students are required to apply a combination of procedures and techniques to new situations in order to demonstrate the required skills as specified in the criteria for the tasks (DoE, 2007b). Assignments require students to find information and apply knowledge and skills. Students are assessed on understanding and application of learning material and not on ability to rewrite text from sources.

- Internal examination papers

An internal examination paper could be a practical or a written paper. The assessment plan should reflect a balance between practical and written papers. An examination paper for assessment should include a substantial amount of content. Mark allocation and duration should be in accordance with nationally set papers for the subject (Umalusi, 2011). Each examination paper must reflect a range of different cognitive levels and must in essence be aligned with the subject guidelines and assessment guidelines.

2.7.3 Tools for assessing student performance.

The assessment tool that best suits the type of assessment task administered must be compiled to match the type and purpose of the assessment task. It may include marking memoranda/guidelines, rubrics and checklists. In the case of a practical task, a proper marking tool has to be developed for evaluation of practical outcomes.

- Marking memoranda / guidelines

A marking memorandum is suited for a task where fixed responses are required to questions. In a case where a marking guideline is required to assess student

performance, the memorandum should be provided in a separate document and must indicate mark allocations and alternative answers (Airasian, 2005). The college must organise a memorandum discussion between lecturers prior to the marking of the internal tasks and examinations (cf. 2.10.3). Umalusi (2006:53-62) also supports the memorandum discussion prior to marking in order for lecturers to standardise their marking. All lecturers who offer the particular subject and who will be marking the tasks must attend the memorandum discussions.

- Rating scales

Rating scales are marking systems whereby a symbol (such as 1 to 7) or a mark (such as 5/10 or 50%) must be defined in detail. This detail is as important as the coded score. Traditional marking, assessment and evaluation were mostly used as rating without giving details as to what was right or wrong, weak or strong. Gipps, McCallum and Hargreaves (2000:9) maintain that rating scales in assessment for learning are based on feedback by a teacher, while Airasian (2005:250) concludes that rating scales as an assessment tool allow the educator to judge the performance along a continuum, rather than as a dichotomy.

- Checklists

Checklists show students what needs to be done. They consist of short statements describing the expected performance in a particular task. The statements on the checklist can be ticked off when the student has adequately achieved the criterion. Checklists are useful in peer- and group-assessment activities (Maphalala, 2015).

- Rubrics

Rubrics are a hierarchy (graded levels) of criteria, with benchmarks that describe the minimum level of acceptable performance or achievement for each criterion. Rubrics are based on clear and coherent performance criteria. When rubrics are developed to include competency levels, they are best suited for practical and open-ended questions. Each criterion described in the rubric should be assessed separately. (Airasian, 2005:253).

There are two types of rubrics that can be used: holistic and analytical. A holistic rubric requires a lecturer to score the overall process or product as a whole, without judging the component parts separately, while an analytical rubric requires an educator to score separate, individual parts of the product or performance first, and then add the individual scores to obtain a total score. Analytical rubrics are preferred when a fairly focused type of response is required; that is, for a performance task in which there may be one or more responses needed/accepted. It results in several scores followed by an added total score.

2.8 FEEDBACK

A social constructivist approach to feedback requires that the students actively engage with the feedback. Leahy, Lyon, Thompson and William (2005:20) regard provision of feedback that moves learners forward as one of a set of strategies that educators may use if they want to use assessment to enhance student learning. Lissitz and Schafer (2000) argue that feedback and self-assessment are critical factors for development, since assessment is tied to learning; they cannot be treated as separate entities. This feedback also serves as the diagnostic aspect of assessment, literally feeding into the next level of learning and growth; this means the feedback will diagnose what the students know and what they still need to know.

Feedback for learning can take many forms. It may be formal or informal, individual or collective. Feedback can also be evaluative or descriptive (Gipps *et al.*, 2000). Evaluative feedback provides feedback by giving rewards and punishments and also expressing approval and disapproval, while descriptive feedback makes explicit connections between students' thinking and other possibilities that they should consider by specifying a better way of doing something.

During assessment, lecturers should provide descriptive feedback to students, then communicate their strengths and weaknesses. Comments should identify what has been done well and what still needs improvement. Lecturers should give guidance on how to make improvements (Black *et al.*, 2004). This kind of feedback enables students to engage in self-evaluation. It is this kind of feedback that helps the students reconsider learning objectives, thereby determining their achievements. For instance,

lecturers can also make use of a rubric to provide constructive feedback to students, because rubrics provide a holistic picture of what the students have accomplished and point out areas that are still lacking.

A delicate balance must be maintained between the principles of assessment so as to ensure the success of the assessment process and contribute towards the validity, reliability, fairness and practicability thereof. Moderation as a form of consistency can improve the quality of assessment, provided that the moderation system is well planned (Umalusi, 2006:2).

2.9 BENEFITS OF ICASS

Geyser (2004:101) refers to continuous assessment as regular assessment that integrates teaching, learning and assessment. ICASS therefore refers to the cyclic process that includes various assessment methods and instruments and that displays a holistic picture of the student's competence.

Cohen (2007), cited in DoE (2009b:10-11), defends the use of continuous assessment and highlights the following benefits that derive from its utilisation. It can be regarded as an important educational component in addition to single, end-of-year examinations in numerous ways. First, it allows for a more representative assessment of student achievement. A single two- or three-hour examination sitting at the end of the year cannot possibly assess adequately the learning that has taken place from the beginning of the year up to the end. ICASS can assess a greater spread of a student's work and allows lecturers to build up a rich picture of an individual student's strengths, weaknesses and levels of achievement over a longer period of time. Second, assessment tasks set by a lecturer for a particular group of students can be better conceptualised than tasks set for a national pool of students from diverse backgrounds with very different experiences. While they may be criticised in that they are not as reliable as externally set examinations, internally set college-based tasks should be used as they can also be valid.

Third, ICASS provides students with assessment opportunities in situations that resemble real-life situations, an aspect which is not possible under examination

conditions. Examinations cannot assess a wider range of increasingly important skills, while ICASS provides students with the opportunity to find and process information from a range of sources. This is the case because in some practical tasks students may have to do some demonstration or role-play; they may conduct their own research, interview people and collect field data in a range of ways. Fourth, ICASS is also essential as playing a role in supporting learning, particularly against the background of the increasing recognition of the links between teaching, learning and assessment. Thus continuous assessment is important in that it delivers more opportunities for students to be assessed in various ways; various skills can be developed, thus giving every student the chance to be assessed fairly. In this system ICASS contributes to the final promotion of students, in order for NCV students to receive the complete subject results for fundamental (ICASS and Examination) and vocational subjects (ICASS and ISAT and Examination). The ICASS component is one of the three compulsory components of assessment in the resulting process. If any one of the three compulsory components is not fulfilled, the student will receive an incomplete subject result. The successful delivery of the NCV qualification therefore requires proper quality administration, management, conduct recording and reporting of student performance in the tasks making up the ICASS component. The following section discusses quality assurance in practice in terms of the process involved.

2.10 UNDERSTANDING QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.10.1 Quality

According to Hattingh (2003:4), quality is a relative concept and an ongoing process, defined as the achievement of specified degrees of excellence. Quality is a crucial part of the teaching and learning process in quality education. Gawe and Heyns (2004:162-164) confirm this viewpoint, adding that quality is a dynamic concept which originated in the business and industry sector, where products and goods must comply with specific regulations and requirements in order to ensure high-quality products. Gawe and Heyns (2004:163) state that quality is a specified characteristic, measurable against specifications, to determine progress which leads to decision-making. Pond (2002:186) emphasises quality as a major priority that should also be listed at the top of most governments' agendas. Therefore improving quality is possibly

the most daunting task facing any institution. Pond (2002) also refers to quality as a controversial concept that is not easy to measure because of major discrepancies in how people regard quality and the fact that no two experts are in agreement on what, for instance, distinguishes a good school, college or university.

2.10.2 Quality Assurance

Harman (1998:346) defines quality assurance as the systematic management and assessment procedures that are used to monitor performance and ensure achievement of quality outputs or improved quality. He further affirms that quality assurance should aim to provide stakeholders with evidence regarding the quality of the management and the outcomes that have been achieved. The key purpose of quality assurance is to ensure educational improvement and effective performance. Gawe and Heyns (2004:173) state that quality processes must be built in from the outset in order for these processes to become the providers of a quality management system. They mention that in so doing quality becomes evident in the inputs, the process and outputs of teaching and learning. Quality assurance is therefore an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating the quality of an educational system.

According to Bellis (2001:119), quality assurance must not be seen as an outcome, but rather as an instrument to identify gaps within an institution. He adds that quality assurance should be stressed as one of the main objectives in any educational institution and must be managed in order to ensure its effectiveness.

In recent years, Umalusi (2008:1–10) has aimed to identify a movement towards the implementation of quality assurance procedures and policies. The advent of this movement originated in the identification of various factors within a dysfunctional system that lacked the necessary quality. McDonald and Van der Horst (2007:4) have raised the following concerns to be addressed:

- Government's concerns regarding the quality of education
- Increased investment in education and training that fails to produce satisfactory results

- The need for international competitiveness and standards (globalisation)
- The need to provide for the professional market

The above concerns point to a need to monitor the quality of performance in schools, universities and colleges to ensure that students leaving the system are capable of acting professionally in and beyond their schooling. It seems that in order to enhance quality, a systematic and detailed strategic plan should be implemented. Hattingh (2003:5) reiterates that quality assurance is determined by the degree of performance specified for schools and other educational institutions. Quality should therefore capture the sum of activities that assure the quality of products and services at the specific time of production or delivery. Quality assurance is thus determined by the following elements:

- Standards required by, for instance, the National Qualifications Framework(NQF)
- Feedback provided
- Continuous assessment
- Ways of correcting or improving the quality of the product

The quality assurance process is therefore typified by the manner in which organisations attempt to reach the required standards for a specific institution. Standards are determined by various quality assurance bodies and their unique functions. The establishment of the NQF arose from the need for an integrated approach to education and training that recognises all education and training in a single national framework. The NQF therefore strives to:

- Create an integrated national framework
- Support career paths that include the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and different combinations of education and training as the basis for progression through recognised levels and across educational bands
- Enhance the quality of education and training
- Redress previous discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities

- Contribute to the full personal development of each student, as well as social and economic development

It appears that the NQF works on the premise that quality assurance should take place both internally and externally. Quality assurance should not be seen as an objective in itself, but should rather be aimed at identifying and addressing shortcomings in quality so as to ensure a continuous sequence of planning, achievement, assessment and upgrading (Bellis, 2001:15-44; Hattingh, 2003:2-5; SAQA, 2000:3-6). Quality assurance in education is characterised by the frequent implementation of procedures that will ensure that all instruction in the teaching and learning context meets the standards and addresses the needs of all individuals, as suggested by SAQA (2000:3).

2.10.3 Quality assurance in education

Bellis (2001:119) states that quality assurance must not be seen as an outcome, but rather as an instrument to identify gaps within an institution. He adds that quality assurance should be stressed as one of the main objectives in any educational institution and must be managed in order to ensure school effectiveness.

Bloom (2008:301-302) states that moderation of assessment is integral to teaching and learning. The moderation of internal assessment is one of the most important processes used to ensure quality and credibility of assessments that contribute to the final examination mark. ICASS conducted at the sites of learning should ideally allow for assessment to take place at the time of learning and, more importantly, should allow such assessment to be integrated into teaching. The quality assurance (moderation, monitoring and verification) mechanisms inherent in the ICASS assessment process serve to strengthen its credibility and the credibility of the qualification. SAQA (2000) points out that moderation ensures that people being assessed are assessed in a consistent, accurate and well-designed manner.

Moderation as an NQF function is a means for professional interaction and upgrading of skills that will continually improve the quality of assessment. Rowley (1995:26-27) refers to TQM as a critical part of quality assurance and argues that it should be a

priority within educational institutions. It can be concluded that quality management, assessment strategies and self-evaluation are means whereby quality assurance can be enhanced in education. Figure 2.1 illustrates the three aspects of effective quality assurance in education institutions.



Figure 2.2: Aspects of quality assurance in education

Source: Adapted from Birzea, Cecchini, Harrison, Krek and Spajic-Vrkas (2005:33-40)

Quality Assurance of assessment in the learning environment starts in the classroom and lecture room in the form of moderation of assessment tasks to ensure that lecturers in the teaching and learning environment use comparable assessment methods and make similar and consistent judgements about student performances (SAQA 2000).

Edwards (2000) affirms that quality assurance plays a role by providing judgements on the education system in order to:

- Provide feedback to educators on the effectiveness of their teaching and assessment methods
- Monitor quality of assessment methods used
- Assess the extent to which the learning outcomes of the modules, course or a programme have been achieved

Umalusi (2006) undertakes the quality assurance of the national qualifications through a laborious process of reporting on each of the assessment processes and procedures. The quality and standard of assessment is judged by the adherence to policies and guidelines designed to deal with the critical aspects of administering credible national assessments and examinations.

Umalusi (2006) envisaged a strategy of putting in place certain action plans that could improve and/or guide quality assurance within the current context. This would be responsible for promoting and assuring quality in South Africa, through the provision of reliable, responsive and reputable services in a supportive and reflective manner. In order to ensure a high overall standard and quality of examinations and assessments in the relevant qualifications, established quality assurance processes should be adhered to. Based on the statement of Umalusi (2014), the following quality assurance processes were conducted in 2014 for Technical and Vocational Education and Training:

- Moderation of a sample of the NCV examination question papers and supplementary and back-up papers, including the Business Studies subjects.
- Moderation of ISATs in cases where changes to the curriculum had been made
- Monitoring and moderation of internal assessment of the NCV field programmes.
- Monitoring and moderation of the conduct of the Internal Summative Assessment Tasks (ISATs)
- Monitoring and moderation of the conduct of the Internal Continuous Assessment Tasks (ICASS)
- Monitoring of various phases of examinations written throughout the year
- Verification of marking.
- Standardisation of marks according to agreed principles and procedures.

The above clearly shows how Umalusi adheres to the call of quality-assuring the assessment processes followed by the TVET colleges.

2.11 MODERATION OF ASSESSMENTS

Moderation in the NQF is a means for professional interaction and upgrading of skills that will continually improve the quality of assessments (SAQA, 2000). It further suggests that the main functions of moderation are to:

- Verify that assessments are fair, reliable, valid, and practicable
- Identify the need to redesign assessment if required
- Provide an appeal procedure for reassessment of students
- Evaluate performance of assessors

Therefore moderation is a process to determine the standard applied in setting of tasks and assessing students (Maphalala, 2015). It involves a judgement about the quality of the tasks and students' performances and is carried out before, during and after administration of tasks, while monitoring ensures that the assessment is planned, administered and conducted according to the college assessment policy (ICASS guideline 2015).

- Moderation reports

The subject moderators as indicated on the assessment plan conduct the moderation of each assessment task for their relevant subject. The consolidated subject moderation reports per campus should be compiled and submitted to the academic head of the college to provide college management with the results achieved from each assessment and moderation cycle (NCV ICASS Guidelines, 2015:19). Full moderation records must be accessible to college management to ensure that the assessment and moderation activities are being done according to the internal assessment policy and plan of the college.

2.11.1 Internal Moderation of ICASS

The moderation of marking is one of the processes utilised by DHET and Umalusi to ensure that marking is conducted in accordance with agreed-upon practices and standards so as to ensure the validity, fairness, reliability and practicability of the

assessment process. Umalusi (2006:31) defines internal moderation as the assessment of the learner's performance carried out on an ongoing basis at the learning site by the educator, using various assessment techniques that may comprise oral and practical work, classroom based work, class tests, projects and examinations. Moderation is generally associated with the output (or the summative results of teaching and learning), thus the outputs are only as good as the inputs and processes. Coetzee (2002) states that internal moderation ensures that assessment are consistent, accurate, and well designed. It is a process of monitoring and verifying assessment practices to ensure that assessment decisions are consistently accurate. Moderation should not take place only at the end of the process, but be integrated into the quality cycle.

Bloom (2008:301-302) also stresses that moderation of assessment is an important tool to ensure that quality standards of the inputs, the processes and outputs are maintained and that moderation should not take place not only at the end of the process, but be integrated into the whole process. The notion of verification during the internal moderation process involves the following aspects:

- Monitoring the conduct of assessments
- Sampling candidate evidence to verify quality of the system and procedure
- Supporting and advising assessors
- Assuring the quality of the system and procedure
- Keeping verification and assessment records up to date

Internal moderation of ICASS tasks takes place in two phases. The phases are discussed below:

(a) Pre- assessment moderation

Pre-assessment moderation is an evaluation of the tasks before they are administered in the classroom. A lecturer who is a subject expert must moderate and approve the task before it is administered to the students. This internal moderation of an assessment task must be conducted according to the subject assessment plan (NCV ICASS Guidelines, 2015:51).The assessment of the student's performance is carried

out on an ongoing basis at the learning site by the lecturers at TVET college using various assessment techniques that may comprise assessment of oral and practical work, classroom-based work, class tests, controlled tests, assignments, projects and examinations. These assessment tasks have to be moderated before the task is administered to students. A pre-moderation checklist is provided and moderators have to check the quality of the assessment task against the checklist. The DHET has made provision for a standard checklist that should be used by the colleges for pre-moderation of assessment tasks.

(b) Post-assessment moderation

Post-assessment moderation is an evaluation of the quality of the assessment process and the marking of assessment undertaken by the subject lecturers. Umalusi (2006:5) and Bloom (2008:302) refer to moderation as a process of ensuring that the assessment is fair, valid and practical and that they are in line with the national standards. Moderation conducted on marked evidence after the administration of tasks ensures that the assessment tool was applied correctly and that students have been treated fairly in the assessment process (NCV ICASS Guidelines, 2015:40). Umalusi (2008:6) has proposed that in order to meet the terms of quality assurance, moderation should take place both internally and externally.

The moderation of marking at TVET colleges first starts at campus level when peer lecturers specialising in the particular subject moderate each other's work for quality purposes and control. Then the second leg unfolds when the multi-campus lecturers meet and moderate the assessment tasks in place. Moderation should take place on a continuous basis and form part of the cyclical nature of quality. Umalusi (2006:53–62) proposes that the moderation of marking should take place through three approaches, illustrated in Figure 2.3

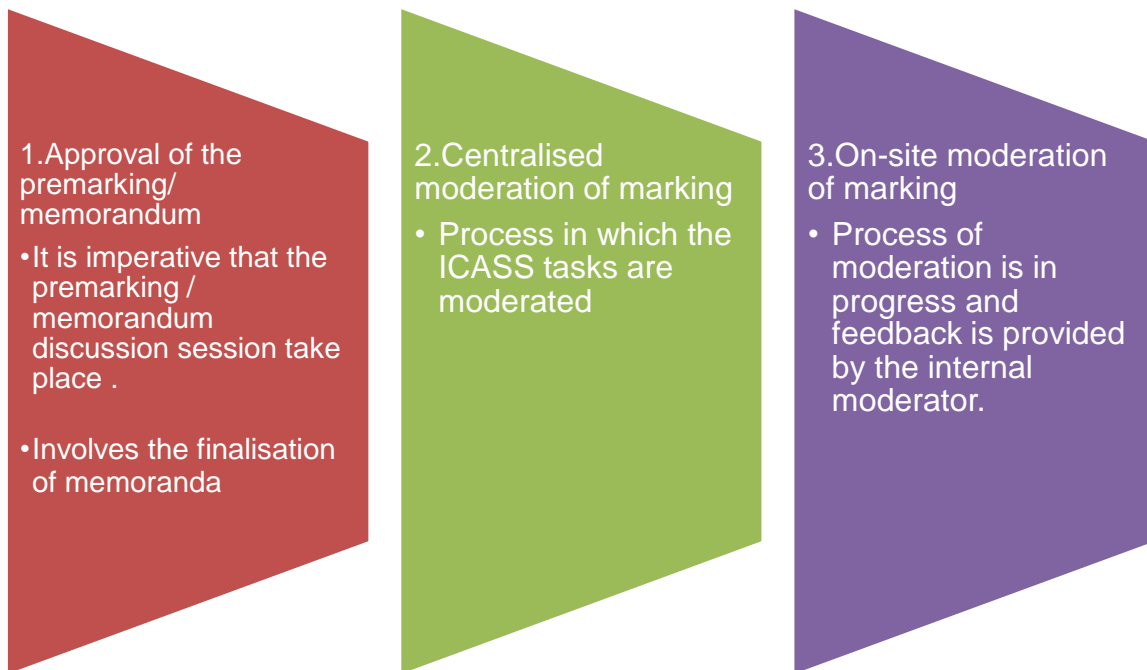


Figure 2.3: Recommended three stages of marking

Source: Adapted from Umalusi (2006:53-62)

During ICASS moderation all three stages have to be followed to ensure quality of assessment processes. The moderation reports are consolidated per campus and should be compiled and submitted to the academic head of the college to provide college management with the results achieved from each assessment moderation cycle. The results of various reports give an indication of how the processes of assessment unfolded; these reports assist the college to self-monitor its progress and enable the college to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to improve on the weaknesses.

2.12 COLLEGE SELF-MONITORING AND EVALUATION

By college self-monitoring, the college is simply trying to control and evaluate the effectiveness of its processes in implementing quality assessment practices. Subject heads, campus managers and academic heads have to ensure that the ICASS component of each subject is being implemented according to the standard set by policy and in a manner that does not compromise the integrity of the NCV qualification at a college. Campus-based monitoring of ICASS implementation should take place on a continuous basis across all three academic terms of the academic year.

The NCV ICASS guidelines (2015:18) stipulate that subject moderators, as indicated on the assessment plan, conduct the moderation of each assessment task for their relevant subject. Consolidated subject moderation reports per campus should be compiled and submitted to the academic head of the college management with the results achieved from each assessment and moderation cycle.

The DHET monitors the implementation by checking the following documents and checking that all the records are up to date against the schedule of dates provided on the assessment plan: assessment plan, ICASS record sheet for the subject and the student evidence (PoE) (NCV ICASS Guidelines, 2015:19). The HODs and campus managers are expected to monitor the process of ICASS implementation, then compile a report that they submit to the academic head before the end of each term. These reports should be able to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the college. Full moderation records must be accessible to the college management to ensure that the assessment and moderation activities are being done according to the internal assessment policy and plan of the college in relation to the national policy.

Subject heads, campus managers and academic heads are crucial to ensuring that the ICASS of each subject is being implemented in such a manner that it does not compromise the integrity of the NCV qualifications at the college.

2.13 Departmental Moderation

The DHET undertakes moderation of both ICASS tasks administered and the marked student evidence during nationally convened moderation sessions (NCV ICASS Guidelines, 2015). A sample of the subjects offered in the TVET college qualification is targeted per examination cycle for moderation during this exercise. The DHET makes use of the specialist lecturers offering the subject at different colleges to engage in the moderation process. The DHET process focuses on the quality of both the ICASS tasks administered and the quality of the marking process.

2.14 CONCLUSION

The chapter discussed quality assurance in general and more specifically quality assurance in education and in the TVET colleges. The chapter gave a theoretical overview of some features of assessment and quality assurance in the TVET sector, with a strong focus on quality of assessment practices as well as the policies and principles of the quality assurance bodies in South Africa. The chapter opened with a discussion of the theories underpinning this study , followed by the theory of assessment in general, narrowing down to internal continuous assessment. Reference was made to ICASS within a wider discussion on assessment, and this encompassed specific details of the planning and ideal implementation of ICASS in NCV at the TVET colleges sector.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter discussed assessment, ICASS, quality assurance and moderation in terms of their background, components and application through assessment practices at TVET colleges. This chapter is directed at the research methodology and design of this study as a way of gathering and analysing data in order to fulfil the aim of the study, which is to explore factors affecting the quality of assessment practices in the NCV Business Studies programmes at TVET colleges in Gauteng.

As Giddings and Grant (2006) point out, research methodology refers to the theoretical assumptions and principles that underpin a particular research approach and guide how a researcher frames the research question and decides on what process and methods to use. Krauss (2005:759) adds that methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge, while Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006) defines the research design as the overall strategy that one chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way in order to effectively address the research problem. She notes that research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Following what has been established concerning research methodology and design, this chapter discusses the research site, population and sampling procedure, as well as data collection, analysis and interpretation methods. Details of adherence to ethical considerations, the quality assurance measures used and the limitations of the study will be discussed in order to explore factors impacting on the quality of assessment practices in the Business Studies programmes in Gauteng .

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan or strategy that moves from the underlying philosophical assumption to specifying the selection of participants (Niewenhuis, 2007:70). Punch (2011:62) defines it as all the issues involved in planning and executing a research

project, from identifying the problem to reporting and publishing the results. It is clear from the definition above that research design is a detailed plan of how the research is to be conducted.

Burton and Bartlett (2005:215) advise that it is important that researchers create guidelines that give order and direction to the project they set out to do. They advise that the guidelines must be set before undertaking research in order to assist the researcher not to lose focus. This study employed a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, using a qualitative approach.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research is implanted in a paradigm, a point of departure from which the research is approached. As Denzin and Lincoln (2013:26) state, the net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises may be termed a paradigm or interpretive framework, a basic set of beliefs that guides action. Babbie (2007:31) points out that a paradigm is a fundamental frame of reference used by researchers to organise their observations and reasons. Since these parameters describe perceptions, beliefs, assumptions and the nature of reality and truth, they can influence the way in which the research is undertaken, from design through to conclusions, and it is therefore important to understand and discuss these aspects in order that approaches congruent with the nature and aims of the particular inquiry are adopted, and to ensure that researcher biases are understood, exposed, and minimised (Flowers, 2009). Furthermore, Flowers (2009) states that a study can successfully be completed if a research paradigm that best suits the study is employed. Over the years, three basic paradigms have been mainly used in research: positivist, constructivist-interpretivist and realist.

3.3.1 Positivist paradigm

The positivist position is derived from that of natural science and is characterised by the testing of hypotheses developed from existing theory (hence deductive or theory testing) through measurement of observable social realities. This position presumes the social world exists objectively and externally, that knowledge is valid only if it is

based on observations of this external reality and that universal or general laws exist or that theoretical models can be developed that are generalisable, can explain cause and effect relationships, and lend themselves to predicting outcomes. Positivism is based upon values of reason, truth and validity, where focus is purely on facts gathered through direct observation and experience and measured empirically using quantitative methods and statistical analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008).

3.3.2 Constructivist- interpretivist paradigm

This paradigm mostly uses qualitative data to collect data. Tools used in this paradigm are interviews, observation, document reviews and visual data analysis. It is these multiple interpretations that create a social reality in which people act. Constructivist-interpretivist approaches to research have the intention of understanding “the world of human experience” (Cohen and Manion, 2011), suggesting that “reality is socially constructed” (Mertens, 2005:12). Since all knowledge is relative to the knower, interpretivists aim to work alongside others as they make sense of, draw meaning from, and create their realities in order to understand their points of view, and to interpret these experiences in the context of the researcher’s academic experience (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006), hence it is an inductive or theory building approach. The focus of the researcher is on understanding the meanings and interpretations of social actors and to understand their world from their point of view. This paradigm is highly contextual and hence is not widely generalisable (as in the positivist paradigm) (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). Understanding what people are thinking and feeling, as well as how they communicate, verbally and non-verbally is considered important (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2008) in the interpretivist paradigm. It is worth noting that the qualitative research approach leans towards this paradigm.

3.3.3 Realism paradigm

The third paradigm is realism, which emerged after the positivist and interpretative/constructivist paradigms; it takes aspects from both positivist and interpretivist positions. This paradigm was born out of frustration that positivism was over-deterministic and that constructivism was so totally relativist. It holds that real

structures exist independently of human consciousness (positivist notion), but that knowledge is a socially created interpretivist notion. Saunders *et al.* (2007) contend that our knowledge of reality is a result of social conditioning. Blaikie (2007) is of the view that while realism is concerned with what kinds of things there are, and how these things behave, it is accepted that reality may exist in spite of science or observation, and so there is validity in recognising realities that are simply claimed to exist or act, whether proven or not. In common with interpretivist positions, realism recognises that natural and social sciences are different, and that social reality is pre-interpreted. However, realists, in line with the positivist position, also hold that science must be empirically based, rational and objective, and so they argue that social objects may be studied 'scientifically' as social objects, not simply through language and discourse, as held by qualitative researchers.

Although Blaikie describes realism as "ultimately a search for generative mechanisms", he points out that realists recognise that the underlying mechanisms can act apparently independently or "out of phase" with the observable events, and that events can occur independently of their being experienced, a view that Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) describe as a 'stratified' form of reality, whereby surface events are shaped by underlying structures and mechanisms and what we see is only part of the picture. Realists take the view that researching from different angles and at multiple levels will all contribute to understanding, since reality can exist on multiple levels (Chia, 2002); hence realism may be seen as inductive or theory building.

3.3.1.1 Motivation for choosing a combination research paradigm for this study

In this study, a qualitative approach was employed to collect data, using interviews and document analysis tools. The researcher also used the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm. As explained, constructivist-interpretivist approaches to research have the intention of understanding the world of human experience (Cohen and Manion, 2007:36), suggesting that reality is socially constructed (Mertens, 2005:12). The constructivist-interpretivist researcher tends to rely upon the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2012) and recognises the impact on the research of his or her own background and experiences.

In qualitative research, the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm emphasises that the aim of research is to understand and interpret meanings and intentions that underlie every human action (Schurink, 1998). It is therefore worth noting that within the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but by descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004). Ontologically, the interpretivist paradigm denies the existence of an objective reality that is independent of the frame of reference of the observer, but holds rather that reality is influenced by the process of observation (Henning *et al.*, 2004).

In this study, lecturers were observed in their social milieu, the place where assessment takes place, which gave the researcher an opportunity to understand their options and the choice of measures of quality that they put in place in their assessment. This study explored the experiences of lecturers in real-life situations, which helped to develop a sense of understanding of the meaning conveyed by people during and within their social milieu. Qualitative research is the method of choice to provide a lived experience of the participants, as mentioned in Chapter 1. Henning *et al.* (2004:3) argue that in a qualitative study we want to understand and also explain in argument, by means of evidence from data and from the literature, what phenomena the study is about.

Qualitative research examines institutions and phenomena within the context in which they occur (Salkind, 2012:3). The researcher interviewed individuals (lecturers at a TVET college) within the context in which they work. The lecturers at the TVET college are living the experience, and the lectures were part of teaching during the implementation of the new NCV curriculum. The old and new lecturers offering NCV Business Studies subjects, whether trained in the NCV curriculum or not, were able to provide a clear picture regarding the quality of assessment practice taking place at TVET colleges.

A research study is guided by beliefs or assumptions about the world and what is perceived as reality or truth. Epistemology is simply the theory of knowledge. The researcher thinks about how knowledge is constructed. Such assumptions influenced the conduct of this research.

As mentioned, a social constructivist-interpretivist approach was applied in this study. The goal of constructivism is to “gain understanding by interpreting subject perceptions” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011:102). Riegler (2012) adds that constructivism refers to the idea that the mental world or the experienced reality is actively constructed and that the observer plays a major role in any theory. The questions posed by the researcher were influenced by theory; the participant’s perceptions on the quality of assessment practices were interpreted by the researcher. As Gomm (2009:14) states, constructivism refers to the questions about how and what we know, and what is true. Constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2012). The epistemological view forming the focal point of this research is that knowledge is relative, plural and subjective and that the researcher and the research participants co-create this understanding (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013:23). This does not mean that the researcher “knows” (O’Kane, 2000); rather, this suggests that the lecturer giving permission to conduct research on his or her reality is the knower and the expert on his or her life. It is possible to obtain knowledge from another person’s inner reality by cautiously and analytically examining their views, meaning, experiences, actions and events in their personal life.

Ontology refers to the world and assumptions within which researchers operate in their search for knowledge (Schwandt, 2007:10). From an ontological point of view there are diversified realities and this diversification affects each individual’s perceptions. People encounter the diversity of the world in different ways because human relations are mutually and socially constructed (Willig, 2001:13), since each individual advances from a constellation of different points of view. This means that no two people view the world in the same way. In my attempt to comprehend and interpret the experiences of lecturers, I assumed that each lecturer interviewed perceived the world in a different way; therefore lecturers would give different opinions. The research is based on the belief that lecturers’ perceptions of the quality of their assessments can be understood through engagement and interaction with them. The lecturers gave opinions based on the world they live in.

Methodology is also about how we come to know, but it is more practical in nature (Henning *et al.*, 2004:2); it is the process of research and techniques used. Methodology is closely related to epistemology. As Henning *et al.* (2004:2) state,

epistemology is a philosophy of how we come to know the world while methodology involves the practice of coming to know and how we study this practice (more elaboration is given under “research design and method”). The guiding methodological strategies that correlate with the aforementioned ontological and epistemological frameworks are interactional, interpretive and qualitative in nature. The ontology of constructivism supports this point of view, in that it regards people’s subjective experiences as being real, valid and therefore unconditionally important.

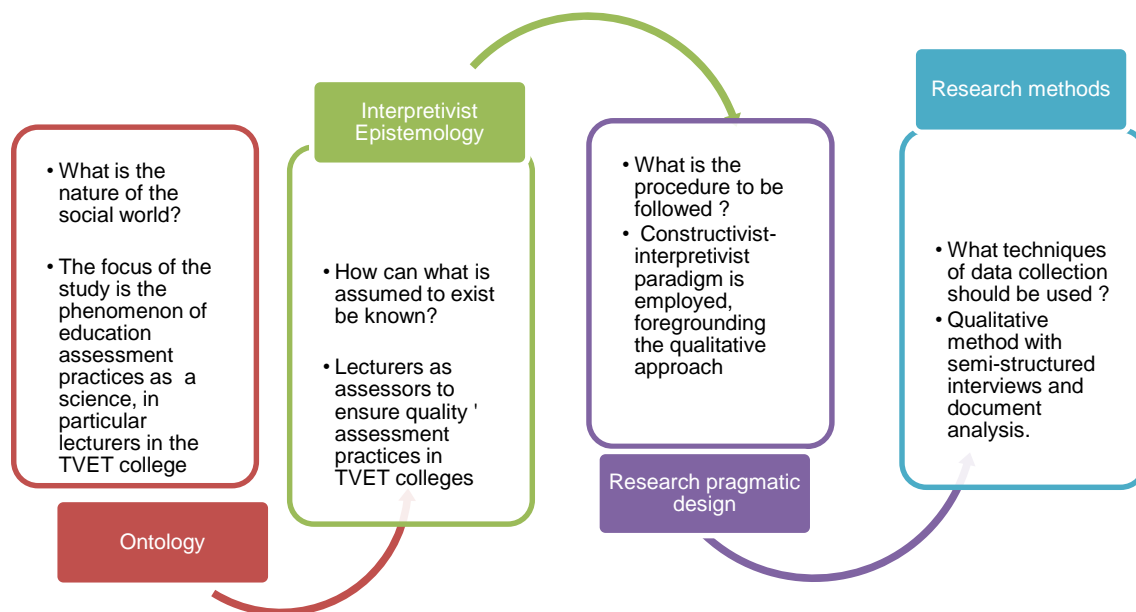


Figure 3.1: Research design.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH - Qualitative research methods

Research methodologies can be classified as either quantitative or qualitative or both as mixed methods. Quantitative research is a more logical and data-led approach which provides a measure of what people think from a statistical and numerical point of view. Unlike quantitative research, which relies on numbers and data, qualitative research is more focused on how people feel, what they think and why they make certain choices (Creswell, 2012).

A qualitative approach is followed in this study. Qualitative research is characterised by a multi-method approach and is of a holistic, inductive and generative nature (Silverman, 2006:113). It is often associated with the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative

methods construct new ways of understanding and consequently emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality. The researcher used qualitative methods because they are more concerned with the process of construction than simply with outcomes or products.

Furthermore, qualitative research is interactive, face-to-face research, which requires a relatively longer time to systematically observe, interview and record processes as they naturally occur (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006) involving an interpretive and naturalistic approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2007). Another important facet is the opportunity to develop new ideas that are empirically supported. In the qualitative approach, the researcher aims for a holistic picture from a historically unique situation, where features are important. Therefore, in this study, the researcher used an inductive mode of thinking, letting the data speak, unlike the traditional “outside” or quantitative researcher, who aims to isolate the phenomenon, to reduce the level of complexity in the analysis and to test hypotheses derived previously (Ospina, 2004).

Three main reasons why qualitative research is suitable for this study are, firstly, that I aimed to understand a social phenomenon (assessment and quality assurance) from the perspective of the participants (lecturers) involved, rather than explaining it from outside. Secondly, I aimed to understand a complex phenomenon that is difficult or impossible to approach or to capture quantitatively. Lastly, I strove to understand a phenomenon in its complexity, that might have been dismissed by mainstream research because of the difficulties of studying it, or discarded as irrelevant, or studied as if only one point of view about it was real (Ospina, 2004). Therefore, employing a qualitative research method in this study allowed me to explore assessment practices employed in Business Studies at TVET colleges and understand them from the educator’s perspective.

3.4.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is strongly associated with the multi-method approach (Mouton, 1996:156). In essence triangulation involves collection of data in many ways and from diverse sources by using a variety of methods and techniques of data collection in a single study (Denzin *et al.*, 2013:73). The reason for the use of various methods to collect data is that the methods complement one another because of their different

biases and strengths. As a result their respective shortcomings can be balanced out (Creswell, 2012:174), thus strengthening the trustworthiness and validity of the methods.

Triangulation of the data collected was employed as a means of checking the integrity of the inferences drawn (Shwandt, 2007). This involved the use of multiple data sources, multiple theoretical perspectives, and multiple methods.

In this study, two different methods were used to obtain an in-depth understanding of the assessment practices employed in Business Studies assessment at TVET colleges. Lecturers who offered Business Studies subjects were interviewed using semi-structured interviews, and documents were analysed. Document analysis was conducted to access information in lecturers' and students' portfolios as well as the information on assessment obtained from the policies and related literature. During the interviews and document analysis, the researcher made use of a personal research journal to note some significant features. The methods used gave a specific perspective that was necessary to understand the situation regarding the implementation of the assessment practices at the college. A benefit of triangulation is that it involves more data and can therefore improve the quality of research (Creswell, 2012). From a qualitative perspective, multi methods are attractive because they seem to provide a fuller picture.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a group of techniques used to answer questions in a scientific manner (Salkind, 2012:47). There is a difference between the "methods" and "methodology" of a research study. As Henning (2009:36) notes, the term "method" denotes a way of doing something (one thing), while methodology refers to the coherent group of methods that complement one another and that have "the goodness of fit" to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose.

3.5.1 Case Study

According to Yin (2014:16), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (“the case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.

Creswell shares the same sentiments, adding that a case study is a comprehensive investigation of a bordered structure which is premised on the gathering of extensive data, with the aim of bringing to the fore understanding and the making of meaning in a situation of choice (Creswell, 2012) .This description paved the way for study in the sense that the bordered structure consisted of identified TVET colleges.

The rationale for embracing a case study design originated from the desire to comprehend the quality of practices in classroom assessment. This is in agreement with the constructivist paradigm, which is geared towards capturing the individual and subjective experiences negotiated by individuals.

A primary distinction in designing case studies is between single and multi-case designs (Yin, 2014:51). This study followed a single-case study design, which can represent the critical test of significant theory. The TVET college chosen had more programmes in Business Studies that could provide a relevant data for the study.

3.5.2 Selection of the research site

The targeted population in this study is the TVET colleges. South Africa has 50 TVET colleges, while Gauteng has eight colleges, and the study was based in Gauteng. The sampled TVET college is Tshwane North TVET College, which is based in the Tshwane district. The college selected has five campuses, but only four offer Business Studies programmes. The spread of the campuses is shown in Figure 3.2.

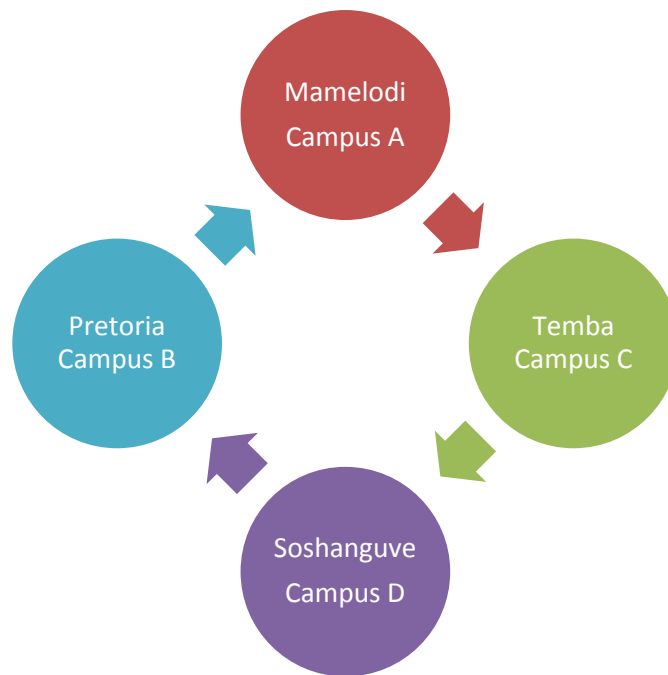


Figure 3.2: Spread of Tshwane North campuses offering Business Studies.

These campuses are spread in Tshwane mainly because they serve the relevant townships with skills programmes that assist the community in addressing skills shortages; the campuses offering Business Studies programmes are able to cater for students in the areas mentioned, which the researcher believed could provide valid data for the study. The colleges offer all the NCV Business Studies programmes, so the data would be able to address the study in question. The selection of lecturers who offered the NCV Business Studies programmes indicated that they were knowledgeable in terms of assessment practices; hence they could provide a relevant data.

3.5.3 Background of the research site

For the purposes of this research one college was chosen. It is one of the two TVET colleges situated in the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan area of Gauteng, chosen primarily because the college offers the Business Studies programmes of the new curriculum, NCV Business Studies. The college is in the hub of the capital city and the student population is mainly from the central, northern and eastern communities of Pretoria. Many of the students in the college also hail from other provinces such as

Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga. It is a large campus institution with six delivery sites extended into the east, west, central and north of the Tshwane region.

The College offers nine programmes of the new NCV curriculum. The programmes fall within the following fields: Engineering and Related Design, Civil Engineering and Construction, Electrical Infrastructure and Construction, Tourism & Hospitality, Business Administration, Information Technology, Marketing, Finance and Economics and Accounting. However the study focused on the programme fields in the Business Studies department.

3.5.4 Sampling Method

Sampling, as defined by Okeke and Van Wyk (2015:224), is the process of selecting a few representatives (sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population), which then become the basis for predicting the outcome in the study. The sample of the study included eight participants who were purposefully selected to explore and describe the quality assessment practices in place in NCV ICASS Business Studies. The study adopted a qualitative research design with a very small sample of eight NCV Business Studies lecturers at a public TVET college in the Gauteng province.

3.5.5 Selection of participants

Qualitative research is not characterised by random sampling of a large number of people with the intention of making generalisations as is the case with quantitative research (Silverman, 2006:99). Instead, the selection of participants for a sample tends to be non-probability sampling, where the sample size is small and a few participants are purposefully selected because they can provide the best information on the phenomenon to be investigated (Creswell, 2012:148).

This study used non-probability sampling, specifically purposive or judgemental sampling. This type of sampling is based on judgements made by the researcher to select participants with a specific purpose in mind, to provide relevant information (Cohen *et al.*, 235). The focus relies on the particular qualities of the people chosen and their relevance to the topic of investigation. This implies that the researcher

already knows something about the specific participants and deliberately selects the sample on the basis of his or her own knowledge of the population (Babbie, 2010:97). An advantage of purposive sampling is that it is informative. It allows the researcher to focus on people who are knowledgeable about certain aspects of the research (Creswell, 2012). Purposive sampling participants are selected according to what they already know about the field and because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic (Okeke and Van Wyk, 2015).

In this study the purposive sampling involved hand picking or intentionally selecting the participants based on the exact characteristics that the researcher needed to learn or understand the phenomenon, in order to develop a sample that was large enough (Creswell, 2012); therefore lecturers teaching NCV Business Studies subjects formed the sample, as they met the requirements and fulfilled the purpose of the study. The lecturers have appropriate qualifications in different fields of NCV Business Studies, they have experience in teaching and conducting ICASS assessments in NCV Business Studies and they have in-depth knowledge that can contribute immensely to the research study.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

To answer the research question, *what are the factors impacting on the quality of assessment practices in Business Studies at TVET colleges?* The researcher conducted interviews with participants and analysed assessment and moderation policy documents in relation to the DHET national policies, as well as students' and lecturers' portfolios.

3.6.1 Document Analysis

According to Briggs and Coleman (2007:281), document analysis is a qualitative research method that requires the researcher to locate, collate, interpret and analyse empirical data and draw conclusions that describe, interpret or explain what has occurred. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents: both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis

requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). A valuable source of information in qualitative research is documents. Documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in a study (Creswell, 2012:223). Document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods. The qualitative researcher is expected to draw upon multiple (at least two) sources of evidence and methods (Yin, 2014). These sources provide valuable information in helping researchers understand central phenomena in qualitative studies.

The documents used by the lecturers at the college were analysed: lecturers' files (PoAs), students' files (PoEs), the college assessment policy (Appendix M), and moderation policy. Rubrics were designed for analysing the PoE and PoA files (Appendices H and I). In this research, document analysis was conducted to provide some triangulation. Portfolios of students and lecturers were accessed because they might contain records of assessment and anecdotal comments from assessors and moderators. The portfolios were not used for what they might reveal about the student's performance but rather for what they revealed about the quality of assessment practices (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

3.6.2 Semi-structured Interviews

For this study semi-structured interviews were developed and an audio recording device was used to record the discussions, while field notes were written to augment the recordings made during the process. In qualitative interview researchers often ask participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Open-ended questions are asked so that the participants can best voice their experiences, unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings. The reason for the use of interviews in this study was to obtain information on how individuals conceive their worlds and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

This researcher made use of semi-structured interviews and conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews, which provided the interviewer and the participants or interviewees

an opportunity to clarify questions and responses and therefore give a true reflection of the respondent's opinions. When using this method of collecting data the interviewer can probe an interviewee when needed to clarify a point. The researcher opted to use semi-structured interviews because they are made up of open-ended questions that allow participants to respond in their own way. This makes them useful for investigating topics, as Creswell (2012:44) points out: "although interviewers have little control over semi-structured interviews, they remain a means to obtain directives as to what interviewers know and have little knowledge about".

Table 3.1 tabulates the research question envisaged in the study, the data collection method and the data analysis technique for each research question.

- How is assessment planned in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges?
- How is assessment implemented in NCV Business Studies to ensure high-quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?
- What are the strategies employed by Business Studies lecturers in ensuring the quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges

Table 3.1: Summary of data collection method and data analysis

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE
2. How is assessment planned in the NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges?	Semi-structured interview Document analysis (Rubric, See Appendix H and I)	Constant comparison analysis
3. How is assessment implemented in NCV Business Studies to ensure high-quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?	Semi-structured interview Document analysis (Rubric See, Appendix H and I)	Constant comparison analysis
4. What are the strategies employed by Business Studies lecturers in ensuring quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?	Semi-structured interview Document analysis (Rubric , See Appendix H and I)	Constant comparison analysis

3.7 DATA MANAGEMENT

During qualitative data collection, data is collected by text or words by interviewing participants. These words need to be converted to a computer document by typing them for analysis or alternatively listening to tapes to begin the process of analysis. The most complete procedure, however, is to have all interviews transcribed. Transcription is the process of converting audiotape recordings or field notes into text data (Creswell, 2012:239).

Data management in qualitative research is basically a way to store the data. The interviews were transcribed using a recorder. Transcription was done by playing the

recorded interviews several times to get them clear while typing them. The interviewees were eight lecturers; all participants were named in alpha-numerical order (L1-L8) letter L standing for lecturer then a number to identify them, as their real names were not used (Appendices K and L indicate two of the eight participants' interview transcripts). By the time we reached the eighth participant, information would start to be repeated, and then saturation would be reached. Saturation is when no new or relevant information emerges with respect to newly constructed theory (Merriam, 2009). For the researcher this means that no more data can be collected and that sufficient data has been collected.

For document analysis, rubrics were designed for analysing the PoE and PoA files (Appendices H and I). The analytical rubrics were used to analyse documents. These rubrics assisted in breaking down the characteristics of the documents analysed (PoEs and PoAs), allowing the researcher to itemise and define exactly which aspects were strong and which ones needed improvement. The researcher opened up all themes that emanated from the document analysis and gave each of them codes. Though some of the themes were identical, the researcher still opened them up separately in what was outlined by Glasser and Strauss in their 1967 model as the first stage for analysis.

Secondly, all the themes were compared with what had been outlined in the first stage. This stage was the axial coding stage, which allowed the researcher to merge categories that were similar under one broad umbrella or category. The objectives for the study set out in Chapter 1 helped greatly in this second stage. The broad categories under which all the themes for document analysis were grouped were: Planning of ICASS, Evidence of quality implementation, Quality of moderation and Constructive feedback.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis contains three linked sub-processes, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion-drawing or verification (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 180). In the next chapter data analysis was approached in a systematic way, using sub-processes as steps to analyse the data. Analysis means the resolution of a complex

whole into parts, while it is also viewed as attributing meaning to the words (Mouton, 2010). The constant comparison analysis developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used in analysing the data collected during the interviews. Though the analysis in question was first used in grounded theory research, Strauss and Corbin (1998) also established that constant comparison analysis is characterised by three major stages. They explain that during the first stage, called “open coding”, the data collected is chunked into small units and the researcher attaches a descriptor or code to each of the chunked units. The second stage, “axial coding”, follows, where codes are grouped into categories. This may simply be grouping of like terms where all the codes that have some similarities are put together into a single category. The third and final stage, “selective coding”, comes in when the researcher systematically develops one or more themes out of the categories that express each of the groups.

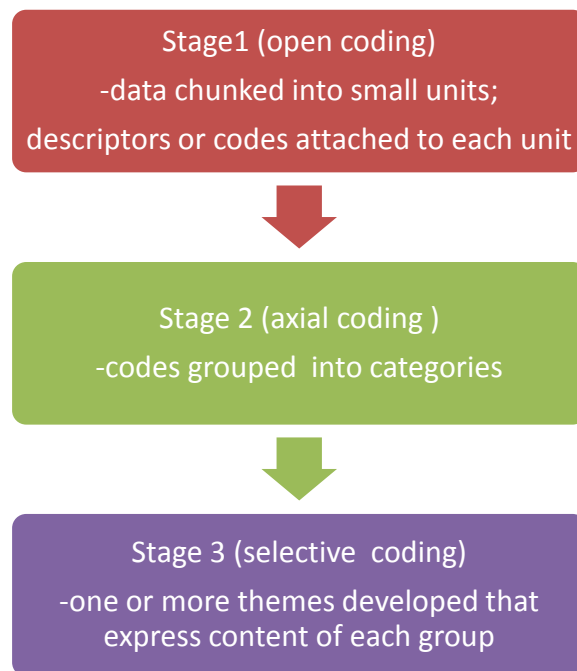


Figure 3.3: Constant Comparison Analysis

Source: Adapted from Glaser and Strauss (1967)

In using the constant comparison analysis in this study, the researcher carefully listened to the audio recordings several times after each participant's interview (Krueger, 1988a) while in the process writing field notes that she had transcribed during discussions with participants. At the first stage, the researcher opened up all themes that emanated from the recording and gave each of them codes. Though

some of the themes were identical, she still opened them up separately in what was outlined by Glasser and Strauss as the first stage.

Secondly, all the themes for interviews and document analysis were compared with what had been outlined in the first stage. This stage, the axial coding stage, allowed the researcher to merge categories that were similar. The broad categories under which all the themes for interviews and document analysis were grouped were: Effective planning of assessment tasks, Quality of implementation of internal continuous assessment, Strategies for ensuring quality assessment and major challenges faced in implementing ICASS. In the final stage, emergent sub-themes from the broad themes were developed into more themes to express the content of each participant.

3.9 MEASURES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS IN THE STUDY

Considering that the aim of the study was to explore factors impacting on quality of assessment at TVET colleges, ensuring quality of the study is a vital component of the overall design and implementation of its various processes. Merriam (2009:209) mentions the importance of “producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner when conducting qualitative research”. To ensure trustworthiness of the data, the researcher conducted the study in an ethical manner and used data triangulation as much as possible. The discussions with interviewees were audio recorded to allow for cross checking with transcriptions.

The researcher played only a facilitator role in order not to make respondents feel intimidated and also not to influence respondents' behaviour. Bryman (2012; 390) outlines four criteria making up trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

The relevant question to ask when ascertaining the credibility of the qualitative research is to find out whether the research has been able to explore what it intended to study. De Vos *et al.* (2005:346) state that credibility is an innate strong point of

qualitative research in that “in-depth description showing the complexities of variables and interactions will be so embedded with data derived from the setting that it cannot help but be valid”.

Credibility acknowledges that reality is subjective and it can be influenced by many perspectives. Credibility is therefore the correspondence between the way in which the researcher interprets and presents the research findings and the meanings and perspectives of the research participants (Merriam, 2009:213-215). In order to ensure credibility, interpretation of the data is important; by engaging with the data thoroughly during the analysis phase, the researcher can gauge the perspectives of the research participants.

Within the parameters of the setting, population and theoretical framework, the research should achieve validity which, along with credibility, takes into consideration the diverse realities and subjective experiences of the research participants. For the study to be credible, the researcher had frequent meetings with her supervisor, who is a professor in curriculum studies, in order to broaden the vision of the study. The supervisor of this study served as a “peer debriefer” who brought his experience in research to bear so that flaws in the approach, bias and preferences that could compromise the credibility of the research findings were identified and eliminated. Lincoln and Guba (2000: 290) assert that credibility can be obtained through sufficient engagement with the research participants in the field. Member checking was highly beneficial in ensuring credibility; this was done when the researcher summarised what had happened during the interviews and discussions for participants to react to. These healthy engagements with the research participants added to the credibility of the study.

3.9.2 Validity

In this study validity was also ensured through the constant comparison analysis (Creswell, 2012) technique used, through which diverse perspectives of the experiences of the research respondents are obtained.

The researcher engaged in peer examination by asking colleagues to air their views on the findings; the data was given to colleagues (researchers in the department) with experience of qualitative research methods and processes, and findings were then discussed. Peer examination is similar to member checking, but includes a colleague who is experienced in qualitative methodology and is able to discuss processes and findings with the researcher (Creswell, 2012).

3.9.3 Transferability

The concept of transferability was proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a substitute which can be used to predict and establish the external validity or the extent to which research findings from a specific piece of research can be generalised to other situations and people. On the other hand, De Vos *et al.* (2005) propose that in qualitative studies transferability can be challenging because of its characteristics, especially its distinctively exploratory and descriptive nature. These characteristics are usually discernible in its ability to give detailed reports about different phenomena from diverse viewpoints.

South Africa has private and public TVET colleges across the country, but it is unlikely that the findings from the one college could be transferred to any other college.

3.9.4 Dependability

In order to ensure dependability, it is important to engage in member checking, peer briefing, triangulation, and prolonged engagement and observation in the research field (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Owing to the small sample of eight lecturers used in this study, only limited insights into the phenomenon (quality of classroom assessment practices) could be obtained, thus dependability cannot be guaranteed. Nevertheless, based on its epistemological stance (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011), the strong point of this research is that it embraces the reflective and broad perception of distinctive situations, meaning that it cannot be regarded as completely dependable when large samples are involved.

3.9.5 Confirmability

The confirmability in qualitative studies refers to objectivity on the part of the researcher, and to obtain this the researcher ensured that her own preferences and biases did not influence the findings of the study. Confirmability points to the extent to which the findings are the end products of the aims of conducting this research and not of the subjectivity of the researcher (Mouton, 2010). Confirmability captures the traditional concept of objectivity and refers to the degree to which the research findings reflect the meaning intended by the participants rather than the preconceptions of the researcher (Jensen, 2008). During and after the interview session with participants, the researcher verified with them that she had understood the information, concerns and realities correctly.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Allen (2011:294) states that the integrity principle is very important in all areas of research.

3.10.1 Informed consent

Lecturers participating in the study were contacted individually in person, and letters (Appendix D) inviting them to participate in the study were handed out. Students were also contacted requesting assent to their PoE files being analysed (Appendix H). A briefing session was also held wherein the lecturers were furnished with details of the study. However, it was clearly stipulated to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the studies without recrimination. Both verbal and written consent were obtained from the participants (Appendix G). Consent protects and respects the right of self-determination and places some of the responsibility on the participant should anything go wrong in the research (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

3.10.2 Access and Acceptance

In order to gain access to the research site, the researcher obtained permission to undertake the research from the officials in charge; these included the College of Education at the University of South Africa, the Department of Higher Education and the principal of the research site. Prior to data collection the researcher sent letters requesting permission and stating the significance and benefits of the study to participants (lecturers). Permission was granted by the DHET (Appendix B) and the Tshwane TVET College (Appendix C).

3.10.3 Protection from harm

In this study, the researcher ensured that no participant was exposed to any form of danger or harm during the research process. The study did not pose any significant danger to the participants. Throughout the research process, she strove to be honest, respectful and sympathetic to all participants, as the researcher should ensure that participants are not exposed to any undue physical or psychological harm (Leedey and Ormond, 2001).

3.10.4 Confidentiality

Participants were assured that the information (data) collected was collected for research purposes only; only the researcher and the supervisor would have access to the information. Participants were also assured of the confidentiality of the source of information in research data. In this study, confidentiality was ensured by using pseudonyms when transcribing interviews as all subjects could be assured that any data collected from or about them would be held in confidence (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993).

3.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach used in this study was that of a case study. The sample of the study included eight participants who were purposefully selected to explore and

describe the quality of ICASS assessment practices in place, in NCV Business Studies. Given the fact that the study adopted a qualitative research design with a very small sample of eight NCV Business Studies lecturers at a public TVET college in the Gauteng province, its findings cannot be generalised to all colleges in the province or other parts of the country. Therefore, results and conclusions that emerged from this study cannot be generalised.

The data collection instruments used in the study include interviews and document analysis. Perhaps observation of the assessment processes could also have been used to validate the data collected through interviews and document analysis. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) indicate that observation is a way for the researcher to see and hear what is happening in the research site. Therefore a rich understanding of the phenomenon being studied can be gained; moreover, observation sheets to record the notes during the observations would have helped to generate rich data. The notes could have been later analysed to provide an understanding of assessment practices used by lecturers in their NCV Business Studies classroom environment.

The use of one TVET college as a research site also gave limited scope to the research. A wider scope could have been considered of multiple case studies where different assessment practices could have been researched. The wider scope of the research might have given different data coming from other participants from the different colleges.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a critical reflection and justification of the researcher's methodological choice and epistemological assumptions. The aim of this study was to explore the factors impacting on the quality assessment practices of ICASS. The chapter outlined qualitative research as an approach and case study design as appropriate methods for conducting this research. The chapter also elaborated on how the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm relates to this study. The data collection methods were explained and justified, as well as the selection of research site and

participants. Purposive sampling was employed in the selection of both the research site and the participants.

The data collection methods in this study included interviews and document analysis. The chapter also outlined qualitative data collection techniques and the data analysis methods used to analyse the raw data. Constant comparison analysis was adopted as a qualitative data analysis strategy in this study. The methodological norms envisaged in this study include credibility, dependability, transformability and conformability. The ethical principles observed throughout the study were highlighted. Based on the analysis of the raw data, the research results and the findings are presented in the next chapter, Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

To achieve the overall aim of this study, information was gathered through an empirical enquiry based on the main and subsequent research questions. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data. As Merriam (2009:175) explains, data analysis is the process of making sense of the data. The aim of this data collection method was to obtain data in order to answer the research questions that were stated in Chapter 1. The questions for this research were linked to the purpose of this thesis. In this research, a qualitative approach was adopted, as outlined in Chapter 3. Data for this research was collected in the form of interviews with lecturers as participants, and document analysis of both lecturers' portfolio of assessment (PoA) files and student portfolio of evidence (PoE) files, the college assessment policy and moderation policy, in relation to the national policies. The interviews conducted were recorded using an audio tape and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The interview transcriptions were analysed by the researcher and the recurring ideas coded and clustered together to form the themes. Data was also analysed to establish the processes put in place by Business Studies lecturers to ensure the quality of their internal continuous assessment in order to answer the following research questions:

What are the factors impacting on the quality of assessment practices in the NCV Business Studies programmes at the TVET colleges?

The main research question raised specific questions:

- How is assessment planned in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges?
- How is assessment implemented in NCV Business Studies to ensure a high quality of assessment practice at TVET colleges?
- What are the strategies employed by Business Studies lecturers in ensuring the quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 summarises the various items of information on the participants which were relevant to the researcher's understanding of NCV Business Studies, particularly as to how lecturers ensure the quality of the assessment tasks. In the section below, the researcher deals with the significant characteristics of the participants, focusing on their campus, gender, qualifications, age group and their years of teaching experience in the college. The lecturer's professional and teaching background is tabled and explained.

Table 4.1: Biographical information of the participants

Campus	Participant code	Gender	Age group	Qualifications	Number of years teaching at the college
Campus 2	L1	Female	31-40	B-Tech Marketing, PGCE	5
Campus 4	L2	Male	40- 50	M-Tech Education	19
Campus 1	L3	Female	30-40	B-Ed (HONS)	12
Campus 3	L4	Female	21-30	B-Ed	7
Campus 4	L5	Male	30-40	B-Com PGCE	8
Campus 1	L6	Female	40-50	B-Ed (HONS)	19
Campus 2	L7	Male	31-40	B-Ed	5
Campus 3	L8	Male	40-50	STD	22

4.2.1 Characteristics of Participants

The researcher considered various characteristics of the participants which were significant for NCV Business Studies, particularly those who offer the NCV Business Studies subjects and who are in the classroom implementing teaching, learning and assessment practices. The researcher purposefully selected eight lecturers as participants, two per campus from the four campuses of Tshwane North TVET college.

Lecturer (L1), a young, energetic female lecturer, has joined the TVET sector as she could not be employed in the marketing industry. With her passion for marketing she brought light to the marketing division. She holds a B-Tech in Marketing from the Central University of Technology and a postgraduate certificate in Education from the University of Pretoria. At the college she teaches in the NCV level 2-4 Marketing field, teaching Consumer Studies and advertisement and promotions subjects.

Lecturer (L2) is a male lecturer who holds an MTech in Education Commerce from the Tshwane University of Technology; he is an expert in Computer Practice and Office Data Processing. He is a senior lecturer in charge of computer subjects. He is knowledgeable regarding NCV since he was trained during the first phase of training. Lecturer (L3) is a female, holds a B-Ed (Hons) degree from the Tshwane University of Technology, and joined the college after completing her degree. Although she was not trained in NCV she works very hard in the Business Studies NCV division. She is offering Office Practice L2-4 in the Office Administration sub-field.

Lecturer (L4) is a female lecturer who holds a B-Ed degree from the Tshwane University of Technology. She teaches Project Management Level 2. She joined the college five years ago and has never received training in NCV.

Lecturer (L5) is a young male offering Accounting level 2, who has never received training regarding NCV. He completed his B-Com in Accounting at the University of Pretoria and in 2012 completed his postgraduate certificate in Education at the University of South Africa.

Lecturer (L6) is a female who offers Entrepreneurship Level 2, holds a B-Ed (Hons) degree, majoring in Business Management and Economics from the University of the North. She has been with the college for 12 years.

Lecturer (L7), a male, has been with the college for 12 years and offers Business Practice and New Venture Creation. He is the senior lecturer for Finance, Economics and Accounting. He holds a B-Ed degree.

Lecturer (L8) is a male lecturer who has been with the college for 22 years. He completed his Secondary Teacher's Diploma from the Transvaal College of Education. He has been teaching Accounting in the NATED programmes (N4-6). He is now offering Financial Accounting in NCV Business Studies; he received training in NCV in 2006 before its inception.

All the participants are lecturers who have appropriate qualifications and in-depth knowledge of NCV Business Studies, and were willing to share their experience in planning and implementation of ICASS tasks in their respective subjects.

4.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS: THEMES WHICH EMERGED FROM THE DATA

The researcher analysed the data that had been collected by means of interviews and document analysis using a qualitative research design approach for the data analysis process. Qualitative data, by its very nature, is more open to ambiguity and requires the identification of emergent key themes for it to be organised, collated and interpreted (Burton, Brundrett and Jones, 2009). The data was collected from participants in order to gain more in-depth information regarding assessment practices in the TVET sector, as stated in Chapter 1, by identifying, analysing and reporting themes within the data. This means that the researcher interpreted her findings in terms of the lived experiences of the participants. Their perceptions of assessment practices, planning and implementation, assessment strategies and major challenges faced in implementing ICASS were the lens through which the

researcher interpreted her data. Each theme aimed at answering each of the research questions.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed constant comparison analysis, which is also called the method of constant comparison, as it is useful approach in analysing data collected during the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (1998) established that constant comparison analysis is characterised by three major stages. As already explained in Chapter 3, during the first stage called open coding, the data collected is chunked into small units to which the researcher attaches a descriptor or code. In the second stage of axial coding, codes are grouped into categories. In the third and final stage of selective coding the researcher systematically develops one or more themes out of the categories.

In integrating the constant-comparison analysis approach into this study, the researcher integrated the research questions for discussion into the analysis, as a guide, which also helped with open, axial and selective coding for the analysis, as set out by Glasser and Strauss (1967). After coding the responses, she developed themes from the transcripts generated from the interview with participants. The themes were in line with the research questions of the study.

After developing the themes, relationships between the identified themes were identified and grouped based on similarity in content, which also helped in developing patterns. Figure 4.1 sets out themes that emerged out of the discussion with participants.

Research Questions

1. How is assessment planned in the NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges?
2. How is assessment implemented in NCV Business Studies to ensure high-quality of assessment practice at TVET College?
3. What are the strategies employed by Business Studies lecturers in ensuring high-quality of assessment practices?

Semi- structured Interview Questions

1. Can you take me through the process you follow when planning assessment to ensure the quality of your assessment tasks?
2. What processes do you follow to implement ICASS in your class, why?
3. What challenges do you experience when implementing ICASS in your subject?
4. What procedures do you follow to ensure that the questions in the assessment tasks are well balanced?
5. How do you ensure that Bloom's taxonomy cognitive levels are applied when designing your assessment tasks?
6. How do you ensure that the assessment actually measures the intended objectives for your subject?
7. How is moderation conducted in your subject to improve the quality of ICASS?
8. How does the process of feedback on moderation assist you in assuring quality?
9. What is the role of the following individuals in reviewing your assessment tasks?
 - Peers
 - Senior lecturer
 - Head of Department of Business Studies

Themes

1. Effective Planning of Assessment tasks
2. Quality Implementation of Internal continuous assessment tasks
3. Strategies for ensuring quality assessment
4. Major challenges faced in implementing Internal continuous assessment tasks

Categories of Subthemes (Patterns)

1. Standardisation and uniformity of ICASS tasks
2. Setting of assessment tasks
3. Designing assessment tools
4. Adherence to ICASS policies
5. Validity of assessments
6. Reliability of assessment tasks
7. Standard of Internal moderation (Pre- and Post- moderation)
8. Constructive feedback
9. Monitoring of implementation of ICASS
10. Language barrier, chronic absenteeism, lack of commitment and load

Figure 4.1: Constant comparison analysis

Source: Adapted from Glaser and Strauss (1967)

Shown above are four themes that emerged from the discussions with lecturers; it became essential to integrate the themes with the aim of the study, which was to explore factors impacting on the quality of assessment practices in NCV at TVET colleges in Gauteng province.

Figure 4.2 shows the patterns integrated and identified from the themes

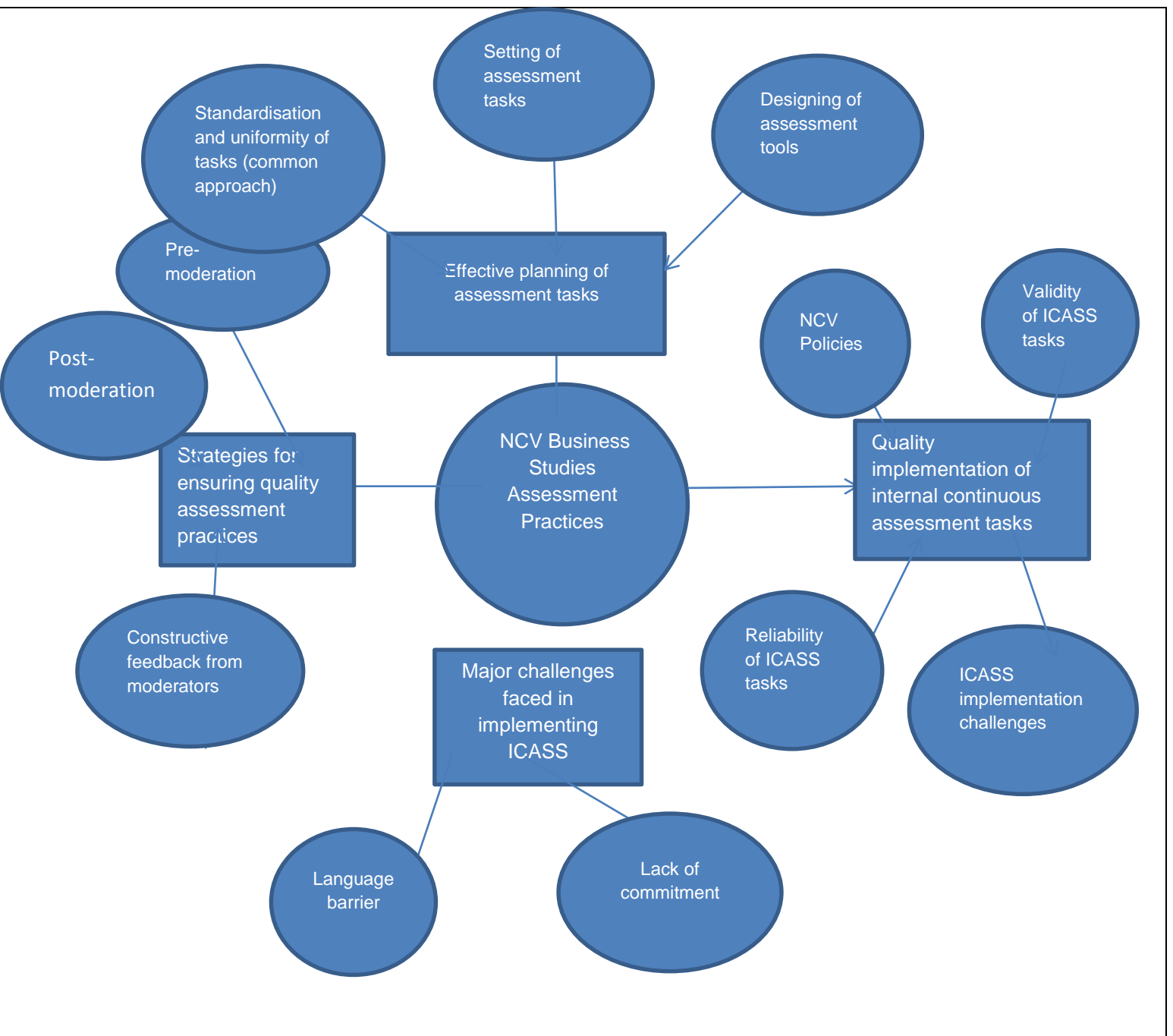


Figure 4.2: Themes of the study integrated with study objectives

4.3.1. THEME 1: EFFECTIVE PLANNING OF ASSESSMENTS

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Standardisation and uniformity of ICASS tasks

The standardisation and uniformity of ICASS tasks in various campuses of the college play a crucial role, because a common approach has to be applied when planning ICASS tasks. The study has revealed that there is lack of standardisation in all four campuses. Lecturers confirmed this during the interviews:

Standardisation of assessment in various campuses where lecturers just assess their own way, no uniform assessment is applied. (Participant L8)

We have to train all lecturers to be assessors and appoint lecturers on rotational basis to do common assessments. (Participant L7)

Subject meetings are convened from central office by curriculum managers. In those meeting tasks developers are nominated. In most cases consultation is minimal. (Participant L 6)

Assessment tasks are not up to standard. (Participant L3)

I have colleagues in other campuses sharing the same subject with me. I find it difficult to use their tasks because we have not taught students the same content at a particular point in time. My approach to the content learned is different from them. (Participant L8)

I always use my own tasks for my subject, Business Practice L2, because my fellow colleagues from other campuses do not share their tasks with me though we are in the same subject. (Participant L4)

Common assessment tasks always arrive late to my campus; in most cases it's when I have given my students a task for ICASS because I cannot rely on tasks that I don't know if I will get them. (Participant L1)

When a task is developed from other campus my senior lecturer always contacts the other campuses for tasks and it never reaches

*me on time or even if I find it, it is not valid for my students.
(Participant L2)*

ICASS tasks may be set by the campus or by one campus for all the campuses if the subject is given in various campuses; this is done so that common approaches will be used by all campuses in the same college offering the same subject and level. However, given the responses from the participants, there is lack of standardisation and uniformity in terms of ICASS planning.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Setting of assessment tasks

The ICASS tasks should be set and administered by the campus, or the tasks may be set by one campus and shared with other campuses of a college or other colleges. The assessment tasks should be carefully designed and weighted to cover the subject learning outcomes and assessment standards and those of the subject. All forms of assessment used in setting the tasks should be appropriate to the subject and developmental levels of the students on the particular level. The design of a task should also ensure that a variety of knowledge and skills are assessed. Tasks should give students opportunities to explore the subject in exciting and varied ways.

The interviews revealed that lecturers relied on the national external summative question papers set by DHET and other previous question papers when setting tasks. It is evident from interviews that tasks were generally cut-and-paste exercises from previous examination papers, or copied verbatim from textbook exercises.

During the interviews the participants confirmed this, saying:

When compiling an assessment task I take previous question papers and assessment guidelines then start compiling according to the required outcomes because assist in preparing my students for examination. (Participant L3)

I do not have way of ensuring that Bloom's taxonomy is applied, I have never had to compile a task by all by myself; I always make use of previous question papers and assessment guidelines (Participant L2).

Advocacy of the Bloom's taxonomy should be emphasised in the subject meetings, in addition to that the task has to be moderated by lecturers who are qualified moderators. (Participant L5)

I do not have a balancing the questions, because I rely on the questions that asked by other examiners, on the previous question. (Participant L6)

We hardly check on that but make sure that we set tasks that conform from simple to complex questions. (Participant L7)

Lecturers are not creative enough to set tasks on their own based on the pacesetters developed during their plenary sessions. Pace setters provide details of the sequence and pace which the subject is to be taught, it is worth noting that is still a challenge. (Participant L4)

4.3.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Designing assessment tools used in ICASS

The assessment tool that best suits the type of assessment tasks being administered should be compiled to match the type and purpose of the assessment task. The study has revealed that assessment designing and tools were limited to the use of few tools and were of poor quality.

I find it difficult to work with colleagues from other campuses because some send assessments tasks that do not have marking guide, rubric or marking tools that are relevant for the task. (Participant L2)

My peers are always sending their marking tools late while some of ours have developed our own at the end we do not use the same marking tool. (Participant L1)

Mark allocations on some of the marking tools do not correspond with the questions and mark allocation in the question paper of a test or assignment. (Participant L4)

Our rubrics from sister campuses provide wrong mark allocation on marking memorandums or question papers. (Participant L3)

4.3.2 Theme 2: Quality implementation of internal continuous Assessment Tasks

4.3.2.1 Subtheme 1: Adherence to NCV policies and ICASS guidelines

The TVET colleges are expected to develop a policy of internal assessment to cover all aspects of the complete assessment process; the policy should be developed in relation to the national policy on the conduct, administration and management of the assessment of the NCV (2007), the NCV ICASS guidelines; subject guidelines and the assessment guideline for specific subjects should also be used in conjunction with the policy when developing the ICASS tasks. This study has revealed that the college gives little attention to the policies and documents regarding implementation of ICASS.

The interviews highlighted the following as responds from the participants.

I'm aware of the policies and ICASS guidelines for the NCV but I do not refer to them in my assessments. I concentrate on what I have taught and assess based on that. (Participant L4)

When the policies are amended they are made available to us; based on my experience I assess students on what will be asked in the final examination. (Participant L1)

I base my assessment on learning outcomes and assessment standards; I do not follow what the policy because to me what is important is to prepare the students for final exam for them to proceed to the next level. (Participant L3)

The policies have been changed many times; I don't really use them in my assessment. I just use information that is important for my teaching and learning. (Participant L2)

4.3.2.2 Subtheme: Reliability of assessments

Brown (2004) defines reliability as the extent to which assessment produces consistent results. NCV assessment guidelines (2007:2) state that reliability assures that assessment practices are consistent so that the same result or judgment is arrived at if the assessment is replicated in the same context. This demands consistency in the interpretation of evidence; therefore, careful monitoring of assessment is vital.

Reliability is an important consideration when constructing an assessment task; it is not always easy to attain because of a range of variables that may impact on its feasibility. Lecturers showed an understanding of the concept of reliability, though the focus was mainly on the reliability of the scores given by various assessors on a similar task

I recheck the marks by recounting and allowing students to check and verify my addition. I verify the marks awarded on scripts and compare with my record sheet. (Participant L6)

I explained that reliability means that different people have scored same marks to a student or even if they are not the same but they have to be close. (Participant L2)

The assessment has to be valid and assesses what it is supposed to assess, reliable to the extent that learning outcomes clearly state the achievement to be demonstrated and the measure that will be used to assess achievement. (Participant L4)

The responses provided by lecturers during the interviews showed that lecturers view the reliability of assessment results as more important than the reliability of the assessment tool. This notion is primarily important because not only the students and the lecturer benefit from the assessment results; other stakeholders also depend on the credibility of assessment results to make valuable decisions.

In addition, lecturers attached a narrow definition to reliability of the assessment, which raises concerns as to whether they understand what it means. Moreover, the study revealed that in an attempt to ensure the reliability of ICASS tasks lecturers often focused on comparing the scores assigned by two independent assessors, with little or no regard to other forms of reliability measures to ensure that the assessment tasks are of higher quality.

4.3.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Validity of ICASS tasks

Validity is more concerned with the relevance of the tasks in terms of covering the content, as Meyer *et al.* (2010) state that content validity is determined by the proportion to which an assessment task represents the intended scope of learning.

The study revealed that participants are not familiar with the assessment principle of validity.

The assessment standards are appropriately linked and integrated where possible. (Participant L2)

Students apply the knowledge and skills accurately in the different context. (Participant L7)

One use previous task as written by students since there is no tool in place to help us to talk to that. (Participant L5)

The lecturers during their interview focused only on learning outcomes and assessment standards in validating their assessment, not considering the content to be covered.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Strategies used in ensuring quality assessment

4.3.3.1 Subtheme 1: Standard of Internal moderation

Gawe and Heyns (2004) define moderation as an important tool to ensure that quality standards for the inputs, the processes and outputs are maintained.

- **Pre-moderation (internal moderation of tasks)**

The interviews with participants revealed that in internal moderation, the majority of tasks were just rubber-stamped, errors were disregarded and weaknesses such as spelling errors, wrong mark allocations and poor languages were neglected. In any case, most recommendations made by the internal moderators were not implemented by the task developer or examiner.

After compiling a task as an assessor, you take the assessment task to fellow colleague or peer for moderation, the peer will do what we call a pre- moderation of the task, being guided by the pre moderation tool. (Participant L7)

Moderation is done by lecturers offering the same subjects on rotational basis; there is no document addressing this matter. (Participant L8).

Pre-moderation took place before the assessment can be printed out by the subject specialist or peer lecturer. (Participant L7)

- **Post-moderation (moderation of marking and student performance)**

The study has further revealed that there was a lack of quality control where internal moderation of marking occurred and student performance; moderation of marking is just a formality using shadow marking. Upon receiving moderation reports lecturers do not assess their marking and make changes based on the recommendations of moderators.

Moderation is done by lecturer offering the same subjects on rotational basis there is no document addressing this matter, in some cases I receive minimal feedback or even no feedback is being provided (Participant L3)

Moderation feedback doesn't assist me that much personally because usually the changes will be very minimal and sometimes don't make that much of a difference in the marks allocated to the student. (Participant L1)

In most cases moderation reports come back incomplete from moderators or without constructive feedback to assist that needs me to change. (Participant L5)

Post-moderation after the assessor has rectified identified errors. (L7)

Post-moderation of students scripts after being marked by the assessors. (Participant L8)

This indicates a possible reason for failure to comply with requirements, particularly in the internal moderation.

4.3.3.2 Subtheme 2: Constructive feedback from internal moderators

Leahy, Lyon, Thompson and William (2005:20) regard provision of feedback that moves learners forward as one of a set of strategies that educators may use if they want to use assessment to enhance student learning. In this context feedback by moderators should be used as a strategy for enhancing high-quality assessment in the TVET college.

When the moderator provides feedback to assessors on their assessment, judgement is conducive to learning; it provides evaluation on the quality of the assessment task. The study has revealed that constructive feedback from internal moderators is not given much priority.

Lecturers receive feedback both orally and in writing. This was confirmed by the participants during the interview.

Moderation feedback doesn't assist me that much personally because usually changes will be very minimal and sometimes don't make that much of a difference in the marks allocated to the student. (Participant L1)

Minimal feedback or even no feedback is being provided. (Participant L3)

In most cases moderation reports come back incomplete from moderators or they have no constructive feedback to assist. (Participant L4)

Lecturers seem not to take feedback from moderation seriously because they never check what it is that they need to improve. They simply put the files away and wait for another moderation to come; they just comply and submit files as they are. This is confirmed by one participant who said:

Not much is done with feedback reports. We keep them in our assessment files until the provincial and national moderation by the DHET. (Participant L3)

This confirms what Umalusi stated in the 2014 report: that there was little qualitative or relevant feedback provided, even though it was pointed out that this was an essential part of the assessment cycle. Lissitz and Schafer (2000) argue that feedback and self-assessment are critical factors for development. Feedback also serves as the diagnostic aspect of assessment, literally feeding into the next level of learning and growth; this means the feedback will diagnose the strength and weaknesses of the assessment practices.

Therefore constructive feedback processes in the NCV Business Studies is crucial, but the present practices leave much to be desired as regards the quality of assessment practice.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Major challenges faced in implementing of ICASS

4.3.4.1 Subtheme 1: ICASS implementation challenges in Business Studies

The study indicated that participants are faced with serious challenges that hinder the lecturers from implementing high-quality assessment. During the interview lecturers highlighted some contextual factors in the college that they experience when implementing assessment.

- **The language barrier** appears to be posing a serious challenge to lecturers when they want to implement high quality assessment.

Language barrier is a challenge, our students struggle with interpretation of questions and application of knowledge of content learnt is a challenge to our students, they cannot implement what they have learnt (Participant L4).

Participant L3 also pointed out that barriers to language which hinders quality, interpretation and application of content learnt is a challenge to our students. They also affect the questions which can be set.

They cannot implement what they have learnt when answering questions and that leads to the assessment not assessing intended goals because lecturers will only ask questions students can answer and this affects the use of the cognitive domain when setting questions (Participant L3).

The obstacles are that student's battle with the language. They can't read which makes them read without understanding. Therefore the answers they give show lack of understanding and comprehension of what they are assessed on. (Participant L5)

- Lack of students' commitment and self-discipline towards their studies. Lecturers as participants also cited students' **lack of commitment** to learning as a stumbling block towards implementing high-quality assessments. Hence laziness on the side of the student cannot be ruled out, as cited during the interview:

Our students are not prepared to work; they just want to be spoon-fed with all information. (Participant L2)

They attend college to avoid boredom at home; they come to the campus but do not attend classes. (Participant L6)

The students register at the college for the wrong reasons; some were rejected by the policy of the Basic Education FET phase due to age cohort and some are not doing well in their academic performance in the FET phase (Grade 9-12) at schools. Therefore they were being advised by their schools that they should register at the colleges because there is a misconception that college only focus on practical tasks that is easy and that there is no theoretical work. (Participant L4)

On other hand, students get to attend college only to access the bursary; thereafter they absent themselves from classes. When students realises that they still have to study it is too late for them to go back to school. (Participant L6)

4.4 THEMES EMANATED FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS PROCESS

Presentation of Document Analysis of PoA and PoE files.

Theme	Sub theme	POA	POE
1. Planning of ICASS tasks	Lack of effective planning of ICASS tasks	Assessment plan Assessment tool	Assessment schedule Assessment tools
2. Evidence of quality implementation	Standardisation of common tasks	Questioning techniques of tasks	Questioning techniques of tasks
3. Quality of moderation	Standard of internal moderation	Pre moderation	Post moderation
4. Constructive feedback	High quality feedback	Feedback from internal moderators	Feedback from lecturers

The following documents were requested for analysis:

Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) and Portfolio of Assessments PoA files. It is dictated by policy that every lecturer should maintain a PoA file which provides evidence of engagement in ICASS tasks for each NCV Business Studies subject, while on the other hand every student should have a PoE file, which is used to keep all tasks assessed, checked and authenticated by the lecturer.

For the purposes of this study the following subject files were analysed, Entrepreneurship L2, Financial Accounting L2, Business Practice L2, New Venture Creation L2 and Office Data Processing L2. The PoA files of the lecturer and PoE files of students of the Business Studies subjects were analysed. The following themes emerged from the document analysis.

4.4.1 Theme: Planning of ICASS tasks

4.4.1.1 Subtheme: Lack of effective planning of ICASS tasks

Planning assessment with the end in mind is a simple approach that requires lecturers to design a comprehensive assessment plan that clearly outlines the required end results of internal continuous assessment. Document analysis has shown that in most of the assessment PoE and PoA files, there are assessment plans and schedules in the files. The NCV ICASS guidelines (2015) advise that the vocational tasks for ICASS have to be five for each subject; campuses alternate in developing the tasks. This means lecturers responsible for setting tasks are aware of their responsibility for setting tasks; however, document analysis of PoA and PoE files showed that lecturers' PoA files have different assessment tasks for the same subject.

This was witnessed in Business Practice L2 assessment tasks 1 and 3 of campus A and B, while in the New Venture Creation L2 subject campuses A, B and C have the same task but Campus D has its own assessment tasks 1 and 2. Lecturers argue that they always receive the common assessment tasks late from other campuses;

this leaves lecturers no choice but to either use previous tasks or develop their own assessment tasks without sharing with other campuses.

This hampers planning and compliance with the assessment plan. The above finding was also validated by findings during document analysis of students from multi-campus having different assessment tasks in their student PoE files that are on the same level and same subject from different campuses but the same college.

From the response given it seems that participants are still not adhering to what they have planned for the year and there is no uniformity and standardisation; lecturers in various campuses make their own choices. Standardisation and uniformity in a common approach to assessment has to be taken seriously because the campuses have to subscribe to the common goals of the entire college

There are some students' PoE files that do not have assessment schedules to provide details of how assessment will take place; students seem to be relying on their classmates for relevant information.

4.4.2 Theme: Evidence of quality implementation as a strategy to enhance quality

4.4.2.1 Sub theme: Types of question

The content filed in both the lecturers' and students' files (at campuses A and C) endorsed the finding that there is no standardisation and uniformity in various campuses of the same college, as the files of both stakeholders were not uniform with regard to tasks, marking tools or file arrangements.

The document analysis of the lecturers' PoA files showed that the majority of assessment tasks included different types of questions; however, the use of different techniques is still lacking in many. Document analysis in all campuses revealed that some assessment tasks had an overemphasis on assessing knowledge, while opportunities to assess skills, attitudes, values and reasoning were limited.

Assessment for learning should be part of everyday practices by students, lecturers and peers. It seeks, reflects upon and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance ongoing learning (Klenowski, 2009). Assessment of learning implies that students' engagement with learning is limited to the product of their learning (Meyer *et al.*, 2010). This lack of application of different questioning techniques can hinder high-quality assessment.

Furthermore, from the above types of questions asked it is clear that the lecturers are not familiar with Bloom's taxonomy, as cognitive levels always assist when setting a well-balanced assessment task.

4.4.3 Theme: Quality of moderation

4.4.3.1 Sub-theme: Standard of internal moderation

- Pre-moderation of tasks

The document analysis of PoAs revealed that though there was evidence of assessment tasks, marking tools in some tasks were not filed.

Post-moderation of tasks

Portfolio of evidence files of students showed that assessment tasks with errors had been administered to students without errors being improved. The PoEs in all campuses showed that tasks were administered to students without implementing corrections of mistakes recommended by internal moderators; this indicates that moderators' recommendations are ignored and tasks are administered without approval from the internal moderators

It has also been revealed that in some subjects marking or memo discussions are not conducted for the first four tasks except for when the pre-examination task, which is the last ICASS task, has been conducted. Marking of assessment therefore differs because lecturers mark using their own discretion and no common approach has

been agreed upon when marking ICASS tasks. This of course this affects the quality of marking.

4.4.4 Theme: Constructive feedback

4.4.4.1 Sub-theme: High-quality feedback

Quality feedback should be provided timeously to the students on their progress towards achievement of the learning outcomes. Feedback should be both on strong and weak areas of the student's performance. The document analysis shows that feedback to students is not provided timeously; most of the assessment task feedback is dated two and more weeks after the tasks were administered, from the date appended to the assessment tasks.

It is also the case that lecturers do not make effective use of the feedback they receive from moderators. They ignore the recommendations made by moderators, because the mistakes continue to be made.

4.4.5 College Assessment Policy

During document analysis the researcher asked to view the college policy. The policy was developed in 2012 and it was reviewed on 7 January 2013. The next review was supposed to be in August 2014 but there is no evidence of a review conducted. The policy document stipulates on page 16 (See Appendix M) the assessment process by means of diagram; however the diagram format does not elaborate on how the process takes place. Furthermore the policy does not conform to the changes made by the DHET regarding number of tasks to be completed for vocational subjects and fundamental subjects, and the policy on page 30 is not clear about the assessment tools to be used; because it refers only to the rubric as an assessment tool, omitting to mention the other tools.

4.4.6 College Moderation Policy

During the document analysis the researcher requested to view the moderation policy of the college; however the study revealed that a moderation policy was not in place. The college uses the ICASS guideline as a guide for moderation. However, the NCV ICASS guideline, when outlining expectations from the college in terms of assessment, only mentions that the college must develop an assessment plan; nothing is said about the moderation policy.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The use of the qualitative research approach played a pivotal role in collecting rich descriptive data. The data collection methods used in this study included semi-structured interviews and document analysis of students' and lecturers' portfolios, and analysis of the assessment policy and moderation policy. These yielded significant data which helped in addressing the research question of the study.

The themes that emerged from the analysis of the data collected were Effective planning of assessment tasks; Quality of implementation of assessment tasks; Strategies for ensuring quality of implementation; and Major challenges faced in implementing ICASS. The development of these themes was integrated with the need to answer the research questions.

The next chapter presents findings derived from qualitative components of the study, accompanied by a reflection on possible recommendations related to the research question.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The final chapter draws together the research questions, the research process and the results, recommendations and conclusions emerging from the study. In this chapter a summary of the research is given. The findings are discussed with the research objectives as outlined in Chapter 1, and this is done by referring to the literature study in Chapter 2 and the research data reported in Chapter 4. The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that influence the quality of assessment practices in Business Studies at TVET colleges. The main research question was:

- What are the factors impacting on the quality of assessment practices in the NCV Business Studies programmes at Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges?

The research question was further subdivided into three sub-questions:

- What are the philosophical and theoretical paradigms which foreground a high-quality approach to assessment?
- How is assessment planned in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges?
- How is assessment implemented in NCV Business Studies to ensure high-quality assessment practices at TVET College?
- What are the strategies employed in ensuring a high quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Provided background information on the research study, described the problem, and outlined the purpose of the study and the research design.

Chapter 2 Described quality of assessment practices and described assessment in the TVET college sector. In this chapter, an attempt was made to focus briefly on assessment in general, and this general description was followed by a focus on assessment within the legislative framework in the sector. This chapter highlighted specific components of the implementation of ICASS in TVET colleges, with reference to the use of assessment guidelines and the purpose of assessment. Furthermore, quality insurance in general was outlined, followed by specific reference to quality assurance in the TVET sector.

Chapter 3: Reported on the research design of the study, in preparation for the empirical study comprising qualitative aspects. The chapter provided information on the research paradigm, followed by sampling issues, and the employment of semi-structured interviews and document analysis as data collection methods for the study.

Chapter 4: Presented the data collected through the semi-structured interviews and document analysis as presented in Chapter 3. The qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews was employed to provide comprehensive data on the research objectives. Chapter 4 covered aspects on the planning of ICASS, implementation of ICASS, quality assessment strategies with special reference to the ICASS guidelines, the policy on assessment from DHET and the perspective of assessment from lecturers. From these data themes were developed which the researcher linked to the research questions in Chapter 5.

The findings of this study are now discussed in respect of the research questions and research outcomes put forward in Chapter 1.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The main research question for this study, as indicated in Chapter 1, concerned the factors impacting on the quality of assessment practices in the NCV Business Studies programmes at TVET colleges, with the four sub-questions expanding on the

main research question. The section below sets out the findings by addressing each sub-question:

5.3.1 Findings with regard to the first sub-research question and aim of the study: What are the philosophical and theoretical paradigms which foreground a high-quality approach to assessment?

This research question was not posed to the participants but concerned the paradigms that underpin the study. The research study was foregrounded by social constructivist and total quality management theories.

The **social constructivist approach** to achieving meaningful understanding of assessment requires some kind of active engagement with the criteria by both lecturers and students. As mentioned in the literature review, a constructivist assessment process holds that the course should be constructively aligned (cf. 2.2.1). In essence learning outcomes, learning and teaching methods and assessment methods should follow one from the other and be seamlessly interrelated. Social constructivist theory requires more than a mere reorientation of the interrelationship between teaching, learning and assessment; the interrelationship should be embedded within the learning and teaching process. The legislative framework in the TVET college also emphasises that assessment must be linked to teaching and learning (cf. 2.2.1.1).

Moreover, ICASS guidelines state that ICASS provides an opportunity to assess students on an ongoing basis in the normal teaching and learning environment beyond the constraints of an examination process (cf.2.5.2). This means that assessment should not be viewed separately from teaching and learning. Shepard (2000:8) states that in a constructivist perspective, assessment needs to be reconstrued from the concept of reward conferred to a source of insight and help for all involved in the learning and teaching interaction. Continuous assessment should embrace the assessment approaches; i.e. assessment for, as, and of learning.

According to DoE (2011), assessment should be both informal (assessment for learning) and formal (assessment of learning). Du Toit *et al.* (2008:36) emphasise this point when they explain that assessment is a crucial component of teaching and learning; it must be aligned with all the components involved in the teaching and learning situation. When assessment is viewed as linked to teaching and learning, it may help students to improve their performance and maximise their learning, while at the same time it allows educators to reflect on their teaching. The integration between assessment, teaching and learning has also been highlighted in official departmental policy documents as one of the aspects which describe assessment (DoE 2007a:20).

It is crucial that lecturers at TVET colleges think like assessors and be able to plan, organise and collectively as a team implement their internal continuous assessment with fewer flaws.

Total Quality Management in education is believed to be a powerful tool to enhance education quality and increase school effectiveness. The TQM model is defined in education as the character of the set of elements in the input and output processes of the education institution that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic stakeholders by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations (Cheng, 1997). Collard and Sivyer (1990), cited in Rowley (1995:26), point out that in order to ensure TQM, there should be commitment from all stakeholders within a college.

Though TQM is used mainly in industries to ensure that products are of the specified condition or quality, this study proves that this model can also be applied in education to ensure that assessment tasks are of high quality. In the TVET colleges, the NCV policy document serves as a manual which outlines the specifications and the quality of "products" (students), though the interpretation and applications thereof are limited. Therefore, it is worth noting that the TQM quality assurance model can also be applied to assessment policy in order to achieve the intended, implemented and the attained curriculum by ensuring that learning outcomes and assessment standards are properly incorporated when designing assessment tasks (cf. 2.2.2). In this context, TQM theory proposes that for TVET colleges to achieve their objectives

there should be a structure for effective control, evaluation and improvement of quality throughout all stages of learning and assessments.

It is worth noting that the college that was the subject of this study does not have an effective quality management model which guides it as an institution. It can be concluded that quality management assessment strategies and self-evaluation are means whereby quality assurance could be enhanced in this case.

This study revealed that in the college the structures which are responsible for effective control of quality are not adequate. The curriculum and academic division structure which is responsible for effective control of quality is unsatisfactory. However, objectives relating to quality are clearly documented in the ICASS assessment guidelines. The NCV ICASS guidelines and assessment NCV policy documents as quality manuals clearly explain the plan and procedures to implement effective assessment, as well as the mechanisms to ensure quality, which include internal moderation. The checklists used to ascertain whether assessment tasks meet the specification should serve as records of quality.

It is worth noting, however, that the study found limited evidence that moderation of assessment occurred regularly, as there was little evidence in the lecturers' P o A s indicating how ICASS tasks could be improved to reach the specified standard.

5.3.2 Findings with regard to the second research question and the aim of the study: How is assessment planned in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges?

Aspects related to the NCV planning in this study covered issues of effective planning of ICASS (5.3.2.1), setting of assessment tasks (5.3.2.2) and designing of assessment tools (5.3.2.3). Lecturers need to plan comprehensively for assessment in order to ensure the clarity, validity, reliability and relevance of assessment procedures.

5.3.2.1 Standardisation of ICASS planning

The DoE (2003:31) states that before educators (in this context lecturers) can assess students, the purpose of the assessment must be clear and unambiguous, since well-planned assessment will contribute to fair, reliable and appropriate assessment practices. Assessment for learning has to be intertwined with all learning processes when it is planned; for this to happen lecturers should have clear learning objectives and be able to share them with students. According to ICASS guidelines, in this instance lecturers have to design an assessment plan for each subject (the assessment plan indicates which subject outcomes and assessment standards will be assessed, what assessment method or activity will be used and when this assessment will be conducted) and an assessment schedule (setting out the assessment tasks that will be administered, conducted, and recorded in the academic year (cf. 2.6.3 and 2.6.4).

Therefore senior lecturers are expected to start their planning by compiling their assessment plan for the subjects; then lecturers compile the assessment schedule guided by the assessment plan for their subjects and design suitable assessment tasks and marking tools (cf. 2.6.2). The lecturers teaching the same subject should therefore collectively plan their teaching, learning and most of their assessment based on the assessment plan and schedule. According to NCV assessment guidelines (DoE 2007b:5), lecturers are expected to plan assessment, and such planning must cover collecting evidence (to specify which subject outcomes and assessment standards will be assessed, what assessment method or activity will be used and when the assessment will be conducted); recording (referring to the assessment instruments or tools with which the assessment will be captured or recorded); and reporting (referring to the putting together of all evidence in a report to deliver a decision for a subject) (cf. 2.8).

The methods of assessment used in ICASS should be appropriate to the subject and the developmental levels of the students; various assessments methods and instruments should be used to assess students (cf. 2.7.1). Table 2.6 outlines the various methods used.

It is worth noting that the majority of lecturers are aware of the importance of ICASS planning, but little is being done to adhere to the assessment plan and the ICASS tasks agreed upon during their plenary sessions. It was stated by lecturers during the interviews that subject meetings are convened by the central office to agree on examiners of assessment tasks; however thereafter there is minimal consultation and a lack of communication between campuses after the meeting (cf. 4.3.1.1).

Tleru (2011) also confirms that the conducting of standardised common assessment tasks poses a considerable challenge. It has been illustrated that assessment and subject guidelines are indeed helpful in providing direction to lecturers for planning and conducting assessments and that in fact, lecturers link the usage of assessment guidelines with how they set out and conduct assessments. However, it has also been indicated that lecturers need to be conscious of the fact that they should not just follow prescribed guidelines, because adherence to guidelines may not necessarily equate to student learning. As Shepard (2000:9) cautions, lecturers as assessment practitioners must be wary of placing too much faith in externally developed and prescribed guidelines, as this may actually lead to a situation where they simply prepare students to be ready for external, high-stakes examinations.

This implies that there is no standardisation or uniformity of planned ICASS practices at the different sites, which ultimately compromises the quality of assessment and moderation practices.

Furthermore the ICASS guidelines (2015) note clearly that a common approach to ICASS should be applied in the college. It is clear from the participants that the academic department also promotes the common approach and standardisation of assessment tasks by arranging collective planning meetings. However, lecturers may plan together, but when they get to their respective campuses they deviate from what has been agreed upon about assessment.

This deviation from plans compromises standardisation and uniformity of assessment tasks. This ultimately led to lecturers assessing without following set standards by the

ICASS guidelines and using their own assessment tasks developed by them (cf. 4.3.1.1.).

The ICASS guidelines (2015) further specify that for the vocational subjects (all Business Studies subjects are categorised as vocational subjects), there need to be five ICASS tasks for each subject; campuses should alternate in developing the tasks. This means lecturers responsible for setting tasks are aware of their responsibility for setting tasks. However, during document analysis it was found that the lecturers' PoA files have different assessment tasks for the same subject. Inconsistent ICASS practices regarding protocol on assessment and moderation were further highlighted by lecturers in the interviews. In most cases, lecturers argued that they always received common assessment tasks late from other campuses, this left lecturers no choice but to either use previous tasks or develop their own assessment tasks without sharing with other campuses. Such practices hamper planning and compliance with the assessment plan.

The above finding was also validated by document analysis, as students from multi-campus have different assessment tasks in their student PoE files on the same level, same subject from different campuses but the same college. At the same time, lecturers have different tasks in their PoA files.

From the responses given in interviews it seems that during assessment participants (cf. 4.3.1.1) are not adhering to what they had planned for the year and there is no uniformity and standardisation. Standardisation and uniformity of ICASS tasks towards a common approach are being affected by non-compliance of lecturers with agreed assessment plans; thus campuses fail to apply a common goal for the entire college and all students do not benefit equally. This ultimately leads to lack of quality in planning and affects quality of implementation of ICASS.

5.3.2.2 Setting ICASS tasks

In the TVET colleges sector, ICASS is made up of common assessment tasks that lecturers administer to students during the course of the academic year; such tasks

may include tests, demonstrations, role-play, practical experiments, research and assignments (cf. 2.7.1). The ICASS tasks are expected to be set and administered by the relevant campus, or the tasks may be set by one campus and shared with other campuses or other colleges (cf. 2.7.2). For campuses that share the same subject, the researcher finds it proper that one campus should set a task and share with other campuses. The college has to make sure, however, that measures are put in place to prevent information sharing by students. The tasks should be administered to all students at the same time to avoid students sharing information and disadvantaging other students.

The assessment tasks should be carefully designed and weighted to cover the subject learning outcomes and assessment standards of the subject. All forms of assessment used in setting the tasks should be appropriate to the subject and developmental levels of the students on the particular level (cf. 2.7.3). The design of a task should also ensure that a variety of knowledge and skills are assessed. Tasks should give students opportunities to explore the subject in exciting and varied ways. Lecturers are expected to compile an analysis grid as part of the setting process and this should accompany the tasks and their assessment tool in each subject for moderation. The grid provides an analysis of the assessment task with respect to the topics, learning outcomes and assessment standards covered and the time and mark allocation and conceptual level attached to each question of the tasks. It emerged from the interviews that lecturers rely on previous question papers set by DHET or copy textbook exercises verbatim when designing assessment tasks (cf. 4.3.1.2). Such verbatim copying limits creative thinking in setting assessment tasks; the ICASS guideline states that the assessment plan should provide details in respect of the sequence and pace at which the subject content is to be taught. It is also stated in the ICASS guideline (2015:12) that setting of ICASS tasks that are a replica of textbook exercises only serves to disadvantage students and should be rejected. Similarly, the use of old examination papers set by DHET does not constitute an authentic ICASS and also does not facilitate the development of lecturer capacity to set high-quality assessment tasks (cf. 2.7.2).

The document analysis of the lecturers' PoAs revealed that the majority of assessment tasks included different question types, but many lacked the use of different techniques. Document analysis in all campuses revealed that some assessment tasks have an overemphasis on assessing knowledge while opportunities to assess skills, attitudes, values and reasoning are limited.

It is worth noting that the types of question asked in the assessment tasks raise concern about the use of the revised Bloom's taxonomy, because an overemphasis on knowledge-based questions has been observed in various tasks in tests and assignments. Use of more demanding cognitive levels always assists in setting a well-balanced assessment task. The lecturers in their responses (cf. 4.3.1.2) confirmed that they were not conversant with Bloom's taxonomy. It was also evident from the document analysis (PoAs and PoEs) that there was a lack of application of different questioning techniques, which would have contributed to higher quality of assessment tasks as required by the assessment policy documents.

5.3.2.3 Use of relevant marking tools

As a requirement for enhancing quality of ICASS practices, lecturers should plan and design the marking tool by marking all tasks in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Lecturers should award marks to evaluate specific assessment tasks and provide constructive feedback. A variety of assessment methods and instruments for collecting data should be used to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their subject outcomes attained at the end of learning (cf. 2.7.3). Therefore various tools for assessment marking (marking memoranda, checklists, rubrics, rating scales and observation sheets) should be compiled to match the type and purpose of assessment tasks (as stated in the New Venture Creation subject assessment guideline (2007:6) and ICASS (2015:80) .

The literature review highlighted various assessment tools that could be used and a variety of assessment methods and instruments for collecting evidence; these methods and instruments may be varied to give students ample opportunity to demonstrate the subject outcomes attained (cf. 2.7.1). Marzano (2000:55)

emphasises that assessment of learning methods does not only include tests and examinations but also a rich variety of products to demonstrate learning (cf. 2.2.1.2.). This alone clearly supports the use of different assessment instruments.

It emerged from the interviews that marking tools are of poor quality, often showing wrong mark allocation, wrong answers and in most cases they do not make provision for other relevant answers. Furthermore, task developers send out their marking tools late. This was confirmed by participants L1, 2, 3 and 4 (cf. 4.3.1.3).

Moreover, document analysis revealed that lecturers limit assessment tasks to tests and assignments and use of memoranda as assessment tools; lecturers do not set assessment tasks that will require the use of other marking tools such as rubrics, observation sheets, comments, checklists or rating scales.

The marking tools for each assessment task should be suitable and relevant to the task. The quality of marking tools is as important as that of assessment tasks; they need to be designed accordingly so that they can inform correct marking, and the standard of marking should be of quality in all campuses.

5.3.3 Findings with regard to the third research question and the aim of the study: How is assessment implemented in NCV Business Studies to ensure high quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?

5.3.3.1 Implementation of ICASS policies and guidelines in enhancing quality assurance

According to the assessment policy (DoE, 2007a), internal continuous assessment consists of tasks conducted by lecturers according to minimum requirements specified in assessment guidelines and requirements stipulated in the policy document (cf. 2.7.1). The NCV has policies and documents that should be used for reference: the NCV national policy on the conduct, administration and management of assessment (2007), subject guidelines, assessment guidelines and the ICASS guidelines, as discussed in Chapter 2. The policies make provision for a common

approach to the management and administration of the ICASS component of all subjects. The purpose of these guidelines is to help lecturers to develop a coherent, integrated assessment system. NCV policy on assessment guidelines (2007:3) stipulates that knowledge; skills, values and attitudes should be assessed throughout the year using assessment instruments such as projects, tests, assignments, investigations, role-play and case studies. All assessment task evidence is kept in a PoE and must be readily available for monitoring, moderation, and verification purposes. Validity of assessments ensures that assessments cover a broad range of SKVAs needed to demonstrate applied competency.

It emerged from the study, however that the college gives little attention to the policies and documents regarding implementation of ICASS. Tleru (2011) also confirms that subject and assessment guidelines are not used effectively. During the qualitative phase of the study it emerged that sometimes lecturers do not consult assessment and subject guidelines at all, and this also creates problems. One of the interviewees mentioned that another lecturer asked a question relating to the weight of an assignment, a clear indication that he had not consulted the assessment guidelines. Furthermore, the document analysis confirmed that even though the assessment policies and guidelines are available, they are not used as guidelines for implementation, In addition the college assessment policy has not been updated since 2012 (See Appendix M). It was confirmed that the college does not have a moderation policy in place at all. It follows moderation processes stipulated in the ICASS guidelines and NCV assessment guidelines. Relevant assessment guidelines, college policies and other relevant documents concerning assessment play a crucial role, as the quality of assessment tasks depends on effective application of polices.

5.3.3.2 Validity and reliability of assessment tasks

Meyer *et al.* (2010) state that to ensure the quality and credibility of assessment tasks, certain requirements should be met, such as reliability, validity, fairness, discrimination, cognitive complexity, feasibility and accountability.

It is notable that evidence from the interviews revealed that lecturers focus only on learning outcomes and assessment standards to maintain the quality of their assessment tasks, with little or no evidence of their ascertaining the validity and reliability of the assessment ICASS.

Validity of assessment serves two major purposes. Validity ascertains firstly whether the means of measurement is accurate and secondly whether the assessment is actually measuring what it is intended to measure (cf. 2.4.2). The NCV assessment guidelines (2007:2) state that validity of assessment ensures that assessment covers a broad range of SKVAs needed to demonstrate applied competency. This could be achieved by

- Clearly stating the outcome to be assessed
- Selecting the appropriate or suitable evidence
- Matching the evidence with a compatible or appropriate method of assessment
- Selecting and constructing an instrument of assessment

A valid assessment has to do with the level and standard of assessment, for instance at NCV levels one does not set papers that are fit for primary school learners. It is, therefore, evident that content validity is vital in ensuring the quality of the assessment; the content of an assessment task should be pitched at the level of the intended group or the target group (cf. 2.2.2). This is to ensure that students do not write an assessment task which is either below or above their mental ability, because incorrect conclusions will be drawn from the students' performance. The scope of the assessing should be appropriate to assessing the intended outcome, and the type of assessment employed should be suitable for assessing a particular skill or outcome in order for the educator to arrive at the correct decision about the student's learning (cf. 2.4.2).

It emerged that the lecturers' understanding of the concept of reliability as a principle of assessment is minimal; the focus is mainly on the reliability of the scores given by various assessors on a similar task.

The study revealed that in an attempt to ensure the reliability of ICASS tasks, lecturers often focus on comparing the scores assigned by two assessors (subject lecturer and the internal moderator), with little or no regard for other forms of reliability measures which could have ensured that the assessment tasks were of higher quality. NCV assessment guidelines (2007:2) also state that assessment practices must be consistent, so that the same result or judgement is arrived at if the assessment is replicated in the same context. This demands consistency in the interpretation of evidence; therefore, careful monitoring of assessment is vital. The responses provided by lecturers during the interviews showed that lecturers view the reliability of assessment results as more important than the reliability of the assessment tool (cf. 4.3.2.2).

Killen (2010:351-354) argues that the reliability of assessment can be affected by the number of items involved, such as in tests and examinations, as well as the level of difficulty, the environment, the interpretation of students' responses, and the formulation of the memorandum (cf. 2.4.1). SAQA (2001:18) expresses strong support for the view of McMillan and Schumacher (2011:73-75), confirming that reliability in assessment is about consistency. In this context consistency refers to consistency in marking and mark allocation and ensuring that all items in assessment should be related to one another and therefore can be assumed to measure the same thing.

This notion is of prime importance because not only the students and the lecturer benefit from the assessment results; other stakeholders depend on the credibility of assessment results to make valuable decisions such as those on admission to institutions of higher learning and employment.

5.3.3.4 Challenges to implementing ICASS assessment tasks

The challenges faced by lecturers when implementing assessment are of concern because they cannot be avoided as they are impeding the proper quality of assessment practices. The study also indicated that participants are faced with

serious challenges which hinder their ability to offer and design high-quality assessment. It was evident that contextual factors in the college were a setback for the participants when designing and implementing high quality of assessment. During the interview lecturers highlighted the fact that there were some challenges that they experienced with assessment, namely the language barrier, lack of students' commitment and self-discipline towards their studies, (cf. 4.3.4).

Lecturers' challenges are of concern because they have a direct impact on the implementation of high-quality ICASS assessment in their subjects. These challenges, as indicated in Chapter 4, need to be considered when planning for ICASS.

5.3.4 Findings with regard to the fourth research question and the aim of the study: What are the strategies employed in ensuring the quality of assessment practices at TVET colleges?

Quality assurance plays a crucial role in ensuring and improving the quality of assessment in education. It is also a crucial part of teaching and learning in determining quality. The quality assurance strategies set out by ICASS (moderation, monitoring and verification) serve to strengthen the credibility of assessment.

The moderation of ICASS is one of the processes utilised by DHET and Umalusi to ensure that quality assessment is conducted in accordance with agreed-upon practices and standards so as to ensure the validity, fairness, reliability and practicability of the assessment process. Gawe and Heyns (2004) state that quality management is a combination of processes used to ensure that the degree of excellence specified is achieved. It is worth noting that the quality of assessment tasks is also guided by the requirements of the NCV policies and guidelines. The NCV policies and ICASS subject and assessment guidelines for each subject should be used as the guide to quality.

5.3.4.1 Moderation of ICASS

Moderation as one of the quality assurance strategies inherited by ICASS serves to strengthen the credibility of assessment. The internal moderation is conducted in two phases: pre-moderation and post-moderation. SAQA (2000) points out that moderation ensures that people being assessed are assessed in a consistent, accurate and well-designed manner.

Pre-moderation tasks takes place when assessment tasks are administered to students by the subject experts, while post-moderation is evaluation of the quality of the assessment process and marking of assessment undertaken by subject lecturer (cf. 2.11.1).

- **Pre- assessment moderation of tasks**

The assessment of the students' performance is carried out on an ongoing basis at the learning site by the lecturers at the TVET college using various assessment techniques, which may comprise assessment of oral and practical work, classroom-based work, class tests, controlled tests, assignments, projects and examinations. These assessment tasks have to be moderated before the task is administered to students (cf. 2.11.1.a). A standardised pre-moderation checklist is provided by the DHET which can be used by the lecturers and moderators who have to check the quality of the assessment task against the checklist. It emerged from the interviews that internal moderation is being conducted, as participants confirmed in section 4.3.3.1.

The lecturers have knowledge of the ICASS moderation procedure they follow when conducting a pre-moderation. However, it emerged from interviews with participants that moderation reports are not received timeously and they do not provide enough information for lecturers to learn and develop from them. The researcher asked the participants the question: "How does the process of feedback on moderation assist you in assuring quality?" The responses from participants showed that moderation

reports are not taken seriously enough to assist them in improving their quality of assessment practices.

Furthermore it emerged from the document analysis of lecturers' PoA files that the majority of tasks with errors were disregarded, and weaknesses such as spelling errors, wrong mark allocation and poor language were neglected. In most cases recommendations made by the internal moderators were not implemented by the task developer or examiner. The assessment tasks found in the lecturers' PoEs proved this, as errors were found in the files of both students and lecturers.

The ICASS component should provide the student, lecturer and the academic and curriculum head with a realistic indication of what the student can be expected to achieve in the external examination component of a subject. Therefore the moderation process is a critical part of setting high-quality assessments and needs to provide an honest evaluation of the standard and quality of ICASS tasks.

- **Post-moderation (moderation of marking and student performance)**

Moderation conducted on marked evidence after the administration of tasks should ensure that the assessment tool has been applied correctly and that students have been treated fairly in the assessment process (ICASS guidelines 2015:40) (cf. 2.11.1.b). Lecturers offering the same subjects collectively are supposed to hold a discussion meeting on the marking tool provided to ensure a common approach to marking and to agree on allocation of certain areas of importance regarding the post-moderation. The moderation of marking at TVET colleges should take place as soon as discussions on the marking tool have been done, at campus level, when peer lecturers specialising in the particular subject moderate each other's work for purposes quality and control. Then the second leg unfolds when the multi-campus lecturers meet and moderate the assessment tasks in place. Moderation should take place on a continuous basis and form part of the cyclical nature of quality control. Umalusi (2006:53-62) proposes that the moderation of marking should take place through three approaches, illustrated in Figure 2.3 (cf. 2.11.1 b.).

The study revealed, however, that there was lack of quality control. Where internal moderation of marking had occurred; it was merely a formality using shadow marking. The lecturers firstly do not have a common marking approach on the first four assessment tasks, which are normally tests and assignments, because they do not discuss the marking tool or have a memorandum discussion meeting. The only task allotted fair memorandum discussion is the fifth task, which is the internal examination (cf. 4.3.3.1).

The responses from participants indicate that the marking-tool discussion is not given priority; lecturers are more concerned with the accuracy of marks, hence they talk only of marking of scripts in their processes of moderation. This raises concerns about proper quality control.

The PoEs in all campuses showed that tasks were administered to students without any corrections of mistakes recommended by moderators. This indicates that moderator's recommendations are disregarded and tasks are administered without approval by the internal moderators.

In addition, the student PoE files do not have information on the marking tools of the tasks to inform them about why marks have been awarded and to serve as a reference as to how marks are allocated. The moderation reports are not filed in the student files; however, there is evidence of assessment tasks being moderated but then incorrect marks are not amended in the lecturer's record sheets (in the PoAs). The assessment tasks' marking tools are not filed in the PoEs, though they are available in the PoAs of lecturers.

Furthermore the researcher requested permission to analyse the college assessment and moderation policies. It emerged that the college assessment policy had not been updated since 2012 and that the college does not have a college moderation policy, but uses the national policy and assessment guidelines. This raises concern as to what informs their procedures of internal moderation, since it seems that not much attention is given to the national policies.

In summary, the findings indicate that the lecturers are aware of processes of internal moderation and that moderation is being done to a certain level but there is evidence of inadequate processes of moderation. This confirms that moderation is not taken seriously and it is done for reasons of compliance only and is not as meaningful as should be expected.

5.3.4.3 Constructive feedback from internal moderators

Lissitz and Schafer (2000) posit that feedback and self-assessment are critical factors for development, since assessment is tied up with learning. Lecturers can improve the quality of assessment and moderation from their peers through moderation reports and discussion between the internal moderator and subject lecturers as the task developer (or internal examiners) of ICASS tasks. Feedback for learning can take many forms; it may be formal or informal, individual or collective. Feedback may also be evaluative or descriptive (Gipps *et al.*, 2000). Evaluative feedback provides feedback by giving reward or punishment and also expressing approval or disapproval, while descriptive feedback makes explicit connections between a student's thinking and other possibilities that he or she should consider by specifying a better way of doing something.

It has emerged from the study that lecturers often disregard feedback and recommendations from internal moderators and do not use them effectively. This is attested to by the common mistakes that are being repeated.

On the other hand, constructive feedback to students is not provided timeously, most of the assessment tasks' feedback is dated two weeks after the tasks were administered. This is confirmed by the date appended to the assessment tasks. It is also worth noting that feedback to students is very minimal, little evidence is shown on how students get more descriptive feedback, and the focus is on evaluative feedback which provides grades or marks with minimal comments.

In summary, findings reveal that there is a lack of standardisation of planning in all four campuses, internal moderation processes are not followed properly, designing of

assessment tools was limited to the use of a few marking tools and poor-quality assessment tasks, and the college pays little attention to the policies and documents regarding implementation of ICASS.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Emanating from the findings above, recommendations can be made regarding TVET college planning and implementation of better quality assessment practices. This section of the report presents recommendations that could be considered for improving the quality of assessment practices in the classroom environment, in particular ICASS assessment tasks in NCV Business Studies. Based on the findings of the research the following recommendations can be made.

5.4.1 Recommendations regarding effective planning to ensure higher quality of assessment practices in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges

In the preceding sections, discussions have taken place on findings regarding the research questions. In the subsequent sections, certain recommendations are made regarding TVET colleges' effective planning of the ICASS practices.

The recommendations are specifically for the following role-players.

Lecturers

- The TVET colleges' Human Resource Department (Training Division) should plan to develop and train all Business Studies lecturers and senior lecturers in ICASS policy requirements and assessment tasks.

Senior lecturers

- The TVET colleges' Human Resource Department should train senior lecturers in teamwork and mentoring so that lecturers teaching the same subject could engage in collective planning towards ICASS common tasks at all campuses.

HOD

- HODs should be trained by the TVET college's human resource departments in various campuses to collectively encourage interrelation between lecturers so that they can work together as a team and work towards a common approach to ICASS. It is further recommended that HODs at all the campuses should meet with Business Studies lecturers regularly to timeously identify challenges regarding planning, implementation, marking, moderation and reporting of assessment tasks.

College

- The TVET college Curriculum and Academic Division should work together to monitor the process of ICASS planning by making sure that all planning sessions are tabled in advance before the college's recess in the fourth term in preparation for the new academic year. It is further recommended that all campuses should have the same assessment planning approach to common tasks and all conduct the same ICASS tasks with all students of the TVET colleges.

5.4.2 Recommendations regarding implementation to ensure higher quality of assessment practices in NCV Business Studies at TVET colleges

Recommendations that are made here are designed to throw some light on possible strategies to deal with challenges that TVET college lecturers may be experiencing in implementing ICASS. In this sense, these recommendations are related to strategies for implementation of ICASS to ensure high quality of assessment practices.

The recommendations are specifically for the following role-players

Lecturers

- The TVET colleges' Human Resource Department should train and develop lecturers on assessment and moderation to keep abreast of assessment practices in vocational education.

Senior lecturers

- The TVET colleges' Human Resource Department should train all Business Studies senior lecturers in assessment and moderation, coaching and mentoring the lecturers to keep abreast of assessment practices in vocational education.

HOD

- The colleges' human resource departments should organise or outsource training to empower HODs with training and development workshops on assessment, moderation, coaching, mentoring, monitoring and evaluation so that they will be able to train and develop their subordinates on a continuous basis. Furthermore HODs should serve as quality assurers in their respective divisions of Business Studies and oversee good assessment practices.

College

- TVET colleges should use good practices used by certain lecturers in various campuses and sister colleges to develop and empower other lecturers in need of support regarding the proper implementation of ICASS.

5.4.3 Recommendations regarding the strategies employed by Business Studies lecturers to ensure effective assessment practices at TVET colleges

In the preceding sections, discussions have taken place on what have been presented as findings regarding the research questions. In the subsequent sections, certain recommendations are made regarding the implementation of ICASS at TVET colleges in ensuring high quality of assessment of the ICASS practices.

The recommendations are specifically for the following role-players

Lecturers

- Emphasis in moderating should be on the quality of the assessment task rather than the accuracy of the calculations (marks) on the mark sheet. However, accuracy in calculation of marks (scores) should be used as a measure for increasing the reliability of scores allocated as part of internal moderation.

Senior lecturers

- For the purpose of reliability, the senior lecturers should adopt a double-marking system for all formal assessment tasks. During internal moderation process, they should randomly select copies of assessment tasks and remark them, to check and verify the scores allocated by the lecturer.

HOD

- The reports from the monitoring visits of Umalusi and the DHET should be shared constantly with the lecturers to encourage them and to work on improvements where necessary.

College

- An assessment team should be formed, represented by HODs, senior lecturers and lecturers from each campus. The teams from all campuses should work together with the college curriculum team to ensure proper assessment practices.
- Assessment networks should be established with other TVET colleges in the province, so that lecturers can share their knowledge and skills in assessment practice.
- The college should adopt the total quality management model, which can be used to improve the quality of assessment by combining quality control, quality assurance, and quality management. It requires teamwork, training and training of lecturers to constantly be able to improve their assessment practices.

- The college should have a qualified quality assurance team on its campuses for different programmes; so that the team can check the quality of assessment tasks before they can be administered to students.
- The college has to update the assessment policy to keep it abreast of the changes made in the ICASS guidelines 2015. A moderation policy should be designed and used in relation to the national assessment policy, ICASS guidelines and NCV policy from the DHET to enhance quality control of internal moderation.

5.5 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research has explored how assessment practices are planned and implemented in NCV Business Studies at a Tshwane TVET college.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that it has provided a clearer picture of how the ICASS is being administered by lecturers. This has complemented the Umalusi reports 2007–2009 and 2014 by giving a different perspective: that of the lecturers involved. The findings mainly indicate inadequate compliance with policies and the ICASS guidelines, a lack of standardisation of assessment tasks and internal moderation discrepancies.

It is suggested that a further investigation of assessment practices might shed more light on the problems and frustrations that the lecturers experience with regard to classroom assessment, in particular ICASS. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study at other TVET colleges in the country to determine whether they experience the same situations and challenges as this particular college. It would be enlightening to learn how other institutions deal with their own situations. In this case, a more detailed study might be more useful.

It is also important to determine where processes have to be adjusted or where support needs to be provided. Further research could also focus on more feasible solutions to the problems that both the colleges and the DHET experience regarding assessment practices. Other research could be undertaken in the following areas:

- Assessment as learning as a strategy to enhance student performance
- The quality implementation of assessment for learning in the classroom environment
- The validity of ICASS as a component of assessment in NCV

5.7 CONCLUSION

The adoption of a qualitative research approach and case-study methodology contributed immensely to the collection of rich descriptive data. The data collection methods used in this study also produced significant data which shed light on the research questions. It was evident that a quality control measure of assessment in Business Studies is not effectively implemented in this college. Therefore, this study confirmed the findings of an Umalusi report that lecturers are ill-equipped to develop tasks of high quality and that attention is needed.

Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall and William (2004) indicate that assessment for learning is any assessment whose first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning. An assessment task serves the purpose of accountability if it can inform learning by providing information that lecturers and students can use as feedback in assessing themselves and improving the teaching and learning activities.

The study further indicated that there was a need to capacitate lecturers, senior lecturers and heads of departments in NCV Business Studies in all campuses in terms of quality management of ICASS assessment practices. The study further revealed that there were contextual factors within the college hindering effective implementation of high-quality assessment tasks: students' lack of commitment, chronic absenteeism, the language barrier and load shedding. The study also revealed that lecturers require further training in terms of quality control and management in assessment. Lastly, it was evident that lecturers also need further training with regard to internal moderation, as the study showed that the emphasis was on submission by lecturers merely for the sake of quality of assessment prior to their implementation.

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Oaks, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

15 July 2015

Ref #: 2015/07/15/41146905/08/MC
Staff#: Mrs PK Nkalane
Staff Number #: 41146905

Dear Mrs Nkalane

Decision: Ethics Approval

Researcher

Mrs PK Nkalane
Tel: +2712 429 8898
nkalapk@unisa.ac.za

Supervisor

Prof MM van Wyk
College of Education
Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies
Tel: +2751 525 2598
vwykmm@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: Factors that influence the quality assessment practices in Business Studies at Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges

Qualification: M Ed in Didactics

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for 2 years.

For full approval: The application/ resubmitted documentation was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 15 July 2015.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.



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Open Rubric

An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

- 3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.

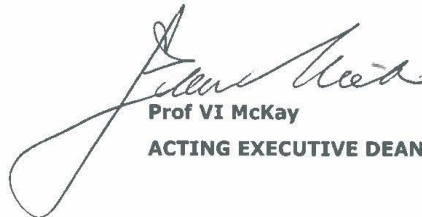
Note:

The reference number **2015/07/15/41146905/08/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



Prof VI McKay
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN



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APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X174, PRETORIA, 0001, 123 Schoeman Street, PRETORIA, 0002, South Africa
Tel: (012) 312 6911, Fax: (012) 321 6770
Private Bag X9192, CAPE TOWN, 8000, 103 Plein Street, CAPE TOWN, 8001, South Africa
Tel: (021) 469 5175, Fax: (021) 461 4781

Enquiries: Renay Pillay

Email: Pillay.r@dhet.gov.za

Telephone: 012 312 6191

Mrs Patience Kelebogile Nkalane
P.O. Box 1624
WAPADRAND
0500

By e-mail: nkalapk@unisa.ac.za

Dear Mrs Nkalane

REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN THE TSHWANE NORTH TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) COLLEGE: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN BUSINESS STUDIES AT TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

I acknowledge receipt of your request for permission to conduct research in the Tshwane North Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College, on the topic "Factors that influence the quality assessment practices in Business Studies at Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges".

Your request has been evaluated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and it is my pleasure to inform you that your request for permission to undertake the above research has been granted. You are advised to obtain further permission from the Principal of Tshwane North TVET College before commencing any research activities.

You are also requested to attach the following documents to correspondence addressed to the Principal of Tshwane North TVET College:

Higher Education and Training - Inkcwaningo on Opleting - Imfuno eLophakame Nakucosha - Bundo Eshwamako Nkandak
Bafundiso ePhakame Nakucosha - Bafundiso ePhakameyo noQeqesho - Dzingizo ya le Hamba na Vukela - Fuzuzo ya Ntsha na Utshatshat
Thuto ya Gadiro la Thuto - Thuto e Phaweng la Thuto - Thuto e Kqinane le Kodo

APPENDIX C
PERMISSION LETTER FROM COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

**higher education
 & training**

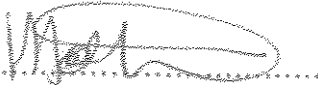
Department:
 Higher Education and Training
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ms PK N.

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT TSHWANE
 NORTH COLLEGE**

Permission is hereby granted to conduct research at Tshwane North College, regarding the research topic (**Exploring factors impacting quality assessment practices in Business studies at Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges**) as part of your MED degree studies at the University of South Africa. It will be appreciated if you could share the findings of the study with us.

We wish you success



Mr S Sethusha
 Acting Principal: Tshwane

Central Office

Cnr. Kgosi Mampuru (former Potgieter Street) & Pretorius Streets
 Tel: (012) 401 1727/1961
 Fax: (012) 323 8583

Mamelodi Campus
 180 Serapong Road,
 Mamelodi East
 Tel:(012) 801 1016/1/
 (012) 4011850/
 (012)8001284
 Fax:(012) 401 1179

Pretoria Campus
 420 Helen Joseph Street
 (former Church Street),
 Pretoria
 Tel:(012) 401 1600/
 (012)401 1633/45
 Fax:(012) 326 5298

Sedibergville South Campus
 College Road, Block L, Sedibergville
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 (012) 401 1818/
 (012) 8000231/245/238
 Fax:(012) 793 1983

Roslyn Campus
 Ernest Oppenheimer Street,
 Roslyn
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 (012) 8000274
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Sedibergville North Campus
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 Sedibergville
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 (012) 401 1839/
 (012) 8000187/188
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Yenika Campus
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J

21.05/201

APPENDIX D TURN IT IN REPORT

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<http://cdn.cfbt.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2013/r-assessment-for-learning-2013.pdf>

8

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<http://uzspace.uzulu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10530/521/Educators'%20Implementation%20of%20Assessment%20in%20OBE%20-%20TZN%20Ngidi.pdf.txt?sequence=3>

APPENDIX E
CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING – MJ MARCHAND

PO Box 35430
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Tel/Fax: (012) 460 5727
Cell 082 343 0325
E-mail: marchm@iafrica.com

14, Twenty First Street
MENLO PARK
Pretoria
0081
22 November 2015

To whom it may concern:

I certify that I am a professional and accredited editor and that I have edited the Master's dissertation entitled "Factors influencing quality assessment practices in business studies at technical vocational education and training colleges", by Patience Kelebogile Nkalane.

I have edited the questionnaire for clarity and correctness of language and expression.

The numbering and the references are the responsibility of the author.

Marion J Marchand
BA, H Dipl Lib, HED,
Postgraduate Certificate in Editing UP; Accredited Translator (Afrikaans to English) and English Editor, South African Translators' Institute, Member of the Professional Editors' Guild; Member of the English Academy

APPENDIX F
LETTER TO THE PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

67 Matroosberg Complex
51 Bossendal Street
Equestria
Pretoria
0184
12 August 2015

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Patience Kelebogile Nkalane and I am doing research with Professor Michael Van Wyk, in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies towards a Master's of Education at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Factors influencing quality assessment practices in Business Studies at Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges: A case study of Tshwane North TVET college.**

The purpose of the study is to explore and identify factors impacting quality of assessment practices in particular Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) in the learning environment at TVET colleges. The study will assist the Academic division, curriculum manager, management at campuses, lecturers and academics to strengthen and adhere to quality assurance of ICASS assessment practices.

I chose your institution as I believe that you are offering National Certificate Vocational (NCV) Business Studies Programmes at your various campuses, which is the focus of my study. The approximate number of participants will be lecturers i.e. two per campus. I chose you because of your experience and excellences. I have known you since I attended workshops with you and realized that you are the one who can provide suitable information for this study.

The study involves audio tape recording, document analysis of the College Assessment policy , Lecturer's Portfolio of Assessment file (POA) and the Learner's Portfolio of Evidence file (POE's), College Assessment Policy , in relation to the national assessment policy and Internal continuous Assessment guidelines and one-on-one interviews for lecturers. Open ended questions will be asked during the interviews. The interviews will take part after the tuition hours which will be from 14h30 and the interview is expected to last for 45 minutes. I request permission to auto record the above mention activities. Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given the information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. The study will assist the Academic division, curriculum manager, management at campuses, lecturers and academics to strengthen and adhere to quality assurance of ICASS quality assessment practices.

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other

people to see the records. Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, e.g. research report, journal articles, conference presentation. Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet at home for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Patience Kelebogile Nkalane on 0829532090 or nkalapk@unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible for publication after completion of the study. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact the above mentioned researcher. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor, Professor Michael Van Wyk at 012 429 6201 or vwykmm@unisa.ac.za. Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson Dr M Classens at mcdtc@netactive.co.za of the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study

Yours Faithfully

Patience Kelebogile Nkalane (Mrs)

APPENDIX G
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent to participate

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY TITLE: Factors influencing quality assessment practices in Business Studies at Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges: A case study of Tshwane North TVET College.

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had it explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the interviews.

I have been assured that I will receive a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Name & Surname of participant (print)

Name & Surname of researcher (print)

Patience Kelebogile Nkalane

Signature of participant

Signature of researcher

Date: -----

Date: -----15/08/2015-----

APPENDIX H

RUBRIC TO EVALUATE LECTURER'S PORTFOLIO OF ASSESMENT (PoA) FILES

Purpose of the rubric: This rubric is designed to evaluate the processes followed by lecturers to maintain a portfolio which provides evidence of engagement in ICASS tasks and adherence to the NCV policies on assessment and moderation.

Criteria	1	2	3	4
1 Planning of the assessment tasks	No evidence of assessment planning	Some evidence of assessment planning	Substantial evidence of assessment planning policy available	Comprehensive evidence of assessment planning available
2 Content coverage: learning outcomes and assessment standards addressed	Assessment tasks does not address learning outcomes and assessment standards	Assessment task address only one learning outcomes and assessment standards	Assessment covers at least two learning outcomes and assessment standards	Assessment task address more than two learning outcomes and assessment standards
3 Relevancy of content: Does the content address learning outcome and assessment standards	Assessment: Content not relevant to learning outcomes and assessment standards	Content partially relevant to outcome and assessment standard addressed	Content mostly relevant to outcome and assessment standards addressed	Content relevant to learning outcome and assessment standards addressed
4 Relevancy of the assessment tool used for formal tasks	Assessment tool used do not match assessment tasks	Assessment tool used partially appropriate for assessment tasks	Assessment tool used match the assessment task	Assessment tool is relevant to the assessment task

Tasks	Assessment tasks	Assessment Tasks	Sections in the assessment tasks	
5 Assessment task suitable to NCV Business studies	Assessment task is not appropriate for Business studies learners	Assessment task partially appropriate for learners in the Business studied NCV	Most sections of the assessment tasks are appropriate	Assessment tasks largely suitable for Business studies learners
6 Evidence of assessment tool used	No evidence of assessment tool used available	Some evidence of assessment tool available	Most evidence of assessment tool used available	Relevant evidence of assessment tool used available

7	Ability to develop high quality assessments tasks	Lecturers unable to craft a variety of assessment tasks	Lecturers attempt craft a variety of assessment tasks	Lecturers moderately craft a variety of assessment tasks	Lecturers can craft a variety of assessment tasks
8	Evidence of assessment record	There is no evidence of assessment records	Some evidence of assessment records are available	Substantial evidence of assessment records	Properly organized records of all assessment tasks available
9	Evidence of assessment feedback	No evidence of assessment feedback	Some evidence of assessment feedback	Evidence provided to students is judgemental	Evidence of feedback is constructive and positive
10	Evidence of internal moderation	No evidence of internal moderation	Some evidence of internal moderation	Internal moderation is partial	Clear evidence of internal moderation
11	Evidence of assessment records	There is no evidence of records	Some evidence of assessment records	Substantial evidence of assessment records	Evidence of feedback of assessment records provided

APPENDIX I

RUBRIC TO EVALUATE STUDENT'S PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE (PoE) FILES

Purpose of the rubric: This rubric is designed to evaluate the processes followed by students and lecturers to maintain a portfolio which provides evidence of engagement in ICASS tasks and adherence to the NCV policies on assessment and moderation.

Criteria	1	2	3	4
1. Evidence of Marking assessment tasks according to the marking guideline	There is no evidence of marking	There is some evidence of marking of tasks	Substantial evidence of marking of tasks	Proper evidence of marking of Tasks
2. Evidence of Internal moderation of assessment tasks	There is no evidence of internal moderation	Some evidence of internal moderations are available.	Substantial evidence of internal moderation	Properly organized records of all assessment task available
3. Recording of marks in the Mark sheet (verification with record sheet)	There is no evidence of assessment records	Some evidence of assessment record are available	Substantial evidence of assessment records	Properly organized records of all assessment task available
4. Evidence of Feedback to students	Feedback is not given to students	Some evidence of feedback to students	Substantial evidence of feedback to students	Positive feedback clearly given to students
5. Summary of results	No summary of results	Some evidence of summary of results	Substantial summary of results	Summary of results available

APPENDIX J
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LECTURERS

TITLE: Factors influencing quality assessment practices in Business Studies at Technical Vocational Educational Training Colleges

The purpose of this interview is to explore an intensive study on factors influencing the quality of Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) practices in the Business Studies programmes at Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges.

1. How is assessment planned in NCV Business studies at TVET colleges?
 - 1.1 How do you unfold the assessment practice in the classroom environment?
 - 1.2 Can you take me through the process you follow when planning assessment to ensure the quality of your assessment tasks?
 - 1.3 How do you make sure that the content of your assessment assess the intended outcome?
2. How is assessment implemented in the NCV Business Studies in ensuring the quality of practices assessments at TVET college?

What processes do you follow to implement ICASS in your class, why?

Can you take me through the process you follow when setting your assessment tasks?

How do you ensure that the assessment actually measures the intended objectives for your subject?

What challenges do you experience when implementing ICASS in your subject?

What procedures do you follow to ensure that the questions in the assessment tasks are well balanced?

How do you ensure that Bloom's taxonomy is applied when designing your assessments?

3. What are the strategies employed by Business studies lecturers in ensuring quality of assessment practices?

How do you ensure that the assessment actually measures the intended goals for your subject?

How is moderation conducted at your college to improve the quality?

What procedure do you follow during the moderation process?

How is moderation conducted in your subject to improve the quality of ICASS?

How often is moderation conducted in your subject to ensure quality of assessment?

How does the process of feedback on moderation assist you in assuring quality?

Can you elaborate on the type of feedback you provide to your students?

What is the role of the following individuals in reviewing your assessments?

Head of Department

Senior Lecturer

Peers

How do you utilise the moderation feedback from the above mentioned individuals?

APPENDIX K
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR LECTURER 1

Semi- Structured interview with Lecturers as participants at Tshwane –North TVET College.

Place: Classroom

Date: 29 /08/2015

Time of interview: 14:30

Duration: 45 Minutes

Interviewer: Nkalane P K

Interviewee: Lecturer L1

Description of the project, telling the interviewee about: the quality of assessments practices in the NCV Business studies programmes.

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors impacting on the quality assessment at TVET colleges

Thank you for participating in the interview.

Participant Lecturer: L 1

1. How is assessment planned in the NCV Business studies at TVET colleges to ensure quality assessment practices?

Interviewer: How do you unfold the assessment practice in the classroom environment?

Interviewee: My role as an assessor comprises of me compiling assessment tasks for the students I am teaching, which are studying towards achieving a National Certificate Vocational (NVC) certificate In Finance, Economics and accounting.

Interviewer: Can you take me through the process you follow to ensure the quality of your assessment?

Interviewee: I use assessment guidelines for the subjects, which are provided by the Department of Higher Education and training I also make use of previous question paper so as to make sure that I assess the students with what is relevant for the examination because I view assessment tasks as a way of preparing the students for the forthcoming examination.

Interviewer: How do you make sure that the content of your assessment assess the intended outcome?

Interviewee: Well to be honest I just type the task having looked at the assessment guidelines and previous question papers then send the task to a peer with whom I teach the same subjects with then he or she does the pre-moderation of the task. If my colleague doesn't bring it back with mistakes that need to be fixed then I take it its quality.

2. How is assessment implemented in the NCV Business Studies at TVET College?

Interviewer: What processes do you follow to implement ICASS in your class, why?

Interviewee: Well the ICASS in our department comprises of 5 assessment tasks, which is 2 formal tests, 2 assignments and 1 internal examination. The tests both weigh 10%, and then the assignments both weigh 25% and finally the internal examination which counts 30%, which all make a total of 100%. You know the other is When the policies are amended they are made available to us, based on my experience I assess students on what will be asked in the final examination.

Interviewer: Can you take me through the process you follow when setting your assessment tasks?

Interviewee: When compiling an assessment task I take previous question papers and assessment guidelines then start compiling according to the required outcomes. On the other hand, when expecting common assessment tasks always arrive late to my campus, in most cases it's when I have given my students a task for ICASS because I cannot rely on tasks that I don't know if I will get them . I also use task that I receive from colleagues in other campuses but my peers are always send their marking tools late while some of ours have developed our own at the end we do not use the same marking tool

Interviewer: How do you ensure that the assessment actually measures the intended objectives for your subject?

Interviewee: Well to be honest I just type the task having looked at the assessment guidelines and previous question papers then send the task to a peer with whom I teach the same subjects with then he or she does the pre-moderation of the task. If my colleague doesn't bring it back with mistakes that need to be fixed then I take it its quality.

Interviewer: What challenges do you experience when implementing ICASS in your subject?

Interviewee: My obstacles are mainly with the students as most of them are not dedicated to their school work. Most of the students do not complete all the required 5 assessment tasks and attendance of these students is very poor, which for me is a serious problem.

Interviewer: Can you take me through the process you follow when setting your assessment tasks?

Interviewer: What procedures do you follow to ensure that the questions in the assessment are well balanced?

Interviewee: I do not have a balancing the questions, because I rely on the questions that asked by other examiners, on the previous question.

Interviewer: How do you ensure that Bloom's taxonomy is applied when designing your assessments?

Interviewee: I do not have way of ensuring that Bloom's taxonomy is applied I have never had to compile a task by all by myself; I always make use of previous question papers and assessment guidelines.

3. What are the strategies employed by Business studies lecturers in ensuring quality of assessment practices?

Interviewer: How do you ensure that the assessment actually measures the intended goals?

Interviewee: The only reliable way of ensuring that an assessment task is of a good quality and measures the intended goals is by taking it to a fellow colleague to moderate it, a colleague will do what we call a pre moderation of the assessment task to be written task.

Interviewer: How is moderation conducted at your college to improve the quality?

Interviewee: After compiling a task as an assessor, you take the assessment task to fellow colleague or peer for moderation, the peer will do what we call a pre moderation of the task being guided by the pre moderation tool.

Interviewer: How often is moderation conducted in your subject to ensure quality of assessment?

Interviewee: Moderation is conducted for all assessments task which would imply that it's done 5 Times in a year because students write five assessment tasks for the compilation of an assessment task.

Interviewer: What procedure do you follow during the moderation process?

Interviewee: There's a moderation tool which comes with the assessment guidelines which is used, 10% of sample of the marked scripts is taken in for moderation.

Interviewer: How does the process of feedback on moderation assist you in assuring quality?

Interviewee: Moderation feedback doesn't assist me that much personally because usually the changes will be very minimal and sometimes don't make that much of a difference in the marks allocated to the student.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate on the type of feedback you provide to your students?

Interviewee: I will normally say to a student who got a passing mark in this instance which is 50% there is still room for improvement and I believe you can do it; I use this type of feedback because I don't want the students to limit themselves.

Interviewer: What is the role of the following individuals in reviewing your assessments?

Head of Department

Interviewee: Head of department doesn't play any role in reviewing the assessments I compile.

Senior Lecturer

Interviewee: My senior lecturer does play in that she does moderate my tasks

Peers

Interviewee: My peers also play an important role in that they assist with compiling the task and moderation of the task

Interviewer: How do you utilise the moderation feedback from the above mentioned individuals?

Interviewee: I try my level to take advice from my peers and use it to assist the students where possible, because there's always room for improvement.

APPENDIX L
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR LECTURER 2

Semi- Structured interview with Lecturers as participants at Tshwane –North TVET college.

Place: Classroom

Date: 29 /08/2015

Time of interview: 14:30

Duration: 45 Minutes

Interviewer: Nkalane P K

Interviewee: Lecturer L1

Description of the project, telling the interviewee about: the quality of assessments practices in the NCV Business studies programmes.

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors impacting on the quality assessment at TVET colleges

Thank you for participating in the interview.

1. How is assessment planned in the NCV Business studies at TVET colleges to ensure quality assessment practices?

Interviewer: How do you unfold the assessment practice in the classroom environment?

Interviewee: Assessment is unfolded through tests, assignments, classroom observations and practical using different tools. When a task is developed from other campus my senior lecturer always contacts the other campuses for tasks and it never reaches me on time or even if I find it, it is not valid for my students

Interviewer: Can you take me through the process you follow to ensure the quality of your assessment?

Interviewee: In this case I make sure that I develop tasks that are well balanced, preparing students and informing them of the assessments dates and expectations. When a task is developed from other campus my senior lecturer always contacts the other campuses for tasks and it never reaches me on time or even if I find it, it is not valid for my students.

Interviewer: How do you make sure that the content of your assessment assess the intended outcome?

Interviewee: Eh! I focus my assessments on the objectives of the lesson and testing if I have attained the assessments.

2. How is assessment implemented in the NCV Business Studies at TVET college.

Interviewer: How do you implement the ICASS?

Interviewee: ICASS is implemented with reference to policy guide line from the DHET it is expected of us lecturers to work together to develop tasks but I find it difficult to work with colleagues from other campuses because some send assessments tasks that do not have marking guide, rubric or marking tools that are relevant for the task

Interviewer: What obstacles do you experience when implementing ICASS?

Interviewee: Standardisation and uniformity are the biggest challenge and our students are not prepared to work they just want to be spoon-fed with all information and the challenge we have in the country of load shedding really has an impact on the common tasks roll out we might be consistent with assessment plan then on the day of the test, or practical computer test or task, we experience load shedding only to realise the generator is not in good order to assist

Interviewer: Can you take me through the process of designing and developing your assessment tasks?

Interviewee: Subject meetings are convened from central office by curriculum managers. In those meeting tasks developers are nominated. In most cases consultation is minimal.

Interviewer: How do you ensure that Bloom's taxonomy is applied when designing your assessments?

Interviewee: I do not have way of ensuring that Bloom's taxonomy is applied I have never had to compile a task by all by myself; I always make use of previous question papers and assessment guidelines.

Interviewer: What procedures do you put in place to ensure that the questions in the assessment are well balanced?

Interviewee: There is none to date

3. What are the strategies employed by Business studies lecturers in ensuring quality of assessment practices?

Interviewer: How do you ensure that the marks assigned to the student are a true reflection of the student's ability?

Interviewee: There is no system in place to talk to the question above. The policies have been changed many times I don't really use them in my assessment I just use information that is important for my teaching and learning

Interviewer: What criterion do you use to confirm that the assessment task accurately predicts student's performance?

Interviewee: One use previous task as written by students since there is not tool in place to help us to talk to that. I recheck the marks by recounting and allowing students to check and verify my addition. I verify the marks awarded on scripts and compare with my record sheet. The assessment standards are appropriately linked and integrated where possible,

Interviewee: We used to have additional assessment to remedy the situation but currently there is none.

Interviewer: How do you ensure that the assessment actually measures the intended goals?

Interviewee: Specific Outcomes are the tools used to attain goal of assessment.

Interviewer: How is moderation conducted at your college to improve the quality?

Interviewee: Moderation is done by lecturers offering the same subjects on rotational basis there is no document addressing this matter.

Interviewer: How often is moderation conducted in your subject to ensure quality of assessment?

Interviewee: We do Pre-Moderation and Post Moderation, in short is conducted twice.

Interviewer: What procedure do you follow during the moderation process?

Interviewee: We use the check list from the assessment guide line.

Interviewer: How does the process of feedback on moderation assist you in assuring quality?

Interviewee: It does not have any impact since there is no follow up done to this process; it is conducted for compliance sake.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate on the type of feedback you provide to your students?

Interviewee: Students receive formative and summative feedback from the tasks they wrote.

Interviewer: What is the role of the following individuals in reviewing your assessments?

Head of Department

Interviewee: The above has no in reviewing assessments.

Senior Lecturer

Interviewee: The above also is paper pusher since they are not workshop in terms of reviewing assessments.

Peers

Interviewee: The above just fill in the moderation tool and have not impact on reviewing assessment.

Interviewer: How do you utilize the moderation feedback from the above mentioned individuals?

Interviewee: The Head of department will not get any feedback, Senior lecturers only requires to see the moderation tool in the Portfolio of Assessment file. As for the peer he/she helps out work on the tool and students scripts. Thank you for your time.

**APPENDIX M:
COLLEGE ASSESSMENT POLICY**

ASSESSMENT POLICY: Mainstream Education & Training



TSHWANE NORTH COLLEGE FOR FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAININ

Inspiring individuals

This Policy has been issued on the authority of the Principal of Tshwane North College for FET

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2. PURPOSE & KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

The purpose of this Policy is to guide the assessment process and to put standardised processes in place to regulate all assessment activities. *The Assessment Policy is intended to be a comprehensive guide. It provides guidelines for quality assessment activities within the College which will enable facilitators, assessors and internal moderators to work within this policy. This policy responds to the specific needs of the students, industry sectors and the community.*

This Policy will assist Tshwane North College for FET in providing quality control mechanisms to facilitate the assessment process in terms of:

- a. Implementation of an assessment system to gather evidence, make judgements and measure applied competence.
- b. Recognised standards and qualifications on the NQF c. A declaration of Competence/Not Yet Competent.
- d. Maintaining high standards of assessment according to SAQA/ETQA.
- e. *The Outcome Based Approach to Education and Training*
- f. *Developing a clear Student Portfolio and pathway to a career/vocation.*
- g. Equip the students with the necessary confidence to skill themselves and adapt to various work situations.
- h. Broadening and developing organisation skills to enable students to take responsibility for their own development as well as accountability for their own learning.
- i. Providing access to assessment with no discrimination.
- j. Evaluating student achievement to meet the requirements of external assessment systems as set against recognised benchmarks.
- k. *Measuring and reporting student progress and achievements. l. Providing students with accurate feedback on their learning*

1.	Excellent inter12, personal and Communication skills. responsible, fair and objective.
----	--

2.	<i>Training and registering of assessors</i>	<i>Meet the criteria of Assessor ETQA Pass the relevant requirements for <u>accreditation of assessors.</u></i>
3.	<i>Assessment 12,/an</i>	<i>Must still}.late assessment Process. <u>tools and methods.</u> <u>Gathering of evidence. Moderation and non-conformances.</u></i>
4.	<i>Moderation 12,/an.</i>	<i>Will be specified by the Moderators.</i>
5.	<i>Re11.ort to ETQA</i>	<i><u>Verify</u> Assessment.</i>

3. SCOPE

This Policy is applicable to all lecturing and Academic Staff at Tshwane North College for FET. It further makes provision for either making use of our own registered assessors (internal assessors) or, should the need arise, for making use of external assessors.

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy is based on the following legislation and relevant circulars:

- a. The SAQA Act, Act No. 58 of 1995 and relevant regulations under the Act b. Skills Development Act, Act No. 97 of 1998
- 5.3 Requirement and guidelines for Education and Training quality assurance bodies; establishing criteria for the registration of assessors
- 5.4 The MQA's Policy for Accreditation of Training Providers, Guidelines for Provider

Accreditation and Terms and Definitions for Accreditation of Providers

7. 1 *Types of Assessment*

The methods of assessment set out below will be utilized within the Institution bearing in mind that, irrespective of which type of assessment is being conducted; it must be continuous in nature. This means that the assessment will be regular, cyclical and formative of nature. In line with the OBE approach, students should be assessed on an ongoing basis in a variety of ways.

Assessment will be integrated. This means there must be evidence of the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values across the assessment. Students must have the opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved both critical and specific learning outcomes within a single assessment.

7.1.1 Formative assessment

Formative assessment takes place during the process of learning and will be formative in nature (i.e. for the benefit of the students learning rather than for educational decision-making). The formative assessment will consist of combination of theory and practical components.

7.1.2 Summative assessment

Summative assessment is conducted so as to determine whether the student has achieved the outcomes as required by the unit standard. This assessment task can either be conducted in a work-based environment or in a *simulated* work-based environment.

Summative assessment involves direct and systematic observation of specific skills. It covers the practical component of the subject outcomes and is aimed at determining the skills levels of the students as applied in real life situations.

Should the assessor find the learner competent, the credit will be awarded, recorded and reported.

The following parties will be involved in assessment:

7.3.1 Trained and registered Assessors

The trained and registered assessor will have a planned procedure to help conduct the agreed upon assessments. The main assessor functions include:

7.3.1.1 To gather evidence to declare a student as competent or not yet competent;

7.3.1.2 The assessor must excel in observation, questioning and listening skills. The Assessor must:

a) Ensure that marks awarded to a particular unit standard comply with the assessment system and guidelines of that unit standard;

b) Plan the entire process of assessment;

c) Assess in accordance with established criteria;

d) Implement assessment procedures;

e) Draw up assessment plans with learners;

- f) Collect the required evidence
- g) Guide the student through the assessment system, including the responsibility of the student in re-assessment,
- h) Offer the necessary coaching and mentoring required by the student;
- i) Ensure that the assessment system is fair and transparent;
- j) Provide essential and timeous feedback to the students;
- k) Evaluate candidate's evidence and make assessment decisions;
- l) Record assessment decisions:
- m) Review assessment plans;
- n) Complete all the necessary documentation;
- o) Plan for re-assessment. if required;
- p) Ensure that the moderator audits the entire process;
- q) Report to all relevant stakeholders including the ETQAs.
- vii. All documentation in connection with assessment must be kept for record purposes (pre-assessment plan, pre-set questions and answers. feedback form}
- viii. All planning and preparation must be done, keeping cost effectiveness in mind.
- 7.3.2 Trained and registered Moderators Onternal} The Moderators wm facilitate the entire process and be a means of control and management. They will randomly moderate assessments to review consistency and quality of standards.

The Internal Moderator's functions include:

Ensure that the assessor complies with assessment procedure as stated in this policy;

7.3.2.5 Liaise with the ETQA;

7.3.2.6 Manage and decide on appeals for re-assessment:

7.3.2.7 Motivate decisions on appeals In a formal report;

7.3.2.8 Provide support and guidance to assessors.

7.3.3 Subject Matter Experts

The subject matter experts will be a form of guidance to the Assessors in offering support relating to the process and methodology

7.3.6.8 Students must turn up on time for the assessment session. They must also abide by the general examination rules set out in the front page of the examination answer book.

7.3.6.9 The student must take responsibility for handing in work on time as well as for the quality of the product.

7.3.6.10 Students who are unsuccessful in IWO consecutive final overall assessments will not be re-admitted into that specific training again. In these cases the student will be assisted by the Guidance Team to choose an appropriate student path. This procedure is applicable to the present system of Assessment and will be amended as the assessment systems are modified.

7.3.7 Grievance Committee

This committee will be called upon if and when student grievances arise that could not be successfully addressed by the Training Committee.

All findings will be declared constitutionally fair and made available to all role-players.

7.3.8 Administrative staff

The Administrative staff will be utilized for the purposes of data capturing and control.

7.4 The Assessment Process

The following flow diagram is the standard procedure for assessment

Stakeholder agreement on Assessment process

Collect evidence and conduct Assessment

(A proper memorandum discussion must take place prior to evaluation)

Evaluate and provide feedback to learners

Complete Assessment Administration

Documentation of Results

Allow for Re-assessment if necessary

Moderation: will occur at various stages

Report to SETAIETQA

Evaluate and review Assessment process

The Heads of Divisions and Student Administrators are responsible for the accurate, appropriate and secure recording and reporting of all assessment results. All assessments conducted will be recorded in accordance with the accepted practices as required by DHET, SAQA, UMALUSI and the relevant SETA (ETQA).

All student records will be stored for a period of at least THREE years in document form and the details of results will appear in data form on Tshwane North College for FET's data base system

- a) An observation book, sheet or file may be used with the students' name, ID number and learning programme clearly written
- b) This must be done for each individual/earner
- c) In the case where a learning programme requires many mark sheets to be used, a file should be used. Assessments (formative and summative), together with dates, signatures, outcomes of assessments, decisions and action plans. These records should then be stored by the internal verifier in a secure place. They should also be readily accessible.
- d) At the end of the training, a student record should contain: correct names, ID number, a registration form for further personal details, learning programme, hours spent on a learning programme, all records must be kept by the assessor and monitored by the internal moderator

7.4.1.4 Feedback Procedure

- a) Feedback may be oral or written. Oral feedback should be in the form of a dialogue. An action plan may also be outlined at this session.
- iii. Flexible enough to accommodate the addition and deletion
of information when the need arises:
- iv. Genuine factual indications of student strengths and areas of support needed must be included. It should also contain action plans where necessary.
- v. Comprehensive enough to demonstrate student progress.
- vi. continuous.

7.4.1.6 Confidentiality

All Assessment and Moderation documentation will be filed and data controlled. Results of students are of strictest confidence and will not be disclosed to any parties except to the student and the Assessment panel

- a) Information must be stored securely and disclosed only to those who
- b) Candidates must be assured of confidentiality of records at all times and only authorized persons may have access to documentation
- c) Information regarding awarding body documents, policies, guidelines and reports must be monitored by the internal moderator.

7.4.1.7 Resources

- a) Assessment must be planned and budgeted for well in advance
- b) A resource checklist must be made for each assessment (since requirements differ per assessment) by the assessor and checked by the internal verifier. should be in accordance with nationally set papers for the subject.

Each examination paper must reflect the range of different cognitive levels and must in essence align to the Subject Guidelines and Assessment Guidelines.

Term 2 and term 3 are interchangeable - if the examination is written at the end of the second term. at least 60% of the curriculum must have been covered. If the examination is written in the third term at least 80% to 90% of the curriculum must have been covered.

Moderation of assessments conducted will be done in accordance with the College's moderation policy.

7.4.2.5 Setting of assessment tool

suits the type of assessment task being administered must be compiled to match the type and purpose of the assessment task. Even in the case of a practical task. a proper marking tooltools may include, but is not limited to the following:

- a) Rubies

When assessing student performance according to different degrees of correctness per criterion, rubies are best suited. Rubies are commonly applied to practical assignments and open-ended questions

The criterion must describe the knowledge and/or skill to be assessed. The competence descriptors describe the levels of competence for each criterion.

When rubies are used, they should be developed to include 4 competency levels. This will encourage the lecturer to take a decision whether the student's performance falls in the upper or lower half of the 4 levels particular subject and who will be marking the examination scripts **MUST** attend the memorandum discussion.

Feedback to students in the form of highlighting weaknesses and strengths must be written on the marked assessment next to the mark.

7.4.3 Timeframes for Assessment

Timeframes for assessment should adhere to the following:

7.4.3.1 Company Specific

- a) *A company may require an assessment report at specified intervals for the purpose of increments and promotions. This must be discussed at registration and a decision taken by the particular Head of Department.*

7.4.3.2 National Policy

- a) *Assessment should be done on an ongoing basis.*
- b) *Students should be assessed on the nationally agreed outcomes and criteria.*
- c) *Summative assessment should be carried out at the end of the learning period. This can be a written or practical examination taken at a particular time or a series of tests leading to a final year mark.*
- d) *Board examinations are taken after informal training is completed and is assessed by the awarding body.*

ASSESSMENT POLICY: Mainstream Education & Training

Record sheets constitute the official assessment records that must be kept at the college for monitoring, moderation and verification purposes. These records constitute legal evidence should a legal dispute be declared by a student/parent/guardian.

The national 7 - point achievement scale for fundamental subjects and the national 5 - point achievement scale for vocational subjects as included in the Assessment Guidelines for NCNJ subjects must be used to record the level of competence a student has achieved in the ICASS component as a whole. The competence level is arrived at by comparing the final mark in percentage obtained by the student for the ICASS component in each subject against the relevant national codes and awarding the code which matches the percentage obtained for the ICASS component as a whole

The sub-minimum for ICASS in NC (V) subjects is as follows:

- *All vocational subjects: 50 %*
- *Life Orientation and the First Additional Languages: 40%*

- Mathematics OR Mathematical Literacy: 30%

The first implication of this is that a student must comply with the sub-minimum in both the external and internal assessment components to be resulted. The second implication is that both external and internal components must be completed in the same academic year. Whilst the ISAT mark is valid for a period of three years to complete a qualification.

According to paragraph

10 (8) of the National Policy on the Conduct, Administration and Management of the Assessment of the National Certificate Vocational) of 2007, the ICASS mark is only valid up to the first supplementary examinations immediately following the November examinations.

7.4.5 Portfolios

It is expected of both the lecturer and the student to maintain a portfolio which provides evidence of engagement in ICASS tasks. It is the responsibility of the

- j) Evidence of review - diagnostic and statistical analysis, including notes on improvement of the task for future use.

7.4.5.2 Student's Portfolio of Evidence

Students' PoE must contain the following

- a) Student information
- b) Declaration of authentic form - duly completed (signed and dated)
- c) Table of contents
- d) Subject assessment schedule
- e) All marked ICASS task responses (scripts, booklets, computer printouts, etc.)
- f) In the instance of an artefact. evidence must be safely stored and be available on request
- g) A completed assessment tool (e.g. rubric and/or checklist) reflecting student performance where applicable
- h) Records of results
- i) Evidence of moderation (where applicable for those students' whose tasks were moderated)

The student's work should be used to:

- a) Track progress, growth and achievements of the student with regard to expected outcomes;
- b) Create an opportunity for the student to reflect on his/her growth and development and set goals for self-development: and
- c) Inform lecturers' planning regarding extended enrichment or intervention strategies.

7.4.6 Review of Assessments

7.5.1 The student failed/was found to be Not Yet Competent

7.5.2 The students was absent during the original assessment and can provide proof as to a valid reason for his/her absence.

In order to prevent a disparity in mark allocation, all successful re-assessment candidates will only be allocated the minimum pass requirement mark as per particular subject guidelines.

7.6 Appeal

Should any student feel that he or she has been unfairly treated; the student may institute an appeal. All students will be informed of this process during their induction phase. All required documentation will be made available to all students.

The appeal process provides the student with an opportunity to request a review of the assessment outcomes.

Students should have at least 5 lecturing days to lodge an appeal after the results of the assessment.

7.6.1 Handling dissatisfaction and disputes

The student has the right to appeal when unsatisfied with an assessment decision and therefore must have access to the appeal procedures.

PURPOSE: To settle a dispute.

OBJECTIVE: To maintain a fair system of assessment and moderation.

PRINCIPLES: Fair learning experience and impartial judgement.

If the student still does not agree with the reconsidered decision, the Appeal must proceed to step 3. This must also be completed within five working days of submission.

Step 3 - Appeals Panel

In a case where the student remains unhappy with the decision made in step 2, he/she has the right to forward the case to the Appeals Panel. The Internal Moderator concerned with the case must forward the details to the appropriate Manager and the following should be included:

- a) Student Appeal form (appropriately completed)
- b) Assessment Record sheet(s)
- c) Any written comments of the internal moderator (providing background detail)

The manager must convene a panel consisting of:

- i. The manager
- ii. The Internal moderator (involved during step 2)
- iii. The original Assessor
- iv. The Student Course Representative
- v. Union Representative (if required by the Employer)
- vi. Training Committee members

The above group will make up the Appeals Panel.

7.6.1.2 Documentation

Records of all appeals are to be logged and made available to a) The external moderator

- b) The Quality Assurance Sub-committee of the Academic B



2013-01-07 August 2014

Underlined reflect new additions to the existing policy. All words, sentences, paragraphs in () reflect aspects to be deleted from the current version of the policy.

NOTE: During the next review everything that

needs to be excluded will be deleted and all additions will be changed to the normal format, i.e. Arial, 12.

DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW

DATE OF REVIEW	DESCRIPTION OF REVIEWS	NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW
	All sentences, words, paragraphs in <u><i>bold, italic and</i></u>	