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Mini Thesis Title

An investigation of students' role within the governing structures of
educational institutions

Student

Khayaletu Edward Ngaso

Supervisors

Dr. Clive Smith and Dr. Hennie van der Mescht

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Declaration of originality

I hereby declare that the work that has been done in this study is mine. I therefore take responsibility for all that is contained in this work.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloveth wife Tammie and my family at large, for their patience that they have shown me whilst I was engaged in this project day and night.

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I wish to record my sincerest gratitude to the following people:

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Abstract

The question of the role of students in the governance of educational institutions has been an issue for decades in South Africa. It arose out of the desire and struggle by black students for a better sociopolitical environment in general and in education in particular. This demand gained momentum in the years 1976, 1980 and 1985. The result was the establishment of Student Representative Councils, Parent-teacher-Student's Associations at schools, Broad Transformation Forums and Governing Councils at tertiary institutions. After 1994 the government of South Africa started the major task of reconstructing the country particularly education and its governance. Democratic governance was accepted as one of the fundamentals of education by the new department of education. The Schools' Act and the Higher Education Act were passed to give effect to this new spirit in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Students had a statutory right to be involved in all matters of governance in educational institutions. However, in the past two years i.e. 1997 and 1998 the issue of student participation has become controversial with tensions erupting amongst stakeholders particularly management and students. The bone of contention this time has not been whether students have to participate or not but how far should they be involved. The National Education Policy Investigation task team had recommended as early as 1992 for the systematic analysis of the roles of the various stakeholders within the governing structures to avoid the present situation to no avail.

The aim of this study therefore was to investigate students' perceptions of their role within the governing structures and to assess the implications of such a role for the management of educational institutions. Central to this largely fact finding mission was an attempt to make a contribution engaging students in this debate and get to know them afresh, thereby understand their position, what their perception is about their role in the governance of their institutions. For this purpose the study used phenomenology as the method of research. The reason for that I wanted a methodology which will enable me to produce a report which would not be contaminated with my preconceived ideas about the phenomenon. The tool used for data-gathering was the interview. In-depth interviews were conducted with four student leaders. They were selected purposely due to the fact that they were involved in the governance of their various institutions.

The study revealed the complexity of this phenomenon. It indicates that student involvement is crucial for harmonious relations to prevail and the creation of a climate of learning and teaching at educational institutions.

Students saw their role as that of legitimising the process of decision-making. This is coupled with enforcing the management to be transparent, bringing back the rule of law, making sure that educational institutions are transformed, that students are empowered and capacitated and looking at the welfare of students.

A recommendation that emerge from the study is that much investigation is needed on student participation. Areas which needed much attention are specified in the study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 A point of no return

Throughout the centuries starting in 1652 the struggle in South Africa has been about control or stakeholder involvement in the socio- political environment in general and in education in particular. Keto (1990: 26) put this in the following manner: “Since schools are institutions of socialisation they become contested terrain”. According to this writer, control has always been uneven with black parents having limited power over the decision making processes that determine policy regarding the education of their children (Keto, 1990: 22).

The result of this was total rejection especially by traditional leaders who saw the educational institution as an “agency that weakens and then effaces all tribal bonds and customs” (Molteno, 1984: 50). The period between 1652 and 1976 was therefore characterised by parents taking the lead in the struggle for control in education (Hartshorne, 1992: 63). According to this writer the above statement does not mean that students were idle and not aware of the social and economic conditions that affected their lives (Hartshorne, 1992: 63). Molteno (1984: 78) argued that the demand for control or as it manifested itself, resistance, goes back to the very first formal educational institution when slave children ran away from it, so that it had to close.

The turning point in the struggle for control by students was in 1976, when with strong organisational leadership, they challenged openly the educational establishment. Kallaway (1994: 20) described the situation in the following manner:

...The very institutions designed to propagate education for domestication on the Verwoerdian model, turned out to be Trojan horses. The upsurge of student power - probably without historical precedent ... marked the beginning of the new era of resistance to apartheid.

There was a shift in the strategy used to fight apartheid education. According to Millar (1991: ix) there was a shift away from reaction and protest to seizing small initiatives on a number of fronts particularly in the years between 1984 and 1988.

Students were mobilised to discredit key institutional structures by bypassing official structures and organising alternative decision-making bodies who were accountable to the mass movement. These alternative decision-making bodies were the Student Representative Councils (SRCs) and Parent, Teacher and Student Associations (PTSAs) which Mashamba (1991: 8) called, the organs of people's power.

Reading the accounts above, one is left with no doubt that the struggle thus far has been about student involvement in decision making at educational institutions. To some extent this has been achieved because students presently are represented in the PTSAs and the governing councils which are the highest decision-making bodies in the educational institutions. The questions that a student of student politics would need answers for would be the following:

1. Now that students are involved in decision making, are the institutions stable?
2. Is there a culture of learning and teaching at educational institutions?
3. Are there harmonious relations among stakeholders at the institutions?

These questions were answered by Chinsamy (1995: IV) when he stated that the question of student participation has become a point of controversy. A cry by Makapela (1997: 18) is testimony to this fact:

Students have to get rid of the notion that they are co-managers of institutions higher learning. It is in fact this notion that they believe that they are entitled to all benefits due to administrators.

Though Chinsamy admitted that student involvement was controversial, he indicated that student involvement in the management of educational institutions was crucial for the creation of a climate conducive to learning and teaching which in turn would result in stability in educational institutions.

From the above, one can deduce that the process of involving students in the governing structures at educational institutions had been started and its reversal could have detrimental results. The next step is to look at how this process could be strengthened and nurtured to the benefit of all stakeholders within an educational institution.

But this step is dependent upon an understanding by all stakeholders, particularly students as to what is expected of them and what are the responsibilities associated with the process. It is also dependent on stakeholders knowing their roles within the governing structures at educational institutions.

As my focus is on students in this particular work, I believe the way to obtain an insight into how they see their role within the governing structures is to ask them. I believe that this is the only way that I can understand how students experience and perceive their involvement in decision-making in their institutions. The result of this I believe would be an understanding of students' position concerning this phenomenon. It is only then that I believe that the three questions posed earlier can be honestly answered.

Now that I have given a brief introduction I believe that for the reader to be able to grasp fully what I am talking about, it is proper at this juncture to give a background to this study and locate it within a context.

1.2 Background and context

The question of the role of students in the governing structures of educational institutions has been an issue for decades in South Africa as attested to in the introduction. It arose out of the desire and struggle by black students for a better socio-political environment in general and in education in particular. The first recorded response by authorities to the demand by students for control of their destiny was in 1945 in an article in the *South African Outlook* which read:

...It seems unthinkable that any body of pupils should have claimed the right to govern, or thought themselves capable of governing an educational institution in any of its internal affairs or in regard to appointments to the staff, but it is these unthinkable things that are happening amongst some African students today (Molteno, 1984: 81).

To me this response was an acknowledgement and indication by educational authorities that something was not right in the governance and management of educational institutions as far as students were concerned. Also this response showed that students were not prepared to accept the status quo i.e. autocratic governance and management of educational institutions. But the educational authorities failed to read the writing on the wall.

This failure by authorities to read the signs resulted in the 1976 revolt, which was unprecedented in the history of South Africa and was the first milestone for students on their road to get control of their destiny. There were demands for democracy, transparency, and transformation of educational institutions. The heads of educational institutions, who traditionally held the reins of governance and management, faced increased challenges from teachers, parents and students, all wanting a say in decision-making structures (Chinsamy, 1995: 1).

Eventually these demands by students were accepted and "implemented" at many educational institutions. The general election of 1994, a victory for black students, ushered in a new dispensation in the socio-political environment in general and in education in particular. The reconstruction of education became a priority amongst other matters for the new government. This was a very important step by the new government because as Hartshorne put it:

Education policies and systems in any country reflect its political options, its traditions and values and its conceptions of the future; and exist in the context of a particular social, economic, political and constitutional order (1985: 41).

The government acted with great speed and established two commissions of enquiry i.e. the Hunter Commission and the National Commission on Higher Education. The results of these commissions were two acts which govern schooling in South Africa i.e. the Schools' Act of 1996 and the Higher Education Act of 1997. These two acts give students the rights to be part of all decision-making processes in educational institutions. This is in line with the views of a growing number of educationists who agree that there is a need for students to play a role within the decision-making structures and processes at educational institutions (Dewey, 1948; Wringe, 1984; White, 1983 & 1987; Hartshorne, 1992; Snauwert, 1993). Brunyee (1998: 14) is of the view that effective student involvement in decision making contributes to a maturity on campus which results in co-ownership of the institution. The proponents of this view find support in Mill as cited in Morrow:

... The rights and interest of every or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is able, and habitually disposed, to stand up for them... (Morrow, 1985: 338).

However, implementation of the spirit of the two acts is proving to be difficult. The reason is the vagueness of the two acts on the role of each stakeholder within the governing structures. For example, both acts advocate co-operative governance on institutional level without expatiating what that means. The Hunter Report (Wits EPU, 1995: 6) even stated that some parents might object to the inclusion of teachers and students in major decision making. Thus they could not force educational institutions to follow the designs they laid out. The reports of these two commissions implied that specific circumstances and practices of each institution should determine the role that should be played by students.

Amongst the various advocates of student involvement there seems to be no agreement as to what this phenomenon entails. There seems to be a lack of knowledge about the actual role and how students themselves perceive their position within the governing structures in the various educational institutions. This was evident as far back as 1992 during the National Education Conference in Broederstroom when a sub-commission tasked to suggest proposals on students and governance reported:

We find it impossible to develop a position that will answer the needs of different institutions- schools, colleges, and technikons.

And they advised:

For harmonious relationships, students should participate where appropriate and as democratically determined by all stakeholders (Meintjies, 1992: 56-57).

This statement was criticised by the conference for being “too loose” and giving no guidance. This lack of a clear cut role for students is causing confusion, tensions and at times open revolts in many educational institutions particularly high schools and institutions of higher learning. In some instances students are perceived as co-managers and administrators of their institutions. They also regard themselves as such in many instances. The probable reason for such beliefs are that they are represented in the Councils and PTSA's which are the highest decision making bodies of institutions of higher learning and high schools. As members of the highest structures in these institutions they become involved in employment and dismissal of staff, in major decision making processes and enjoy benefits enjoyed by other stakeholders in such structures.

From the above it is clear that a problem exists about students' participation in the governance and administration of educational institutions. Therefore below I give a brief overview of this contention.

1.3 The problem

There is a great deal of confusion on this subject, as described above. There seems generally to be a lack of knowledge about the actual role of students and how students themselves perceive their position within governing structures in various educational institutions in general and in institutions of higher learning in particular. This anomaly is reflected in the fact that, in all the material that I have read so far, about student participation, I have not come across any documentation that states that the students were ever asked to articulate their position about the role that they would like to play in the governance of their institutions.

What we know and was fought for by civil society in general and by students in particular, was that educational institutions must be transformed and democratised and the workings of the administrations should be transparent. These terms were never defined and clarified when it came to their implementation. Students further had a demand “we want to rule ourselves” (National Education Policy Investigation [NEPI], 1992: 26) The question arises, what do students think should be their role in the governance of their institutions because the demand mentioned above is open to many interpretations.

A simplistic interpretation could be that they want to be involved in student affairs whatever that means, and not to be involved in administrative functions of these institutions. Another could be that they do not want any control from adults i.e. Principals, Rectors, Teachers and Parents. The question I posed to myself when I reached this point was how could I get clarity and understanding on this subject? There were many roads available for me to take. I decided on one, the one I felt would get me there directly without detours. That road was asking students themselves. I believed that that would give me the answers that would to a large extent clear the confusion shrouding this phenomenon.

1.4 Motivation for the study

It is the above mentioned question and the confusion surrounding student participation that motivated me to investigate this area. Two things spurred my interest:

1. The results of a research I conducted in 1997 on students’ involvement in the governance of their institutions. The results were not conclusive and left me more confused

2. A suggestion from the NEPI that:

There is a need for a systematic analysis of the role of various constituencies within the governing structures as there are no clear distinctions drawn between participants (NEPI, 1992: 26).

This research will try to solicit exactly what students perceive their role to be. This I believe will help the government, administrators, educators, parents and students to:

- know the views and perceptions of students concerning their participation in governing structures
- improve relationships between managers, educators, parents and students
- help management to understand students' thinking about their role in governing structures
- start a debate on the issue, which would help the government in clarifying the role of students in governance

In this study therefore I want to investigate and elucidate students' perceptions about their potential role in the governance of their institutions, focusing on four educational institutions in the Eastern Cape.

1.5 Definition of terms

Student involvement: refers to the ability of students to make a meaningful contribution to decision making in educational institutions. The term is used interchangeably with participation.

Students: refers to black students in educational institutions. The term is used interchangeably with children.

Educational institutions: refers to schools, colleges, technikons and universities.

1.6 Aims

1.6.1 To investigate students' perceptions of their role within the governing structures at educational institutions.

1.6.2 To assess the implications of such a role for the management of Educational institutions.

1.7 Objective

The objective is to try and help ease tensions between educators and students, thus creating an environment where there is understanding amongst stakeholders in educational institutions.

1.8 Research Methodology

I conducted this research within the interpretive paradigm, because I want to understand the life world of my participants from their own frame of reference (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1975: 5). Within this paradigm I used Phenomenology. According to Van der Mescht (1996: 40) when the researcher uses phenomenology, he is bound to attempt to enter the world of participants in order to gain an understanding of the participants' *lebenswelt* and have an insight into how it is constituted. This then meant that I should identify fully with my participants. This according to Van der Berg (1972: 47) was putting myself in my participants' existence, "in his world".

I collected data from a sample of presidents of student representative councils of educational institutions in the Eastern Cape. I chose four of them as key informants through purposive sampling (Bailey, 1978: 94).

I conducted in-depth interviews with these presidents (Cannell & Kahn as cited in Mahlangu, 1987: 87). During the interview I asked questions about the perception students have about their role in the decision making structures and its implications for the management and governance in their various institutions. Other questions were developed from the answers given by my participants.

I am aware of the limitations of conducting research on a phenomenon that I grapple with on a daily basis, more so as one of my participants was from my institution. However, I attempted to bracket my personal preconceptions and judgments, and, to the fullest extent possible, remained faithful to the data (Van der Mescht, 1996).

Having transcribed the interviews, and checked them for accuracy, I took them back to my participants for verification. I used that opportunity to ask my participants for clarification of those areas that slipped through during the interviews.

I analysed the data by delineating natural meaning units and explicating dominant themes as they emerged spontaneously from the reading.

1.9 Outline of the study

In this chapter, the background to the study was presented which attempted to locate and contextualise the research questions. The problem, the definition of terms, the aims, the objective and the research methodology central to the investigation were defined.

Chapter two presents a review of the literature available on the subject under investigation. It moves from a premise that the subject under investigation is located within the discussion of participatory democracy. Approaches to management and administration are briefly touched on.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology employed in the study. The chapter starts with an exposition of the methodology. It then highlights important features of the methodology and justifies its usage. The techniques employed in the research process and the method of analysis are then discussed.

Chapter four arranges the data and attempts to make it manageable. Natural meaning units are delineated and described without additions. This chapter provides a structure description of my participants.

Chapter five is a continuation of chapter four but provides a deeper structure description of my participants contextualising them within their life worlds.

Chapter six moves from the specific structure description to a more general description, thus transforming the meaning units into the language of the phenomenologist.

Chapter seven provides the general statement.

Chapter eight discusses the general statement.

Chapter nine provides the conclusion and looks at the strengths and weaknesses of the study, the implication of the study and provides recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A virgin territory in need of cultivation

Progress in research on student involvement in the governance of educational institutions is very slow and scanty. Seekings (1993: ix) argues that this is the case because of the small number of studies focusing “on youth politics” with youth organisations, actions and attitudes remaining undocumented. Chinsamy (1995: 8) on the other hand attributes this to the fact that this phenomenon has not been taken seriously by education authorities. This writer maintains that “there have been a few attempts at student self-government in Britain and America”, while in South Africa this phenomenon emerged as a result of the struggle by students for a better education system (Chinsamy, 1995: 8).

According to Cross the education crisis between the years 1976 and 1980 eventually committed many social scientists “to a more serious approach to the study of education in South Africa” (Cross, 1986: 185). But these approaches were flawed in that “the social composition of the protesters in 1976-77 had been inadequately explored in existing accounts” (Seekings, 1993: 25). One of the reasons this writer puts forward was the limited range of sources drawn on, little use of oral testimony or even court records. This writer further argues that the accounts of these years viewed “the revolts from the outside, focusing on the objective features of the structural context rather than on the participants” (Seekings, 1993: 25).

The scenario depicted by Seekings above clearly shows why in 1998 there is still confusion on the subject. No one clearly understands what is meant by student involvement. The concept means different things to different people. The question is what are the provisions about student involvement from the government, community organisation and student organisation, what have they to say about this?

In 1994 the African National Congress put its case on the matter in its Policy Framework for Education and Training:

...The powers and functions of school boards need to be carefully drawn up after a process of consultation. Democratic participation in school governance must be distinguished from the responsibilities for the management and administration of the school which are vested in school principals (Underlining my emphasis) (1994: 24).

This position by the ANC clearly distinguished between participation in policy formulation, which must be vested in the governing bodies of educational institutions and management and administrative issues. Its aim was to make sure that there was no clash of interests between administrative and governing issues. The former was to deal solely with the day today running of the institution and carry out the mandates given to it by the latter.

But this position fell short of the call by the National Education Policy Investigation in 1992, which stated that:

There is a need for a more systematic analysis of the role of PTSA's and parents, teachers, students and workers in the governing process (Underlining my emphasis) (NEPI, 1992: 27).

It put the following reasons:

... No clear distinctions have been drawn between participation in overall control of schools, planning at the national level, regional and local levels, and administration and management of institutions. Neither have the different control needs of different institutions been considered beyond the demand that the system must be democratised.

There is very limited information given concerning the patterns and mechanisms of accountability that would be inherent in any democratization of governance functions, and these need to be considered in more detail (Underlining my emphasis) (NEPI, 1992: 27).

Three things come out strongly from the quotation:

- (1) that the roles of the different stakeholders within the governing councils needed to be analysed.
- (2) that an investigation of the different control needs of different institutions had to be conducted i.e. democracy had to be defined by each institution.
- (3) an investigation of the patterns and mechanisms of accountability as a result of democratisation had to be conducted.

These investigations were crucial for the successful implementation of transformation of educational institutions. The report did not confine its quest for information on the role of governing council and administration and management. It wanted a thorough investigation as the ANC report requested.

The NEPI report therefore understood as early as 1992 that it was not only the separation of functions that were to be investigated, though that was also important, but also the role of each and every stakeholder representative within the governing structures. It had the foresight that there would be problems emanating from the representatives themselves but it had no solution or recommendations to this problem. I say this because it also did not have any recommendations to be considered by future commissions. What is important about this report is that it identified areas which would be problematic when the democratisation of institutions was finally achieved. It also pointed out the shortcomings of some of the demands made by the revolutionaries, particularly the call for “democracy” which was not defined and is yet to be defined when it comes to educational institutions.

With the above scenario facing me, setting off on this journey has been, to say the least very difficult and at times frustrating. At first I thought I knew the territory well, after having been involved in it for the past eight years. It is a territory which every stakeholder involved in education talks about. But the moment I started my journey, the first thing I came to understand was that I was on an unusual journey, which is known yet simultaneously not known. This paradoxical situation is explained later in this chapter. What then is the situation at educational institutions and what theories if any are employed to continue this debate on student involvement?

2.2 HOT AREA WITH SCATTERED THUNDER SHOWERS: THUNDER SHOWERS EXPLORED

Participatory democratic theory has provided a framework within which student involvement in decision- making is discussed. “The underlying assumptions about the human being which informs this theory are that everyone, given the opportunity, is capable of developing leadership abilities” (Walters, 1987: 353).

Individual freedom, and greater equality amongst all members are very important and emphasised in this theory. In a sense this was a change of strategy particularly after 1985. According to Unterhalter:

The demands of the previous period had been concerned primarily with equal access to education for black and white, with the medium of instruction, and with the oppressive nature of the apartheid state. In the new phase, signaled by the adoption of the Declaration on People’ Education ... These earlier demands were not abandoned but placed within a different context. (Underlining my emphasis) (Unterhalter, undated: 29).

A new approach to education was thus formulated thereby linking education and the struggle for education with the struggle for national liberation (Unterhalter, undated: 29). According to this writer this new approach “highlighted the education arena as an important site of the national liberation struggle and the process of education as an important aspect of that struggle” (Unterhalter, undated: 29). Education now had to prepare students for a democratic South Africa. This was clearly articulated in the Declaration on People’s Education:

People’s education ... was education that enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial democratic system... stimulates critical thinking and analysis; eliminates illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of any person by another, equips and trains all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain people’s power in order to establish a non-racial democratic South Africa (Underlining my emphasis) (Unterhalter, undated: 29).

Besides the calls for the establishment of democratically elected SRCs by high schools, students at the Universities of Western Cape (UWC) and the Durban Westville (UDW) and to a lesser extent at the universities of Witwatersrand and Cape Town, questioned the very nature of the universities, their admissions policies and their lack of accountability to the black community (Unterhalter, undated: 30-31). The highly authoritarian structures in White education were called into question.

People’s education therefore called for a system of education which was responsive to people’s needs and aspirations. These needs and aspirations had to be in harmony with the spirit of the day i.e. democratisation of institutions of governance in the country in general and in educational institutions in particular. Education therefore had to prepare good citizens who would contribute to the welfare of a democratic country. The question arises, how were educational institutions to be turned into sites of the liberation struggle?

2.3 EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

2.3.1 Education, a vehicle for change

The arguments for student participation are in line with the demands for the democratisation of institutions of governance in the country in general and of educational institutions and its management and governance structures in particular.

But according to Green (Undated: 2) “democracy...is not only a contested concept but also a remarkably ambiguous one”. He argued that it is impossible to eliminate ambiguity and contradictions in its usage because they are built within the very concept. But educationists agree on the fact that more often than not, democracy is associated with politics, rather than a way of life. This is what Green (Undated: 14) highlighted when he said:

... We have not seen the popular face of democracy because we have been looking for it in the wrong place: in constitutions in legislatures; in elective monarchs ... and worst of all in the abstract attitudes.

He advised:

We would do better at least initially, to understand this hidden face of democracy as a series of moments: moments of popular insurgency and direct action ... we would do better to conceive of the real history of democracy as the history of popular struggle, in which the people learn how to govern themselves.

It is therefore within this context as described by Green that I examine the issue of democracy i.e. democracy as a way of life, and it is within this framework of a democratic life as a process that student participation in institutional governance was investigated.

This notion finds its home in the works of radical democrats like Dewey (1948), Harbermas (1972), and Snauwaert (1993). These writers championed the idea of community and communication as important to the growth of the individual and society.

Snauwaert (1993: 60) presented a view of institutional governance and student participation that is located within the framework of a developmental conception of democracy which he attributed to the political thoughts of Mills, Rousseau, Marx, Dewey and Gandhi. According to him the common factor in their thoughts was that human development should be the guiding value in exercising choice over the kind of society individuals would like to have and this is dependent on participation in the policy-making processes of the social institution one is a member of.

In support of this developmental conception of democracy Prinsloo and Beckman (1988: 100) had this to say:

It is logical that the recognition of the child's rights to be heard and articulate his needs and aspirations must lead to his being allowed to participate in the events and decision making processes which determine the cause and quality of education provided to him. (Underlining my emphasis).

According to these two writers therefore education must be a tool which develops the student to his or her full potential. It must provide him or her with the necessary guidance that would enable him or her with the means to develop as a human being not as a sub-species which had been the trend in the education of the black student in South Africa before 1994. Education was not therefore intended to train black students for servitude.

2.3.1.1 Consensus as a principle of democracy

Often an argument is underpinned by a principle. What then could be the principle here on which this argument is based? Democracy in the classical sense and representative government in the contemporary sense, have in common that they are both legitimised by a philosophy of majority rule (Green, Undated: 4). In contrast to this notion Snauwaert (1993: 76) takes consensus as opposed to majority rule as being consistent with the developmental ideal.

According to this writer the conception of participation in consensus decision-making is premised upon an equality of decision-making authority which is threatened by the stratification on the grounds of race, class and gender which in turn bring the notion of unequal power into the decision-making process (Snauwaert, 1993: 81).

Conflict is inevitable in any decision-making process since each individual brings with him or her, his or her personal or constituency's interest. According to Snauwaert (1993: 76) conflict in the developmental ideal is transformed through dialogue which constitutes a search for some common principle upon which all participants would agree.

Barber as cited by Chinsamy (1995: 25) put it this way:

Strong democracy resolves conflict through a participatory process which aims to transform conflict rather than suppress it.

This is in keeping with Dewey's line of thought as he saw the essence of democracy as a mode of associate living of conjoined communicate experience. Thus according to Becker and Couto (1996: 2) in agreement with Dewey (1948) it is possible for citizens to learn basic values of democratic citizenship such as how to:

- respect one another
- listen to one another
- think critically together about common problems and issues
- arrive at solutions to mutual problems creatively in a community setting and
- work together in implementing solutions.

For democracy to thrive therefore consensus seeking amongst stakeholders must be the underlying principle guiding debates in educational institutions. The basic values mentioned above could be attained if education could cultivate and nurture this principle in students.

But in educational institutions the traditional authority of the teachers over students can easily turn into unequal power relations and threaten the developmental conception (Snauwaert, 1993: 81). In support of Snauwaert, Caspany as cited in Becker and Couto (1996: 27) said that traditional authority is the security, safety net of professional authority backed by the power of grades.

The key therefore to ensuring consensual decision- making is to create conditions under which dialogue can take place. Caspany as cited in Becker and Couto (1996: 29) expanded on this when they said:

The value of mutuality, dialogue and non-violence can be seen as an indispensable micro foundation for democracy in larger spheres.

2.3.1.2 Community participation versus competency

There have been instances where this principle of consensus has been disregarded to the detriment of democracy. Snauwaert (1993: 64) provided a reason for this when he argued that there is tension between the demand for direct community participation on developmental grounds and the demand for expert control on the grounds of competency and efficiency.

Schumpeter as cited by Green (Undated: 5) illuminated this tension when he stated that; “ the people are capable of nothing but choosing leaders. Most people are neither competent to participate in governance nor desire to do so”. Schumpeter clearly advocates a scenario where the governance of a people is left to the “professionals”.

In educational institutions the implication of what Schumpeter has said is that teachers are possessors of power and knowledge therefore the professionals. They then should dictate terms to the student because “ there is a great difference in the status level between the instructor and the student” (Rogers, 1983:185).

According to Rogers (1983: 186) the above constitutes a disregard of democracy and its values:

Students do not participate in choosing the goals, the curriculum, or the manner of working. These things are chosen for students. Students have no part in the choice of teaching personnel, nor any any voice in educational policy.

But from a developmental perspective, Snauwaert (1993: 64) argued that participation must not be subordinate to competence, rather these tensions must complement each other. He explained this by the democratic use of expertise in which the community may consult and delegate certain decisions to experts. Chinsamy (1995: 25) simplified this argument by stating that all individuals must be given the right to decision making while at the same time the collective interest of the many are preserved. The facilitative nature of this perspective makes “a profound change in the power relationship of the educational setting” (Rogers, 1983: 191).

The student is respected and prized. According to Rogers (1983: 191) conditions of this nature “ foster all kinds of learning, both personal and intellectual”. Also students improve in their way of perceiving themselves and in their social behaviour. According to the developmental conception of democracy, therefore, the “authorities” in educational institutions must facilitate a climate in which the students would develop in all their faculties and grow to be responsible citizens.

This can only be facilitated in an environment where “the decision-making power is in the hands of the individual or individuals who will be affected by the decision” (Rogers, 1983: 189).

A precondition of what I have stated above according to Rogers (1983: 188) is that:

A leader or a person who is perceived as an authority figure in a situation is sufficiently secure within herself and in her relationship to others that she experiences an essential trust in the capacity of others to think for themselves, to learn for themselves. She regards human beings as trustworthy organisms.

If the scenario as depicted by Snauwaert and Rogers is present in an educational institution there should not be a competition between the “expert” and the students. A healthy environment could be cultivated for the benefit of all stakeholders in an institution and as Snauwaert would have it the “tensions” would complement each other.

2.3.2 Education and democratic participation – The dilemma

Morrow (1985: 332) defined a dilemma as “two views which...have powerful intuitive appeal but are incompatible with each other in the sense that they cannot both be true at the same time”. According to this writer the moment one starts to think about democracy and education, one is faced with a dilemma because one is immediately confronted by two views which “seem to be true but **both** cannot be true” (Morrow, 1985: 332). There are powerful arguments for both views.

In this section therefore, I give the reader a feel for these arguments by dividing them in terms of Morrow’s two broad categories namely view one and view two.

2.3.2.1 View one – Argument against democratic education

View one’s argument according to Morrow (1985: 332) has a faultless democratic lineage and contends that education for and participation in democratic decision-making are two separate processes. The argument states that education for democratic participation prepares one for participating in a democracy. The argument’s standpoint is that students must first be taught how to participate in democratic decision-making before they may actually participate.

It is premised in the thought that:

although all persons should be regarded as politically competent (in the sense of having a right to take part in political decision-making) unless a very strong indication of personal incapacity is produced, those under the age of, say, eighteen should not be counted among the political competent (Morrow, 1985: 332).

This argument goes on to state that:

The real world of politics, of political deliberation and decision, is a world of rational beings, and education is the preparation of those who are not yet rational for participation in the world of politics. Education cannot be 'democratic' because those who are yet to be educated do not yet possess the capacities and abilities, in particular those related to rationality, which are a prerequisite for participation in the democratic process (Morrow, 1985: 333).

My contention is that the above argument is in fact very discriminatory and anti-democratic and is used to deny students taking their rightful place in the governance of their institutions. A lot of questions could be posed on the argument presented by Morrow particularly in the context of South Africa where all students particularly in black educational institutions, irrespective of the levels, are taken as children and therefore irrational. Morphet and Millar (1981: 34) attributed this to:

...The conceptual confusion ... rooted in a conception of education and in educational structures for education that tend to interpret education as coterminous with childhood and adolescence with adulthood as its goal. Education is normally conceived of as initial education, from primary through to tertiary level (Underlining my emphasis).

Morphet and Millar bring out another dimension to this argument, the aim of education, which is adulthood. The implication of this is that educators are there to lead the not yet educated, not yet rational and therefore not yet adult to a journey that would eventually stop when they reach their destination, adulthood. The educators therefore are trained to structure their education and tuition to suit this type of a human being. This type of a human being needs guidance from primary to tertiary level. That is why for instance in South Africa according to these two writers there is a lack of professional preparation for adult educators.

They put this in the following manner:

... While there is a substantial investment in the professional education of school teachers, which takes place on a massive scale under a variety of government departments, the professional preparation of educators of adults has been almost totally neglected by educational institutions (Morphet and Millar, 1981: 33)

Many arguments barring students from actively participating in institutional governance take their cue from the above rationale. In the following sections therefore I give the reader a glimpse of arguments which support the anti – democratic tendencies.

2.3.2.1.1 Rationality a handicap in democratic participation in institutional governance

Most of the literature against student participation presents its case by advancing the argument that students are not rational and mature enough to engage meaningfully in the affairs of educational institutions. Morrow (1985: 333) emphasises rationality as a qualification to participate in democratic participation. This rationale can be traced back to the ancient Israelites, Spartans and Athenians.

In ancient Israel, the father as head of the head of the family was responsible for educating his children. If the child or children refused to listen to him or city elders, he or they were punished harshly. Children were required to show unconditional respect for and obedience to their parents. Cursing either of his or her parents was a justification for him or her to be killed (Deutoromy, 18: 21; Exodus, 21:17 and Leviticus, 20: 9).

This is clearly illustrated in the testing of Abraham by the Lord in Genesis (22: 2) which read:

God said, take now your son Isaac, whom you love and go to the region of Moniah; and offer him as a burned offering upon one of the mountains of which I will tell you.

The child Isaac had no option but to obey his father. Such was the respect and love the children of ancient Israel had for their fathers because that was how they were socialised.

In Sparta, children were the commodity of the state without any rights. Even parents did not have any rights over their children. Only selected parents were allowed to produce children. Weak children were put to death with only those that were physically sound and strong, granted a chance of life (Verster, Theron & Van Zyl, 1982: 69).

In Athens Plato wrote that the young person was vulnerable to certain things pertaining to the adult world. Because the child was young and tender, the adult was obliged “ to protect him against everything which is untrue, unclean, immoral and burdensome” (Plato as cited by Verster, Theron and Van Zyl, 1982: 61).

Aristotle in agreeing with Plato wrote that the child was “ feeble and false in mind as ... a madman” (Verster et al, 1982: 61). To him the child was imperfect proving that the adult is superior to the immature child. Thus the child was in no position to make or take decisions together with his father.

Philosophers like Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes reinforced this view. Rousseau regarded the child as someone to be protected. He wrote:

Tender anxious mothers I appeal to you. You can remove this young tree from the highway and shield it from the crushing of social conventions (Verster et al, 1982: 77).

Locke believed that children were to be under the jurisdiction of their parents, till they could shift for themselves (Worsford, 1974: 44). The reason for this was that they lacked understanding therefore they could not exact their will. He further argued that the authority of parents should be absolute (Curtis and Boulton, 1953: 239).

Hobbes on the other hand argued that children could not be granted rights, for the logic of the primary relationship between the father and the child does not allow it (Gauthier, 1965: 118). According to him, in line with what has been stated in the above paragraphs, the father has the power of life and death over his children (Gauthier, 1965: 188).

The views above are shared by a number of contemporary philosophers of education. Van Zyl as cited in Verster et al (1982: 86) argued that the child is dependent upon his fellow humans. In this argument, the child is in a state of total dependence and helplessness. The adult has to care for and protect him against harmful influences. According to Van Zyl as cited in Verster (1982: 72):

If it were not for dwelling together with and the living example set by fellow humans, the human child would never become fit to take on the world prepared for him by others”
(underlining my emphasis).

This sentiment is shared by Peters as cited in Kim (1990: 235):

Education consists essentially in the initiation of members of a society into a form of life that is thought (by society) to be worthwhile.

2.3.2.1.2 Economic considerations used as a handicap to participation

Wringe (1984) and Dunlop (1979) are proponents of this argument. According to Wringe (1984: 77) students have limited experience and reasoning power. He advanced the argument that students need to have choices made for them, to receive guidance, support and coercion necessary to achieve ends, which they would be able, if they were more rational. He went further to say that adults may find that their preferred courses of action may sometimes be over ruled and their goals hindered by the votes of students, who because they are not rational are likely to be swayed by demagoguery, momentary enthusiasm or mere whim.

According to him therefore, in the interest of efficiency and good order a totalitarian rather than a democratic form of institutional management is best. The reasons he forwarded are on economic grounds. He contended that student participation in decision-making was inefficient in terms of money, time and resources. It increased administrative costs and demanded additional structures to be established for the communication of necessary information.

This sentiment is evident in Dunlop (1979: 47):

All experiences show that if there is to be discussion of everything that affects people, an enormous amount of time has to be set aside for meetings. How schools could ever find time for this extra claim for time table space (even if it were thought worthwhile) altogether escapes me.

The overriding thought running through this argument is that it is not economically viable to have students participating in decision-making because students by nature are irrational. To rationalise with them therefore would be a waste of time and money.

2.3.2.1.3 Fear of loss of status by educators a handicap in participation in institutional governance

Buckley as cited by Wringe (1984: 47) stated that the fear by teachers for their status and self respect is one of the reasons which militates against students participating in the governance of educational institutions. The feeling therefore is that if students sit around the table with educators, the latter would be the loser. According to Becker and Couto (1996: 27) student involvement meant giving up the security, the safety net of professional authority backed by the power of grades.

Scrimshaw (1975:62) endorsed this sentiment:

In the interest of competence, authority in schools must be left to teachers and principals.

Strike (1982: 49) echoed this view when he declared; “Virtually all decisions in schools are intellectually rooted and therefore belong to teachers”. The emphasis in this argument is on competence, that students are by nature not equal to teachers and therefore not in the same league as them. Therefore, educators should not lower themselves and make and take decisions with students. The reason is that students are not competent to take major decisions, which need rationalising and reflection. Therefore, by putting emphasis on competence and intellectual expertise students are excluded from authoritative decision-making (Chinsamy, 1995; Gutman, 1987)

2.3.2.1.4 Political motives as a handicap in democratic participating in institutional governance

White (1983: 97-98) advanced arguments against student participation on political grounds. She argued that politics are about power therefore political skills whether they are exercised in a democratic framework or not, are predominantly those that enable one to impose one’s own view on others and get one’s own policy translated into corporate action. The love of power and the competition of rival factions are typical of any political activity.

Therefore, the democratic participation in institutional governance is likely to whet the appetite for power and intrigue (White, 1983: 97 citing Dunlop). To her there was no reason why educational institutions should necessarily emphasise power sharing rather than be concerned with doing what is right in the context of the whole community.

According to White students must just appreciate the fact that their institution has a democratic structure and must understand that it cannot be changed to fit them, rather they change to fit it. According to White (1991: 207) students should live in an institution which enshrines democratic values and the institution must guide students in actually living by these values which have been formulated by “adults”.

2.3.2.1.5 A reflection

The argument advanced by this view is that there is no place for students in the governance of institutions. Students as young human beings have to be protected and guided in order for them to be “responsible adults”.

Adults are portrayed as captains of the ship, righteous, having a monopoly on intelligence and authorities on morals. The student on the other hand is discriminated against at all levels i.e. from primary up to tertiary level. He is portrayed as a madman, a weakling and a mischievous being who cannot survive without the help and guidance of the adult or the expert.

According to this argument the social standing of the student determines their role in society in general and in education in particular. This argument is flawed in the sense that it gives an umbrella term to all students that they are irrational and this is not the case.

According to Morrow (1985: 344):

A central problem with view one is that it so readily lends itself to self-righteousness; those who see themselves as 'rational' tend to slip into the idea that they are the guardians of democratic ideals, the moral experts charged with the responsibility of seeing to the good of everyone.

Morrow goes on to attack this view further by stating that the scenario revealed in defense of view one is that democratically legitimate conflict is suppressed and the agenda is rigged in favour of the current holders of power. To him therefore the defense of view one is not a defense of democracy at all. He puts this in the following manner:

The **semblance** of rationality provokes rage, to respond with reason when reason is being used, as a trap to deprive one of reason is not rational. Self-righteousness (either of the left or the right) is an enemy of democracy, it is based on a link between rationality and certainty which undermines rationality, and it arises out of a mistaken view of the kind of agreement on which democracy depends (Morrow, 1985: 345).

Morrow (1985: 149) concluded his attack on view one by stating that what view one stands for is that educative relationships are not relationships between equals. The result of this is a situation which prevents the development of the student and his political judgement.

According to Morrow (1985: 149):

One overwhelming effect of our schooling system is to teach people that it is grossly unwise to use one's own judgement, or to allow it to emerge in our school work; in fact successful products of our schooling system learn the most amazing skill of keeping their own judgement out of view.

2.3.2.2 View Two – Argument in defense of democratic education

The argument in this view is in sharp contrast to view one. This view holds that students are not too immature to engage meaningfully in the affairs of their institutions. Rodham as cited in Kim (1990: 236) argued that a student denied the opportunity to exercise responsibility is effectively denied the opportunity to mature into a responsible adult, therefore denied the right to mature.

Wringe (1984: 78) put it this way:

Young people are allowed to marry at the age of sixteen; they are allowed to vote in parliament and local elections at the age of eighteen and make legal, binding contracts.

Because of the above he fails to see how students can be regarded as totally lacking powers of rationality as they approach those years. View two therefore is closely linked to the theories of participatory democracy, “that there is a peculiarly intimate link between democracy and education” (Morrow, 1985: 332). According to this writer:

This link might be expressed in the thought that it is only by participating in decisions that people become educated for participatory democracy. Fundamental to this view is the idea that it is not possible first to educate someone for participation and then to allow her to participate in decisions – these processes cannot be separated from each other in this way.

In line with Snauwaert's developmental conception of democracy this view insists that democracy is not simply or primarily a form of government or a political system; it is a desirable characteristic of any organisation. Morrow (1985: 336) stated that “the reason for this can be found in the general principle, which lies at the root of democracy, that those affected by decisions have a right to participate in making those decisions”.

According to this view politics and power go hand in hand, and power is found not only in the form of government but in all human relationships (Morrow, 1985: 336). This view is premised on the principle that “in any relationship or organisation each individual should have access to the exercise or control of power” (Morrow, 1985: 336). According to this view therefore students should take control of their own education, “ which is after all, simply an aspect of people’s making of their own history, and an educative relationship is a relationship of equality” (Morrow, 1985: 336). In articulating this view a Cape Town teacher according to Morrow wrote:

Unless students can participate equally in the learning process,
determining what they are being taught, running seminars
and especially working with relevant educational material, we
would be unable to provide them with the necessary experience
and preparation for a democratic society (Morrow, 1985: 336).

Arguments in support of this view are varied and plentiful. In the following sections I give the reader a glimpse of these arguments. I present the arguments in the following manner:

- The right to participate on account of humanness
- The right to participate on account of development
- The right to participate on account of psychological research
- The right to participate on account of creating a climate conducive to the culture of learning and teaching
- The right to participate on account of political motives

2.3.2.2.1 The right to participate on account of humanness

Maxcy was one of the exponents of student participation because he believed that this would develop them as human beings. He argued that for individuals to carry out decisions made by others alienates them from being human beings (Maxcy, 1985: 140). To him an individual, in this case a student, to develop as a human being and actualise himself or herself, must participate in making decisions that will bear on personal action.

According to Maxcy therefore, self-determination through participation in decision-making is necessary for human development. Education therefore has to develop the student to be a worthy human being who will be able to stand on his own two feet and be counted among other human beings.

In expanding on this point, White (1987: 88) equated self-respect with the individual's dignity as a person. She argued that if the individual's moral or political rights are curtailed, then his self-respect and self-esteem as a human being are affected. By denying students the opportunity to participate in democratic decision-making therefore the student is denied his humanity and dignity.

White is supported in this argument by Scheffler (1985: 101), who stated that policy makers, in this case rectors, principals etc., have to avoid imposing their own values on others. Hartshorne (1992: 96) supported this view and added another element, that of "Ubuntu". The notion of ubuntu is premised on the fact that a person is a person because of other persons. Therefore, a principal, a rector is such because there are students and other stakeholders involved in the educational activity. According to Hartshorne then, students must be treated as persons with all the respect of being a person.

This can be done by carefully listening to them and hearing what they have to say. According to him this is their inalienable right. The implication of this therefore is that human development or student development is dependent on the respect students are afforded in their institutions. Therefore denying students the right to decision-making is tantamount to denying them their humanity. The humanity of students is enhanced when they participate in decision-making.

2.3.2.2.2 The right to participate on account of development

Tied up with the above argument is the idea of development as a result of participation in decision-making. Dewey (1948) argued that human development is possible through free, extensive communication and participation in the decision-making processes of group life. He argued that participation needs self-reflection, clarity of thought, imagination and sensitivity towards others. Students therefore can learn these attributes when they are involved in democratic decision-making.

This then contributes to and expands the experience of the students. A consequence of this therefore is that an awareness of interests that unite a community is developed. A student becomes aware of what is expected of him or her and behaves accordingly. According to Dewey (1948) total education is possible where individuals share responsibility in proportion to their capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social group to which one belongs.

According to this argument therefore, the development of the student depends on whether the student is given room to participate in shaping his or her future. If not, the student cannot develop to his or her full potential and if that is the case the objectives of education are defeated.

2.3.2.2.3 The right to participate on account of psychological research

Psychological research has provided no evidence that students have no capacity to think as adults do. Lindsey (1993: 83) argued that according to developmental research, the student at the age of twelve develops formal thought processes, which provide the skills necessary to analyse situations.

He further argues that at the age of twelve, the cognitive capacity of formal operations to think about things and about oneself emerges. Melton (1983:101) in support of this argument stated that there is no evidence in current psychological literature that children between fourteen and fifteen are different from adults when it comes to standards of competence in decision-making.

According to this argument therefore students have a right to decision-making at the highest level without any reservations.

2.3.2.2.4 The right to participate on account of creating a climate conducive to learning and teaching

Chinsamy (1995: 87-88) sees student participation as crucial in the attempt to create a conducive climate for teaching and learning. He argued that both parents and teachers acknowledge the fact that when students are involved in discussions of anything that affects them, it is easily enforced.

He further argued that students, as beneficiaries of the learning process, are crucial in the ongoing evaluation of institutional effectiveness. To him the students' representatives gain a sense of responsibility and can transmit this to their peers with whom they relate with ease. They bring to the governing councils what is a fresh and innovative approach to institutional governance. The result of this therefore is that rules are more in keeping with the situation which has been legislated for.

In support of Chinsamy, Fraser (1988: 32) argued for student participation on the grounds that when they are involved a sense of ownership of the institution prevails. This sentiment is shared by Wringe (1982: 47):

When rule making involves all interested parties, there seems a greater likelihood that they will be more relevant to the situation and children will have an interest in rule keeping rather than rule breaking.

This notion has a direct bearing on what Walker (1990: 93) said about accountability. He argued that accountability needed to be understood in relation to the basic principle of democratic theory i.e. those with legitimate direct interest in a decision should have majority representation with respect to that decision.

Therefore students have legitimate direct interest in their own education and if that is respected students respect decisions and become accountable for them. Thus when students own the processes of decision-making, there is harmony in the institution and a culture of learning and teaching prevails.

2.3.2.2.5 The right to participate on account of political motives

White (1983: 94) argued for student participation in order that students are prepared for political life. She argued that students need political experience to learn how to do things e.g. to be critical of authorities, to be tolerant of others' viewpoints and be willing to have their mistakes pointed out and rectified in context. To her the educational institution is the place where such practice could be provided.

The implication therefore is that in educational institutions, students must be prepared and developed as individuals to be able to participate fully in their immediate and future work environments and communities at large. White (1983: 86) therefore argued for this system of education. She stated that providing such experience, as stated by her above, in the educational institution, would allow people to develop the abilities and social confidence to permit them to participate in other groups outside the institution, thus becoming good citizens.

In support of White, Snauwaert (1993:8) argued for direct participation of students in the governance and affairs of an educational institution. According to him the educational institution is the primary polis (i.e. a place for students to learn about politics first hand) for the student; therefore an analysis of the social relations within the educational institution and their connection to the larger society would be part of each and every student's education and experience.

Adler (1977: xxv) citing Dewey in support of the student participation and the educational institution to provide such training said:

All children of our nation, now that it is on its way to becoming democratic, have the same destiny to lead lives in which they would earn a living, act as intelligent citizens of the republic and make an effort to lead a decent and enriched human life.

The implication of the above is that students given the correct guidance in democracy, would be able to practise it in later life and contribute better to the welfare of their nation.

Now that I have explored the various arguments and viewpoints about student participation in institutional governance, I return to the paradoxical situation mentioned earlier. The next section will throw some light on this puzzle.

2.4 The challenge: The paradoxical situation explored

The arguments presented in the two views provide interesting reading. Both provide good justification for them. Both claim to be democratic. The following observation by Benn and Peters as cited by Morrow (1985: 333) has proved to be prophetic:

Nowadays virtually everyone is in favour of democracy. It is a propaganda asset which no party can afford to surrender to its opponents. In their terminology, virtually everyone uses 'democracy' with 'the same prescriptive force'. On the one hand, there is variation in what people mean when they use this word.

Let me explain what I mean by the above. In summarising the two arguments, I found out that in view one, the perception is that students are not capable of making sound decisions. The reasons put forward are that students are immature and irrational. Therefore they do not possess the necessary skills and experience in decision-making. Thus students need guidance, protection and to a larger extent education in all spheres of life in order for them to be good citizens.

According to this argument democracy is seen as a form of government or a political system. Because of that then education and democracy are seen as contingently, or externally linked to each other (Morrow, 1985: 333). The argument goes in the following manner:

The real world of politics, of political deliberation and decision, is the world of rational beings, and education is the preparation of those who are not yet rational for participation in the world of politics (Morrow, 1985: 333).

According to Morrow (1985: 333) the defenders of this argument use the notion of 'rational beings' rather than that of 'adults'. The reason put forward is that the understanding of democracy rests not on the semi- biological idea of 'adults' but on the idea of a community of rational beings organising their social life in the light of their best collective judgement.

Thus education cannot itself be democratic because those who are not yet educated do not yet possess the capacities and abilities, particularly those related to rationality, which are a prerequisite for participating in the democratic process.

This then defines the role of students in society, that they are followers, hence the notion by Verster et al (1982: 1) that:

A characteristic of education is the constant striving to lead the not-yet- adult towards adulthood.

According to this argument therefore anti-democratic activities are those activities that undermine rationality. This means therefore that allowing students to participate in democratic decision-making is anti-democratic for they are yet to be adults.

View two's perception is that students as humans have a right to equal decision-making as any human. The defenders of this view believe that students have the capacity to think effectively and meaningfully. The point of departure in this view is that, it is through experiencing something first hand, that students could gain experience and knowledge. Unlike view one, democracy in this view is not seen as a form of government or a political system but as a way life. According to Morrow (1985: 336) one of the:

Main sources of the powerful appeal of the second view lie in its fierce opposition to manipulation of any kind, from any quarter, and its passionate support for liberation. From this point of view most of what passes for 'education' is simply a form of manipulation even if that manipulation is sometimes appealingly wrapped.

A way out of this kind of manipulation according to this writer is to apply in the educational situation the principle that each individual should have equal access to the exercise or control of power. This view regards as anti-democratic any activities that hinder or prevent students from exercising or controlling power. Their main argument therefore is that students can compete well with 'adults'.

This point is true in South Africa, where black students in particular, from 1976 to the 1990s, took leadership of the struggle against apartheid and in education in particular against the wishes and to the horror of their parents. Parents and teachers were literally forced to take the back seat. Students took the country by storm and not even the massive state apparatus could stop them. A fuller account of this history is documented in Chinsamy (1995), Brooks and Brickhill (1980), Nkomo (1992) and Kallaway (1984).

Be that as it may, this is not the place or time to launch an attack on the merits and demerits of the two arguments, for time and space would not allow this. What is important here is the fact that something is missing in both arguments and that is, the voice of the students. There is no evidence in all the literature that I read that suggests that the views of the students, as protagonists in education and in this debate, have been solicited. Even the defenders of view two seemingly argue on behalf of students not with them.

Both arguments therefore are uninformed in the sense that we do not get what students have to say in this whole debate because as stated previously both views argue about students not with students. This means that both the defenders of view one and two do not know the field which they profess to know. Both arguments seemingly think they know what is good for students whereas they do not. This is therefore against the very principles of democracy on which the defenders of view two's argument is premised. That is the saddest part, particularly in South Africa, a country which has seen and experienced the power of students and what they are capable of since 1976 to date. That is therefore the challenge facing researchers, educators and parents: to get to know the student sector better and understand them.

This research therefore is an attempt to engage students in this debate, to get to know them afresh and thereby understand their position, what their perception is about their role in the governance of their institutions that they have helped in freeing from the chains of oppression. This is a small step, which hopefully will lead to greater strides within the next couple of years. I believe that the infighting in educational institutions presently is due to the fact that there is misunderstanding amongst stakeholders within the various institutions.

We, as educationists probably think we know what students want whereas they are aware that we only presume to know what they want. Therefore students want to prove that we are wrong. A solution to this I believe is to listen to what students have to say.

The section below will reveal why this is necessary. In it I trace the story of management in educational institutions.

2.5 The basic dilemma: Management versus democratic participation

“The South African transition poses a significant challenge regarding the transformation of administrations. It also offers a unique opportunity to rethink the role of, and reshape the approach to public sector administrations so that they implement a people centered development in a rapidly changing environment and thus deepen democracy” (Woodridge & Cranko, 1995: 338)

The above is the dilemma facing education. Freire, as cited in Becker and Couto (1996: 12) asked this question to illustrate the dilemma: "How is it possible to be democratic in undemocratic settings?" The implication of this question is that the system of control in educational institutions is undemocratic. But the main cause of this dilemma is attributed to the fact that approaches to educational administration and organisation have been transferred from the study of business management and behavioural sciences, which are pre-occupied with control, efficiency and regulation.

Sergiovanni (1992: 41) concurs with Angus (1986) as cited by Chinsamy (1995: 26), when he stated that the literature on educational administration is influenced by the belief that educational institutions are formal institutions. Therefore educational institutions, like manufacturing establishments that turns out a standard product, must build its students according to specifications laid down without fail (Cubberley, (1916) as cited in Hughes, 1985: 8).

The model depicted above is the formal model as described by Weber who saw organisations as bureaucracies (Hughes, 1985: 8). In contrast to the above, Greenfield and Bates (1983) as cited in Chinsamy (1995: 27) argued that educational institutions consist of people, individuals acting upon and being acted upon by other individuals in a complex network of relationships. This view therefore necessitates that educational institutions be democratised to enable administrators to recognise the part played by other stakeholders in creating the organisation of the educational institution.

This notion has found favour with many writers and this is what informs the current study. The value of all stakeholders is prized and encouraged. In America this resulted in an approach to educational management known as site based management with participatory shared decision-making amongst stakeholders. The strategy is to allow those closest to the problem to provide direct input into the solution (Change, 1993: 98-106)

Snauwaert (1993:100) is also in favour of site based management and considers it a move towards democratisation of educational institutions though it does not go far enough. To him the tendency is in favour of professional or community, one at the expense of the other. The right thing is a balanced system of governance, one which increases professionalism at the same time empowering the community which is inclusive of students. This has not found favour in South Africa.

This reluctance to include students in the management of educational institutions is evident in the Report of the Task Team on Educational Management Development (1996: 18) which stated that:

In general, the education system did not encourage staff and students to take responsibility for what was taught and learnt.

The implication of this is that in a democratic setting decision-making becomes a collective process. Sergiovanni (1992: 42) expanded on this notion when he said:

As a collective practice becomes established, a principal can afford to give less attention to the traditional management functions of planning, organising, controlling and leading.

According to Dunlop and Golding (1991: 5-29) the above constitute a new dimension to power relations within the educational institution i.e. facilitative power where administrators' time and energies are focused on facilitation of the others' knowledge, talents and expertise instead of control. This is acknowledged by Davis as cited by Sergiovanni (1992: 42):

My role became "acknowledged", I recognised and acclaimed good teaching, positive students' results, caring parents and progress toward our goal at every available opportunity as people felt more appreciated. I think they worked harder and felt more confident to try and share new ideas. At that point my role became " supporter, reinforcer and facilitator".

According to Snauwaert (1993: 102):

The system of governance we chose will be determined by what we value. If we value efficiency over all, then bureaucracy and elite control will remain a prominent part of our lives, if we value human development as an ideal of schooling, the principle of participation, communication, association and community should define our system of institutional governance.

This means therefore that there is still a lot of work to be done to resolve the management practices and bring them in line with the democratic spirit which has engulfed the country since 1994.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

“The question of the participation of students in institutional governance is a relatively recent one in South Africa. It has not been a subject that has been readily delved into by researchers and subsequently, not much has been written on it”(Chinsamy, 1995: 41).

It is also true that the voice of the students themselves, how they feel, and perceive their role to be has not been investigated. For me an investigation to understand the meaning the students give to their role within the governing structures in their institutions became necessary. I felt that their voice was important in this matter because that itself is a principle of democracy.

The next step therefore was to find an appropriate instrument to accomplish this task. I checked my instrument box. There were many instruments but as I was moving from a premise that through lived experience people construct their view of the world and that determines how they act, I settled on one instrument i.e. phenomenology. I settled for it because its proponents and I share the goal of understanding the complex world of the lived from the viewpoint of those who live it (Schandt, 1994: 188).

In this chapter therefore I present a description of phenomenology, highlighting its important features, the procedure I followed in gathering the data, the justification of the methodology and the subsequent analysis employed. I must caution the reader that the procedure I used in gathering the data is not cast in stone, therefore it must not be taken as the only way of conducting a phenomenological research. Van der Mescht (1996: 39) elucidated this point when he said:

There is no correct methodological procedure, the methodological steps taken by the researcher cannot be predetermined.

Van der Mescht further argued that there must be planning by the researcher but it must be open ended, giving room for revision, adaptation and even complete rejection of some of the envisaged strategies. Stones (1988:150) citing Kullman and Taylor supported the above notion.

3.2 The approach

The phenomenological research approach arises from an existentialist view of the world, one which seeks to understand the human condition “as it manifests itself” in concrete lived situations (Van der Mescht, 1996: 40). This approach therefore rejects both the idealistic view; which absolutised the mind, as well as the materialistic view, which absolutised man’s measurable existence, thus overcoming the subjective and objective dichotomy (Kruger, 1988: 30). This approach insists that man is both the question and the questioner thus the starting point of all questions concerning being. In expanding on this notion Orr (1978: 1) stated:

... Everything we talk about, everything we have in view, everything toward which we comport ourselves in anyway, is Being. What we are is Being, and so is how we are. Being lies in the fact that something is; in Reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity; in *Dasein*; in “there is”.

The word *Dasein* means being there or here denotes a presence, in the sense that the world being present to man and man being present to the world and fellow men (Kruger, 1988: 37). The implication of what is said by Orr and Kruger is simplified by Van der Mescht (1996: 40) when he stated that man is thus never seen as separate from the world he inhabits. Man is constantly in a dialogue with a meaningful world and living in a relationship with the world. Van den Berg (1972: 35-37) emphasised this point:

The relationship between man and the world is so close that it is erroneous to separate them...

What do I mean by all that I said so far? The answer is provided by Engelbrecht (1985: 12) when he stated that human beings live in a world where they have to acquire meaning and to which they must give meaning while they discover meaning. According to Van der Mescht (1996: 40), this constitutes co- constitutionality, which is central to the phenomenological position. Each of the acts i.e. living in the world, acquiring meaning, giving meaning, and discovering meaning are, according to Engelbrecht (1985: 12), a response to the invitation of the world. Man therefore is contextualised i.e. intentionally making meaning of the world and being endowed with meaning in turn (Van der Mescht, 1996: 41). Van den Berg (1972: 37-38) elucidated this as follows:

Never do we see objects without anything else ... We see things within their context and in relation with ourselves...

The implication of the above is that meaning is attached to actions retrospectively i.e. only the already experienced is meaningful not that in the process of being experienced (Burrell and Morgan, 1994: 244). This therefore means that the researcher must strive to throw light upon what the participant experiences i.e. he must understand the social world from the point of view of those living within it. This view was supported by Schwartz & Jacobs (1975: 5):

The researcher must understand the life world of the individual or group from their own frame of reference.

What was the implication of the above to me? Van der Mescht (1996:40) answered this well:

The researcher is bound to attempt to enter the world of the participant in order to gain an understanding of the participants' *lebenswelt* and gain insight into how it is constituted.

3.3 Expectation of the method

3.3.1 Entering the world of participants

Moving from the phenomenological view, I was bound to understand the phenomenon under study from the students' point of view. To be able to do that I strived for what Weber called "*verstehen*" i.e. understanding on a personal level the motives and beliefs behind peoples' actions (Van Wyk, 1996: 128)

Burrell and Morgan (1994: 245) argued that genuine understanding meant intentional grasping of the experience of the other and reflecting a true comprehension of the subjective meaning. This understanding is possible in a face to face encounter between the researcher and the researched and is dependent upon direct exchange and interaction. According to Van den Berg (1972: 47), that is putting oneself i.e. the researcher, in the participants' existence, "in his world".

The above presupposed that I firstly understood the nature of the worlds of my participants which is characterised by intentionality, uniqueness and the importance of perceptions. Secondly to enter their world for the phenomenological encounter. My first task therefore was to explore the characteristics of the world of my participants.

Intentionality

According to Van der Mescht (1996: 40) intentionality is a key concept in understanding the special characteristics of *lebenswelt*. Husserl as cited in Kruger (1988: 28), investigated consciousness as intentionality. He was expanding on the work of Brentano who argued that:

Consciousness always ... intends an object- I do not just love, I love someone ... (Kruger, 1988: 28).

What this meant was that intentionality was an act which is directed at an object and therefore the object should be the focal point of an investigation which in turn must be allowed to speak for itself (Kruger, 1988: 28). This point is further emphasised by Van den Berg (1972: 40) when he said :

Our world is our home, a realisation of subjectivity. If we want to understand man's existence, we must listen to the language of objects ... If we want to describe a subject, we must elaborate on the scene in which the subject reveals itself.

Intentionality therefore presupposes a dialogue between the subject and the object, which then becomes the focal point of phenomenological investigation. This point was supported by McConville as cited by Van der Mescht (1996: 43):

The dialectic organisation of experiencing – behaving subject and social world which essentially defines the phenomenon in question.

Van der Mescht (1996: 43) summarised this aspect as follows:

The researcher's focus is neither on the human subject nor human world, but necessarily on the meaning which is itself a process ... the phenomenon which the researcher investigates is accessible only by means of dialogue, the meaning which comes about through the interaction of the subject and the world.

This dialogue therefore defined the area to be covered in my investigation.

Uniqueness

Another characteristic of *lebenswelt* is its uniqueness to each individual (Van der Mescht, 1996: 42). Engelbrecht (1989: 45) explains:

No two people are alike ... every child is an individual and everything about him should be adapted to this fact.

The implication of the above is that a subject has a unique relationship with the world and within his openness towards it, he will find those meanings which are particularly significant for him. Van den Berg elaborated on this concept “significant” in the following manner:

We might say that we see the significance things have for us. If we don't see significance, we don't see anything.

But according to Kruger (1988: 35) the world we live in is *mitwelt*. The implication of this was that a subject actualises himself or herself in relation to others i.e. you can know yourself if you compare yourself with others. Van der Mescht (1996: 42), concurs with this point:

Naturally there are shared experiences, or areas that are shared... these are not to be denied: indeed these form the structure of life as we know it.

What has been said above is important for the study in that as Van der Mescht (1996: 42) put it, I will be able to identify the areas of commonality among my participants and interrogate that which is unique in each participant against the fabric of commonality.

Perception

It is against this notion of uniqueness that I move on to the last feature of *lebenswelt* i.e. perception. According to Kruger (1988: 99) perception is one of the ways in which we intentionally relate to the world and is always referred to something meaningful out there in the world. Van den Berg (1972: 40) explained this in the following manner:

As a rule, ours is another kind of perception ... Never do we see objects without anything else ... Thinking one thinks something, a matter ultimately always located there yonder, outside; an object or something concerned with objects.

The implication of that is that perception is made meaningful by means of reflective experience. Giorgi as cited in Van der Mescht (1996: 43) clarified this further:

The phenomenological approach admits to a reality independent of consciousness but claims that knowledge of such reality can only occur through consciousness of it, so it is better to study the reality claims made by persons through their consciousness of it. The task here is to understand the reality claims (or non-reality claims) precisely as they are made by the research participants. In other words, it is the perceived reality that the phenomenologists are interested in, and often “distortions” are more vital than the veridical perception.

The meaning of this is that the world as it is, is presented to us in our perception as already a meaningful structure inviting our behaviour (Kruger, 1988: 100). According to Van der Mescht (1996: 43) it is these perceptions that constitute the data to be explicated and made meaningful by the researcher.

With all that has been said above, the question that came to mind was how do I create this situation described? How then do I enter my participants’ worlds? The answer was provided by Van der Mescht (1996: 45) citing Van den Berg:

He, who desires to know what, in a given situation, ... does well to put himself in that situation.

Implied in that is the nature of the negotiated relationship between me, as a researcher and my participants as the researched. According to Weinstein (1990: 3460) this could have a profound impact on the data and the conclusion drawn. Berker and Geer (1970: 150) explained this in the following manner:

The researcher’s own action are as much part of the study design as the research instruments used.

It is therefore for this reason that I needed to develop a better understanding of the skills of working with other people, not only to gain access to research situations, but to also accomplish the objective of my study.

3.3.1.1 How did the researcher enter the world of participants?

May as cited in Valle and King (1978: 1) argued for a “ necessary bridge” to avoid standing on one side of the chasm, forever unable to get to the other side, forever separated from the human being as he or she is.

The “necessary bridge” for me to be able to define myself as part of the phenomenon, was the use of two strategies; bracketing and reduction on the one hand and description on the other. This notion finds support in Van den Berg (1972) and Van der Mescht (1996).

3.3.1.1.1 Bracketing and reduction

The most fundamental dictum of phenomenology as a methodology is that the data must speak for itself (Van der Mescht, 1996: 46). According to Van den Berg (1988: 142) this is possible when there was:

a desire to restrict oneself to what is happening ... he tries to describe the phenomena as they are ... That is he respects what is put on record, the incidents as they are occurring ... he refrains from pronouncing judgement on the situation, for quick judgement is usually premature.

What is argued for here, is that the researcher must not contaminate the data with his ideas about the phenomenon. The purpose is to understand the phenomenon in a way which is free of the supposition of our cultural heritage as much as possible. Aanstoots (1986: 85) argued this point further when he said:

In order to attend to ... any phenomenon, as it is lived it is necessary to take what is experienced just as it gives itself in any instance, and thus begin where it must begin.

This process is called bracketing and is defined by Stones (1988: 142) in the following manner:

Phenomenological reduction is a process of suspending or bracketing personal preconception and presuppositions by making them explicit ... through this process the researcher attempts to approach the phenomenon from a position of silence.

The above according to Van den Berg (1972: 64) is the basic principle of all phenomenology; the investigator remains true to the facts as they are revealed.

In order to obtain the data from the participants as it is, the researcher has to identify with his participants. According to Van den Berg (1972: 67), the researcher becomes one with the phenomenon. Van der Mescht (1996: 45) citing Polanyi argued this further when he said:

It is only through the indwelling that the external observer was able to attend from rather than look at that which he or she was observing.

Van der Mescht (1996: 45), takes this point further when he said the position stated above borders on subjectivity, yet to achieve indwelling the researcher must subject himself to such rigorous testing as will reveal any presuppositions he may have, and approach the phenomenon with an open mind. According to him, this calls for a high level of objectivity and only when such objectivity has been gained would the researcher be true to phenomenology as a methodology and allow the data to speak for itself.

Complete reduction cannot be achieved. Stones (1988: 144) spelled out the reason when he said “Clearly, anyone setting out to investigate any phenomenon systematically and rigorously is from the beginning guided by what is already understood about the phenomenon”. What this meant was that it was not possible for me to completely take out what I knew about the phenomenon under study but I tried as much as I could to be true to the facts and to my participants as was humanly possible.

3.3.1.1.2 Description

According to Giorgi as cited in Stones (1988: 147), the operative word in phenomenological research is “describe”. Van der Mescht (1996: 47) citing Giorgi defines this term in the following manner:

Description is the use of language to articulate the intentional objects of experience within the constraints of intuitive or presentational evidence. The key point here is that a descriptive attitude implies necessity demanded by saying that one describes what presents itself, neither adding nor subtracting from it. The description also implies the adoption of the attitude of phenomenological reduction, which implies the bracketing of past knowledge about the phenomenon being experienced as well as the withholding of existential affirmation.

The definition highlights the importance of description as the basis of phenomenological research as stated by Van der Mescht (1996: 47). The emphasis therefore is the fact that the researcher is writing his “report”. His own stereotypes must not contaminate his report. Thus in describing it is important for the researcher to avoid premature analysis or explanations i.e. the phenomenon must be described as it is presented. The aim therefore should be to describe as accurately as possible. This point is supported by Aanstoos (1986: 84) when he said:

The task of the researcher is to let the world of the describer ... reveal itself through the description, in order to remain faithful to the phenomenon as it is lived.

Be that as it may, phenomenologists accept the fact that pure description is not possible. Van der Mescht (1996: 48) conceded that it is not possible to be truly faithful to the data in the sense that any researcher moves from a certain premise. Giorgi as cited in Stones (1988: 144) emphasised this when he said:

All facts are selected ... by the activity of our consciousness, and hence they are always interpreted as facts. Perspectivity thus ruled out ... the possibility of an absolute stance and this applies to a phenomenological perspective as well.

Now having put myself in the existence of my participants (Van den Berg, 1972: 47), the question is how do I make the readers understand their reality?

3.4 Data-gathering: Technique

The technique used in this research is the interview.

3.4.1 Interview

According to Cannell and Kahn as cited in Mahlangu (1987: 87) a research interview is:

A two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining relevant research information and focused by him on the content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation.

There are two things which come out of this definition which are of importance to my research, and the methodology used in it. Firstly the fact that I initiated the interviews with my participants with the sole aim of obtaining their views and how they experience the phenomenon under investigation. In that sense the interviews were focused. Secondly I wanted them to describe to me their experience of the phenomenon to enable me to gain an insight into it. The interview allowed me to enter their world and understand it. I support Patton when he said:

It ... begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit (1990:41).

The interviews therefore helped me not to impose myself or my predetermined responses. In this research I used unstructured in-depth interviews. These according to Van Wyk (1995: 131), “employ a set of themes and topics to form questions in the course of the conversations”. In line with what has been said by Van Wyk, I asked during the interviews questions about the perceptions students have about their role in the decision-making structures and its implication for the management and governance in their various institutions. Other questions were developed from the answers given by my participants. That meant that I had to be very attentive and listen very carefully to their responses.

According to Seidman (1991: 56-57) listening during an interview is very important and is a necessary skill a researcher must possess. He stated that it should take place on three levels:

- (a) On the first level interviewers must listen to what the participant is saying. They must concentrate on the substance to make sure that they understand it.
- (b) On the second level the interviewers must listen to the inner voices as opposed to the outer more public voice. The outer voice is not necessarily untrue, but it must be guarded.
- (c) On the third level the interviewers must listen while remaining aware of the process as well as the substance. They must be conscious of time, the participants' energy levels and any non-verbal cues being offered.

Armed with this knowledge I was able to conduct the interviews in a much better way than I would have. After the interviews I had to tackle the major task of data analysis.

3.5 Data analysis

There are various ways of handling and analysing data. Van Wyk (1995: 136) stated that, “ the typology of research purposes ... have an effect on the analysis and presentation of findings”. What then is data analysis?

According to Bogden and Biklein (1992: 145) data analysis is:

The process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, other materials which were accumulated by the researcher to increase his or her understanding of the mind which enables the researcher to present that, which was discovered by others.

This process according to Fetterman (1990: 229) is data reducing whereby data is selected, focused, simplified, abstracted and transformed to enable the researcher to manage it. In this research I transformed the data into natural meaning units. I believed that this procedure would suit my purpose and the methodology I have used in this research. It would allow me to describe the data as it was revealed to me by my participants. Stones (1988: 143) explains this process in the following way:

Having obtained protocols from research participants usually by means of open-ended interviews, the researcher interrogates these with a view to identifying statements which are self definable and self limiting in the expression of a single, recognisable aspect of the (subjects') experience. These meaning units are then subjected to rigorous reflection, so that essential themes may emerge and transformation, which entails the explication of meaning units.

After transforming the raw data into natural meaning units, I reflected as stated in the quotation rigorously on them and explicated dominant themes as they emerged spontaneously from the reading (Kvale, 1996: 194). The result of this process was a general statement, which provided a clue as to how students experience the phenomenon under investigation. This process allowed me to remain true to the data as the methodology required.

3.6 Why phenomenology

In Chapter Two I indicated that stakeholders in education are not sure of what role the students play within the governing structures in educational institutions. Given the high profile students had in the struggle against apartheid in the country in general and in education in particular, tension was bound to exist amongst students on the one hand and the adult population on the other when the common enemy ceased to exist.

This is the point referred to by Vilakazi as cited in Albeldas and Fischer (1987: 54) when he said:

The black opposition or revolutionary movement has reached one of its crucial and delicate transition period, a transition which has to be handled wisely, delicately, and with a strong sense of realism, on the part of all concerned ...

The pronouncement by the ANC in their Policy Framework for Education and Training as stated in Chapter Two was a direct response to this call. But as I have stated in the same chapter that pronouncement has yet to be heeded and this study is an attempt to start the ball rolling in the direction pointed by Vilakazi.

The first step therefore is understanding each other, talking with each other and getting to know each other in a deeper sense. The implication of this for me in this study was to go to the students and listen to what they had to say about the situation, get their perspective and their understanding about the phenomenon under study. I wanted to be closer to the data and get a comprehensive knowledge of the phenomenon under study as it manifests itself with the least imposition of theory, method, personal prejudice or need and language habit (Stones, 1988: 143)

This meant that I had to be open minded and accept whatever was disclosed and significant for the understanding of the phenomenon. This then would help me to analyse, conceptualise and categorise the views and perceptions from the data itself. Thus, according to Van der Mescht (1996: 53), allowing a holistic, lived experience to emerge.

Phenomenology allowed me to fulfill what I had in mind. It allowed me to remove myself as a researcher from the phenomenon and get a pure understanding of the students' perspective within their context and as it was experienced by my participants.

Stones (1988: 143) supported this when he said:

The researcher aims to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon as it appears ... the investigator remains true to the facts as they are happening.

All this according to Stones (1988: 143) constituted a respect for the phenomenon, which is fundamental to phenomenology. According to Van der Mescht (1996: 54), it is for this reason that phenomenology has not remained the exclusive province of psychotherapists and has been used in other human sciences, in this study education, particularly, in investigating the obvious, the taken-for-granted reality of a given situation and approach a phenomenon afresh. As I stated in Chapter Two I thought I knew the role that students are supposed to play in the governance of institutions, but I was wrong.

It is therefore against this background that I present the following account of how this study was initiated.

3.7 Initial stage of procedure

On 10 March 1998, there was a launch of the South African National Student Congress (SANSCO) at a college of education in the Eastern Cape. I was asked to give a keynote address. The main thrust of my speech was student unity and I gave an exposition of what I meant, by tracing student resistance from the 17th century to the present. During the speech I hinted that I was busy exploring the field of student participation in the governance of educational institutions and asked the presidents of Student Representative Councils' present if they would participate in my research.

After the launch five presidents from two colleges, a university, a technikon and a technical college came. All the presidents conformed to the selection criteria envisaged by Stones (1988: 150) that they:

- (a) have experience related to the phenomenon to be researched. All were presidents of SRCs involved in the executive of SANSCO provincially and nationally and were members of governing structures in their various institutions.
- (b) were verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions in relation to the researched phenomenon. All were fluent in English and very articulate.
- (c) had the same home language as the researcher, since this would obviate the possibility of the loss of subtle semantic nuances owing to the need to translate from one language to another. All were Xhosa speaking and from the Eastern Cape. They would be able to ask the researcher in Xhosa if they did not understand a question.
- (d) expressed a willingness to be open to the researcher. All agreed to do this.

All except one agreed to take part in the research. We selected dates on which I would visit each one of them in their respective institutions. In the interviews I started with questions about them i.e. their biographical profiles. According to Van der Mescht (1996: 55) citing Valle and King, “an existential phenomenological view of the world acknowledges the total indissoluble unity or interrelatedness of the individual with his or her world”. He further stated that this kind of information helps in providing a basis for such attitudes and perceptions as may emerge from the data and also provide a form of intrasubjective validity or methodological triangulation.

The transcribed interviews constitute the raw data of this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

From meaning units to descriptions

4.1 Introduction

The data I got from the four interviews was to say the least very chaotic, but rich in content. According to Van der Mescht (1996: 60) this was the case because:

this is after all the essence of qualitative data, particularly when they have been gathered by means of loosely structured interviews, including many open-ended questions.

My major task, therefore, was to attempt to make sense of what I had gathered from my participants in order that I and ultimately, the readers get a true picture and an understanding of how my participants experienced the phenomenon under investigation. The tool I used was the phenomenological technique of delineating natural meaning units. Giorgi (1979: 124) summarised how this technique works in the following manner:

- The researcher reads the entire description of the situation through to get a sense of the whole.
- Next the researcher reads the same description more slowly and delineates each time that a transition in meaning is perceived with respect to the intention of discovering the meaning of the phenomenon under study. After this procedure he has a series of meaning units or constituents.
- Then he eliminates redundancies and clarifies or elaborates to himself the meanings of the units he just constituted by relating them to each other and to make sense of the whole.
- The researcher reflects on the given units, still expressed essentially in the concrete language of the subject with respect to the phenomenon under study. Each unit is systematically interrogated for what it reveals about the phenomenon under study in that situation of the subject. The researcher transforms each relevant unit into the language of the phenomenologist.
- The researcher synthesizes and integrates the insights achieved into a consistent description of the structure of the phenomenon under study.

Looking at the five points I understood what Van der Mescht (1996: 60 - 61) meant when he said:

... the process seemed to me unnecessarily laborious. Why could I not simply present, in the form of a *précis*, the gist of what each participant had said. It would certainly be less time-consuming, and might I not produce much the same kind of result?

The steps seemed to be too many and unnecessary. At first glance, the steps, two to five would seem to be included in step one in the sense that after I had gone through the whole process I would get a sense of the whole i.e. a summary of what my participants had experienced without disturbing any of my participants' protocols. But these categories by Giorgi are in keeping with Van der Mescht's notion that:

One can present faithfully the big picture by looking more closely at its constituent parts (Van der Mescht, 1996: 60).

In this chapter therefore I followed Giorgi's first three categories as there was "no shortcut" available for me. I, therefore, listed "separated meaning units for each protocol and then proceed to an explication of the meaning contained in it" (Van der Mescht, 1996: 61). I then followed Van der Mescht's procedure i.e. where the meaning was strongly locked within my participants' words, I retained those exact words (Van der Mescht, 1996: 62). He explained this in the following manner:

In these cases I coded each quotation (e.g. A1, where A refers to first participant, and 1 to the first meaning unit.) In this way I was able to render the raw and chaotic data into something more manageable, whilst still retaining the 'voice' and sense of the original (Van der Mescht, 1996: 62).

According to Van der Mescht (1996: 62) this then enabled me to articulate the essential structure (e.g. Vuyani as member of the governing council) of each of the protocols. I started each description with a brief biographical sketch of each of my participants (Van der Mescht, 1996: 62).

4.2 Brief biographical sketch of Vuyani

Vuyani is a president of a Student Representative Council at an educational institution in the Eastern Cape. He is in his first year of study towards an LLB degree. He grew up in Mdantsane, the biggest township in the Eastern Cape and the second biggest in South Africa. He is the youngest in the family. He became a student activist early in his high school years. He is very much involved in student activities.

He is a deputy president of the South African Union of University Student Representative Councils and deputy chairperson of South African National Students Congress.

4.2.1 Description of the structure Vuyani as member of the governing council

Vuyani experiences the context in which he is a member of the governing council at his institution as not being in touch with the spirit of the 1993 constitution. He feels that the situation in his institution is very complicated (A6). He feels that there is a lot of confusion where people do not understand the ultimate objective of transformation.

He is not comfortable with things as they are, where he has to sit with professors around negotiation tables, whereas he does not have the capacity to engage meaningfully with them (A18). He feels that to be able to live out his life view, he has to be capacitated by his institution and the environment made conducive for effective participation. In his own words:

As students we need effective representation and effective means you have to make sure that you capacitate us ... you expect people who are attending classes, people who have assignments, write test like ordinary students to also attend the same meetings that the administration is attending (A17 and A18).

He feels that a major obstacle for him to function properly is the fact that the “system operating” in his institution needs to be changed and be in line with the spirit of the 1993 constitution (A20). But he believes that this can be possible only if there is willingness on the part of the administration of the institution to change.

He feels that at first there was willingness, but this has changed, particularly in 1998 (A25). He believes strongly that it is the duty of students to resuscitate the forms of transformation to force change in his institution. He is advocating a student’s forum where all students would participate and be empowered (A34).

What comes out strongly from Vuyani is the fact that he feels that there should be a difference between policy making, which should be stakeholder driven, and the administration of the institution, which is the prerogative of the management (A14).

4.3 Brief biographical sketch of Mzimasi

Mzimasi is a president of a Student Representative Council at an educational institution in the Eastern Cape. He is the eldest of two children. His mother is divorced and works as a domestic worker. He grew up in Mdantsane and boasts that two members of the provincial legislature live just a stone's throw from his home. He is a student activist. He is serving in several committees at his institution. He is also a deputy president of the South African Technikons Student Union.

4.3.1 Description of the structure Mzimasi as member of the governing council

Mzimasi experiences the context in which he is a member of the governing council at his institution as fulfilling and developmental. He feels that his background, that of growing up in Mdantsane and having a father who was a political activist, has prepared him for his role. Thus he feels that the minds of student representative council members have to be transformed before they are elected to positions of responsibility (**B1**).

He feels that as a student leader he has to know what he is about, and do research to enable him to sit with confidence with other stakeholders around the table (**B3**). He feels that he has to influence decisions taken at his institution (**B6**). He believes that nothing should be hidden from students. Students have to be aware of everything that takes place in his institution even if it concerns the administration. He boasts that no meeting at his institution can take place without him. In his own words:

... Like for instance, I'll say there is no meeting or committee that I sit at, could just start when I'm not there, they phone me every time and say where are you because they know I'm critical in criticism (**B20**).

Incidentally that happened when I was interviewing him. I had to let him go, and I waited for three hours before I could resume the interview. He did try though to persuade the caller to start the meeting without him, but in vain. He feels that he has a good working relationship with the head of the institution, his constituency and everyone on campus, and he is able to function well in this environment.

But he feels that a lot could be done for students. For example, they could be allowed to attend as observers in meetings of the governing council, to provide continuity (**B24**).

4.4 Brief biographical sketch of Mandla

Mandla is a president of a student representative council in an educational institution in the Eastern Cape. He is also a president of a branch of the South African National Student Congress. He is from Dimbaza, a township twenty kilometers from King William's Town. He is the youngest amongst three children. His mother is in Cape Town and his father in Johannesburg. He became active in student activities during the 1980's and comes out as a radical activist.

4.4.1 Description of the structure Mandla as member of a governing council

Mandla experiences the context in which he serves as a member of the governing council as frustrating and in need of transformation. He attributes this to the different factions amongst the students themselves and to how the governing council functions (C2). He feels that there is no unity of purpose in his institution (C5). This according to Mandla is the situation in his institution because the factions within the institution have different ideologies; some are associated with the African National Congress and others, the Pan African Congress.

Though this is the situation in his institution he feels that he would like to own decisions coming from the governing council (C7). But this can be achieved only when there is transparency within the governing council and when it is fully transformed (C10).

He feels strongly about collectivism where people work as a collective rather than individuals (C11). But what comes out very strong from him is the separation of powers between the administration and the governing council. He feels that students should not be too much involved in the administration of the institution. To him that is the domain of the administrators (C18). By this stance he differentiates between administrative matters and policy matters (C19).

4.5 Brief biographical sketch of Lulama

Lulama is a president of a student representative council in an educational institution in the Eastern Cape. He is originally from Port Shepstone in Kwazulu Natal. He started to be involved in student activities in 1995. He is the first amongst five children. He lives with all his family when he is on holidays in June and December.

4.5.1 Description of the structure Lulama as member of governing council

Lulama experiences the context in which he serves as a member of a governing council as contradictory. He feels that he is representing the biggest single sector within the institution, but they are not accorded a status befitting that (D1).

He has big plans about student involvement. He feels that students' involvement should not be confined to institutions only. Ideally, students should be involved nationally because decisions taken nationally at times impact negatively on students within institutions (D3).

He feels that the department of education and heads of educational institutions assume that they know students' needs because they were students first (D5). This is not acceptable to him in that, he feels at times, they do not “realise that they are irrelevant as far as current issues are concerned” (D7). He feels, therefore, that their involvement in the governing council is to:

Try and adjust them to the present environment so as to ensure that we transform and empower students in the process (D8).

Thus he feels that when the above has been achieved the contradiction would be solved. The other stakeholders would then heed the voice of the students, particularly the head, of his institution who holds so much power over students. For Lulama it should be the students who must be at the forefront of transformation in his institution (D14).

But though this is the case in his institution, he feels that he is working well with the head of his institution. He concedes that there is transparency in his institution, and students know what is happening within the institution (D15). This consoles him though he is not happy with it, in that he feels that they, the students, should make things happen.

CHAPTER FIVE

A DIFFERENT DESCRIPTION THE LIFE-WORLD OF MY PARTICIPANTS CONTEXTUALISED

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the uniqueness of my participants is explored. I must from the beginning state that I am not at this stage attempting to interpret the descriptions in chapter four, though I believe that the essence of what role students want to play within the governing structures of their institutions has been captured.

In the structure descriptions in chapter four, because of the length of the protocols, I reduced what my participants said to a line or two. The result was, in a sense, the decontextualisation of the data. My intention in this chapter, therefore, is to contextualise the data within my participants' *lebenswelt*, thereby allowing the data to speak for itself and give a sense of belonging to my participants: a sense of being in the world of their experiences, which is absent in chapter four. This element is very much present in the protocols, because I did not just ask for their perceptions about the phenomenon under study, but also their actual experiences within the structures they were engaged in. This notion is supported by Van den Berg (1972: 40) when he said:

If we want to describe a subject, we must elaborate on the scene in which the subject reveals itself.

This is in keeping with Heideggers' notion of *dasein* as cited in Van der Mescht (1996: 85) which holds that:

Not only are we unique (as far as we know today) in our ability to be aware of our existence, but this awareness reveals an inseparable relationship between existence and the world. Our awareness is not solely subjective, but rather intersubjective.

All that I have said so far according to Van der Mescht (1996: 85), which, in actual fact, is the description of my participants' relationship with their worlds, has the potential to add a lot to a researchers' understanding of his participants' *lebenswelt*.

It's (*lebenswelt*) four dimensions i.e. *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, *Eigenwelt* and *Überwelt* explained well by Van der Mescht (1996: 86-87) presented pointers to the unconquered territory of the individual's *dasein*. This according to Silverman (1987: 29) brings out the existentiality of existence.

It was, therefore, on account of wanting to fully understand and elucidate my participants' *lebenswelt* along the routes pointed by Van der Mescht that I undertook this second journey, i.e. presenting a different description to the one in chapter four. I present, like Van der Mescht, a single coherent description of each participant without headings except the name of the participant.

5.2 Vuyani

Vuyani experiences his world as frustrating, demanding and disappointing. At the center of his frustration lies the fact that he cannot function as he would want and as his constituency would like him to.

He comes out as a very intelligent, reasonable and tolerant young man with noble ideas. His life-view is characterised by compassion for others and empathy. This comes out when he says:

I am saying this rule ourselves thing does not negate the fact that there must be rule of law ... We may agree on the code of conduct, how people should conduct themselves and we should adhere to that particular code of conduct. That is the kind of environment we are talking about not the loose kind where one does whatever he wants, e.g., holding people hostage, deciding not to come to class and so on. This is not acceptable to me because the administration is made up of people like us, with feelings and responsibilities like us...

His uncle, an activist in the early 1980's, and the township of Mdantsane have had a major impact on how he sees things. He stated that the detention of his uncle and his subsequent dismissal from his work place and what was generally taking place during "the Sebe regime", thrust him into student activism at an early age. Also his upbringing in a close knit family structure shaped his life view. This life view suggests the approach he would like to take with his constituency i.e. the student body, the administration and the larger community in his institution. He feels that the institution must capacitate him to be able to play his role fully. He puts this in the following manner:

So we are saying students should be given capacity, the environment must be made conducive to participate effectively.

The qualities mentioned earlier emerge in what he had to say about working with the administration and constituency. In his own words on administration:

We acknowledge the responsibility of the administration to manage and administer the institution. But they must account somewhere and in our view they must account to those structures, student structures and worker structures and so on. There must be a forum wherein they come and discuss issues of interest.

On students:

I think on the student body, you must also understand that it's also changing. There is a new generation after 1994, a generation that is largely not politically active. This generation is conscious of its interests and we would like to safeguard its interests at all cost. So you want a leadership that is able to guide that particular desire to safeguard interests, in that those interest, must not be necessarily selfish and also you must be able to translate that desire to fight for a broader just and democratic society.

But Vuyani cannot live out his life view. Disappointment with the management has affected his view of others and his context. He is critical of the administration on its handling the transformation and how students' matters are handled at his institution. He portrays a complicated and confusing scenario at his institution. He feels that things started to go wrong when the staff association, students and everyone inside the campus succeeded to "chuck out" the previous administration which was "white dominated" and an entirely "new administration with black faces" and a new governing council came into being without "changing the systems". This then led to a situation where the various roles of stakeholders within the governing council remained the same, as was the case during the previous regime.

He feels that towards the middle of 1997 to 1998 a new trend is emerging which is alienating the administration from students. He believes that management has "reactionary tendencies" which were not there in the years 1994-1996 which is worrying to the student body. One other factor that he sees emerging is the "commercialisation of the higher education sector" which makes it even difficult for him to live his life view because the majority of his constituency is poor and are being gradually squeezed out of the higher education sector.

Living his life view under his context has affected his role as the president of the SRC. He has to balance the needs of his constituency with the role as a stabilizer of a very complicated situation in order that reason may at the end prevail at his institution. He is very much disillusioned with what is taking place at his institution but is hopeful that things could be worked out for the betterment of all in his institution.

5.3 Mzimasi

Mzimasi experiences his world as a world of opportunities, which is full of promise and developments. He finds it an ideal place to live out his life view in its present context. He feels he has been thoroughly prepared for the challenges which he is faced with in his institution. The guiding light in his life view is his ability to negotiate and be able to see the point of view of others.

He feels that he is always there for everyone in his constituency and everyone in his institution. This comes out when he says:

On Mondays I have allocated myself the female residence I just go there and chat with them and discuss with them, issues, how do they see their welfare in their residence, how is the cleaning by the general staff. I even catch up with how the general staff is victimised by Pritchard, their employer and other things through going to people and discuss with them.

His life view is very much influenced by his family background and the township of Mdantsane. He has been politically aware and involved from an early age, hence he is able to live out his life view in this new context of his life. He finds it easy to communicate with everyone on campus. This has earned him the respect of others especially the administration. From his stories he states that the relationship between the head of the institution and himself is “good”. Whatever is to take place at the institution, he is the first to know and meetings “don’t start” without him in attendance. Before proposals are tabled at meetings of the Broad Transformation forum, they are discussed with him to see if these things are not going to have hiccups for the welfare of the technikon and the students.

He sees his organisation as a democratic structure. This comes through when he says:

We are starting to practise the principle of transparency, principle of accountability, the principle of honesty because they are all principles of democracy, which is very much alive at this institution.

Operating in this context for Mzimasi is both fulfilling and developmental. He is able to view the attitude of his own colleagues objectively i.e. He feels that even the “SRC” needs to have their minds transformed before they are allowed to enter into the governing structures of the institution.

5.4 Mandla

Mandla experiences his life world as disorganised and frustrating. What comes out strongly is the fact that he cannot live out his life view because of obstacles beyond his control.

His background has played a major role in shaping his outlook and perception of others. Dimbaza, a township about 20 km from King William’s Town was created as a dumping site for politically problematic families by the then South African government. This background moulded him and drove him to politics as an early age. In justifying his stance in politics he said this:

The second ground coming from Dimbaza, Cradock and Johannesburg, they are acquainted with these things because as they grow up, these things happening in front of them, and I identify myself with his group, I am a militant.

He strongly believes in democracy and the separation of powers. He believes that each and every person at his institution has a role to play to make things work and develop the institution. But he feels that he just cannot see his way through because members of his community are not pulling together in the right direction. In his own words:

I think in my institution there is democracy but the democracy we are having in our institution is being destroyed by both students and management and also the staff members.

Mandla feels that a drastic change in management student body and staff members’ attitudes and behaviour is necessary to be able to live his life-view. Again in his own words:

...That individual is representing himself instead of representing the college as a whole, including the students. Also I think the members of the governing council somewhere, somehow I think they should play the role of second parents but from my experience they don’t play a role most of the time.

Mandla comes out as an angry individual because he is not fulfilled as an individual and as the head of the student body. His institution disappoints him as a place of development as an individual.

5.5 Lulama

Lulama experiences his world as a world which needs constant change because it is “dynamic”. At the center of it all are students who are the biggest single sector within the institution and who must command respect from other stakeholders.

His life-view is essentially driven by the supremacy of students’ power and the right of children to education and decision making. The fact that students are at the center of education dominates his view. In his own words:

You may find that the biggest sector is the student sector and therefore their leadership are the people who are more significant in terms of the governance of student matters as well as the management of the institution.

Again this feature is present when he said:

We are the biggest sector within so our voice should carry more weight in the running and governance of the institution.

He feels that the head of the institution cannot have more powers than leaders of the student body because the institution is essentially about students. Using a metaphor he feels that not only does a car need a driver, but it also needs tyres, fuel, lights etc to move. Therefore, at the head of the institution could be the driver, but if the aforementioned are not present the car would not move.

He also feels that present students’ needs are different to former students’ needs and aspirations. The government seems to ignore that fact and is not moving with the times. In his own words:

I think the main cause is the fact that the government as well as the education department and principals assume that they know students’ needs since they were students first. That is a big problem in that we are not as they were our needs are different. They are not well vested with current students’ needs and demands; we are more sophisticated than them.

His background has played a major role in his outlook. Growing up during the 1980's where student power was at its peak shaped his current thinking and stance in student governance. Fortunately for him he can partially live out his life-view in his institution. He seems to be working "well" with the management of his institution. His ideal of democracy is practised for "there is transparency" and he knows everything there is to know about what is happening in the institution and relations between management and students are good.

Yet there are issues which, at times make it difficult for him to live out his life-view. He cites "time", "reactionary staff members" and even "students who do not care whether they are moving to right or left" as obstacles to the fulfillment of his ideal which is to have students at the forefront of "transformation within his institution". Another factor he cites is the lack of research capacity and student support services for students in order that they could function to their full capacity.

He feels some of the obstacles could in time be resolved by having a student parliament, which would prepare student for future citizenship later in their lives. He is, though, contented with what is happening in his institution.

CHAPTER SIX

TRANSFORMING THE MEANING UNITS INTO THE LANGUAGE OF THE PHENOMENOLOGIST

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter unlike in the two preceding I attempt to explicate dominant themes as they emerge spontaneously from the reading. Van der Mescht (1996: 61) citing Giorgi defines the process of explication thus:

If meaning [of the phenomenon] is to be understood, it is done better by a process that for lack of a better term can be called explication, that is, the process of making explicit or thematizing the locus of any given phenomenon within its horizon.

Whenever a phenomenon appears, it always appears within a certain horizon or context, and the horizon that implicitly is given with the phenomenon is not irrelevant for the understanding of the phenomenon. On the contrary the horizon is essential for the understanding of the phenomenon because the role that the phenomenon plays within the context, even if it is only implicitly recognised, is one of the determiners of the meaning of the phenomenon.

What comes out strongly from Giorgi's description is the fact that at this stage the bringing together of important themes emerging from the data is most desirable. It helped me as a researcher but more importantly the reader to get a general overview of my participants' understanding of the phenomenon under study.

This in turn makes findings presented in this manner more easily comparable to findings by other researchers in the same or related fields (Van der Mescht, 1996:96). How then do I go about explicating the themes from the reading? I went back to the meaning units and reflected on them and the central themes and transformed them into formal phenomenological language (Stones, 1988: 153). A useful transformation tool according to Stones is that of 'imaginative variation' whereby the researcher reflects on imagined possibilities inherent in each central theme and discards those that do not withstand criticism. He further argues that "in this way, it is possible to arrive at a psychological statement which accurately expresses the subject's intended meaning" (Stones, 1988: 154).

According to Giorgi's procedure this constitutes the final stage of the analysis of the data. According to Stones (1988: 154), this phase comprises two steps.

He contends that firstly the researcher must synthesise the insights attained by taking into account all the expressed intentions derived from the natural meaning units. He further argues that it is at this stage that various discrepancies might be noted and that certain themes might appear to contradict others or to be unrelated to others. This is what I have done in this chapter. Secondly, the researcher has to communicate "this phenomenological synthesis to the world of critical opinion" (Stones, 1988: 154). I deal with this part in the next chapter i.e. chapter seven.

6.2 Dominant themes

6.2.1 Legitimising decision making

Vuyani moves from the premise that decision-making should be stakeholder driven (**A14**). He believes that his role is to legitimise and own the process of decision-making in order for it to be acceptable to the larger community. When there is willingness on the part of all concerned within the council everybody becomes a vehicle of change (**A22**).

Mzimasi experiences his life-view in terms of making sure that decisions taken are not perceived to be from one source (**B3**). He feels that if that happens and stakeholders end up disowning the process, then the process becomes dangerous for everyone on campus (**B3**). For him it is therefore important that all stakeholders own the process. Unilateral decisions are therefore not acceptable (**B7**).

Mandla moves from the premise that in order to for everyone to own the process, no one should think of himself as superior to others (**C8**). Everyone must know that his or her voice carries the same weight. That to him is acceptable and makes it easy to work within the group.

Lulama moves from the premise that he is more powerful than other stakeholders within the governing structure (**D9**). He boasts that if decisions are taken without him being part of that, he has the power to disrupt whatever has been decided upon (**D10**). Therefore his involvement is to make sure that students get equal representation within the governing structures in his institution (**D12**). That is his way of making the process legitimate.

6.2.2 Transformation of the institution

This is one element which Vuyani feels very strongly about. He feels that the situation in his institution is complicated by the fact that stakeholders within the institution thought that when the old regime was ousted, transformation was achieved (A6). He, therefore, feels that “the systems” of the old regime have to be changed (A9). For him it is only then that he can say that transformation has been achieved.

Transformation for him entails representation in the “very critical committees”, where decisions on “the future of the institution are taken”. He feels strongly that not only in institutional forums must transformation take place, but also on national forums (A20). He also feels that transformation is possible only where there is willingness from all stakeholders, particularly the administration (A22).

Mzimasi like Vuyani puts transformation at the top of the agenda if the decision-making process is to be owned by students (B4). He states that in his institution they had experienced a bad period where the rector was used in taking unilateral decisions (B7). But students have changed that and people recognise the voice of students (B8).

Mandla feels that his role in the governing council first of all is to transform the way they used to do things (C10). He feels that people before represented themselves not their constituencies (C11). This state of affairs is not acceptable to him and needs to be changed hence his stated aim of transforming his institution to fit the new dispensation.

Lulama feels that the government and heads of institutions think that they know “students’ needs” (D5). He feels that this is the “big” problem facing educational institutions (D6). This then renders them irrelevant when they deal with student issues, in that, according to him, they are not aware of “current students’ needs” (D7). In his own words:

I think what we are doing as student representative council members, we are trying to adjust them to the present environment so as to ensure that we transform them and empower students in the process (D8).

6.2.3 Bringing back the rule of law

Vuyani feels strongly about bringing back normality in educational institutions. He feels that though there was a demand by students “to rule themselves”, that does not negate the fact that in educational institutions there must be “rule of law” (A4). His role therefore in the processes of decision-making is to ensure that law and normality prevails at his institution (A5).

Mzimasi agrees with Vuyani when he says that it would not be a good thing for members of an educational institution to disagree in matters debated within and then they go out to disown each other (B4). His involvement therefore is to make sure that such instances are minimised and harmony prevails within the institution.

Mandla feels that they have come to the institution to get education. That is therefore his priority to have things normal in his institution (C16). For him students are students not parents and therefore he is against the fact that students seem to want to take the place of adults (C17). Therefore his role within the council is to make sure that students know their place.

Lulama is not explicit in this point though he acknowledges it when he says:

I believe that we need as the student representative council in the governing council to make sure that our constituency is brought back into line and normalise their aspirations (D28).

That was as close as he could come to acknowledge that his role is to bring back the rule of law within his institution.

6.2.4 Enforcing transparency

Vuyani acknowledges the responsibility of the administration to “manage and administer” the institution (A12). But he feels that transparency is paramount. Management has to be transparent about its business. The only way that can be done is:

when they account somewhere, in those structures, student structures and workers’ organisation and so on (A13).

Their activities then become “legitimised” and accepted by all stakeholders. So his role within the governing structures is to make certain that there is transparency in his institution. This then would make students know what is happening in their institution at all times (A14).

Mzimasi feels that his institution is now starting to “practise” the principles of democracy, which start by being transparent about businesses within the institution (B13). His involvement has facilitated this because he believes that:

There must be openness towards students; it must not be a role of principal to tell you that today the fees are going to increase. You need to be part of the process (B14).

For Mandla this aspect is contained in his statement, which stated that:

Our role in the governing council, first of all is to transform the way they use to do things (C10).

He feels that business in his institution is shrouded in secrecy and students do not know what is happening. His role therefore is to make sure that the institution is transformed (C10).

Lulama feels that he is working well with the administration of his institution because there is transparency. In his own words:

We work very well with the rectorate. There is transparency, we know what is happening in our institution, relations are good (D15).

This environment makes it possible for him to function well but he feels that the rectorate needs constant supervision not to deviate from this trend.

6.2.5 Empowering students

Vuyani feels that students “need effective representation” within the governing structures (A17). For him this means that students have to be empowered and given capacity. He sees this as one of his major roles within the governing council.

He argues that no one can expect students to be effective if the environment is not made conducive for students to take their rightful place amongst other stakeholders (A19). He feels that this can be achieved only if “our systems on how we are operating in our institution” are changed (A20).

He also proposes “a national framework on how students should play a role in terms of policy making”, to be drawn up and circulated to all educational institutions (A20).

Mzimasi feels that the empowerment of students is paramount in his dealings within the governing structures in his institution. He feels that “a lot of training is needed” to train students to understand what they are doing. His involvement therefore entails making sure that students are capacitated to the fullest by the institution (B5).

More important is the fact that students have to be empowered to be able to do research. Coupled with this notion is the fact that the environment must be conducive to that (B6). For Mzimasi empowerment also means the balancing of activities i.e. being able to function effectively within the governing structures and within the classroom.

Mandla feels that the only way that students can be empowered is when the older members within the governing council act as “parents” and guide students in the right direction (C11). His role therefore is to make sure that this happens.

Lulama on the other hand feels that the only way that students could be empowered is by being “treated as equals” by other stakeholders within the governing structures (D16). The fact that they are numerically bigger than other stakeholders within the institution should compel others to bow to them (D7).

More importantly support services to help students cope with demands on them are needed. It is therefore his duty to force matters within the governing structures so that students are capacitated to enable them to engage meaningfully with people older than them (D19).

6.2.6 Equal representation

Vuyani feels that within the governing council there should be equal representation not in terms of numbers but in terms of content (A11). He believes that all stakeholders should participate in the governance of the institution. But he acknowledges the responsibility of the management to manage the day to day affairs of the institution (A12). Though that is the case the management must account to a forum where everyone is represented on an equal footing (A13). His role is to make sure that this happens.

Mzimasi believes that there must be no discrimination when it comes to the governance of the institution (B11). The voice of the students should carry equal power with other stakeholders within the governing council (B8). He feels that even the head of his institution acknowledges this. This is evident when he i.e. the head, jokes with him and states that “our voice or what we say as students is final” (B8).

He believes that he is playing a dual role within the governing council, that of making sure that a certain direction is followed by the governing council in connection with student representation within the governing structures and that relationships between students and staff are good.

Mandla on this element feels that equal representation means that each delegate on the council represents not only its constituency but also the entire community of the institution (C11). Members particularly from the outside should play the guiding role as parents. He sees his role as facilitating this kind of representativeness within the governing council.

Lulama sees his role as representing the biggest sector within the institution. Equal representation for him means students having equal or more powers than other representatives within the governing structures (D1).

He is not happy with the situation in his institution because though as students they are in the majority, their voice is not taken as such (D2). Also for him equal representation means having a say in all aspects of institutional life. He sees his role therefore as forcing his institution to recognise the power of students.

6.2.7 Safeguarding the welfare of students

Vuyani believes that representation in the “very critical committees” which he believes are finances and residential, is crucial to the welfare of students (A10). He feels that his role within the governing council is making sure that issues critical to students are discussed and the point of view of students are taken note of (A11).

Mzimasi likens the role of students to that of administrators (B9). He feels that within the governing council his role is to safeguard issues, which are crucial for students and not let other stakeholders particularly the management, go it alone (B9). He believes that it is the actual reason why students are present within the governing structures of educational institutions (B16).

This therefore makes him play dual roles, that of seeing to it that students do not suffer and at the same time having to make sure that students are not left behind.

Mandla takes the position that he is “there” in the council to serve the interest of the students (C7). His role therefore is confined to making sure that students get a fair deal in his institution.

On this aspect Lulama is adamant that he serves on the council for the sole reason of seeing to it that the largest single sector within the governing council is recognised (D1). He is not happy with what is currently the situation where this sector is not fully recognised and given its fullest dues, that of dictating terms to other stakeholders.

He is not only interested in being represented in the governing council. This is evident when he says:

We, as student representative council members are having a big picture, not only to be involved institutionally but we also intend to be involved nationally on those policy making forums so that we can be represented there (D3).

This is so because he believes that national policies at times influences institutional governance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A GENERAL STATEMENT PROVIDED

7.1 Methodological issues considered

In the previous chapters I followed strictly the procedure as indicated by Giorgi as stated in chapter four, particularly points one to four. I did this in order that I, and eventually the readers get a clear understanding of what is happening “there” in the world of my participants, what involvement within the governing structures meant to my participants (Van den Berg, 1972: 76). According to Van der Mescht (1996: 98) the descriptions in chapters four and five are at the situated level. What then is the next stage? It should be obvious that the moment has come that I give my observation or my opinion because I too have to express one (Van der Berg, 1972: 77). Van der Berg (1972: 77) has this to say about this stage that I have reached:

His story tries to be the interpretation of what he observes: hears, sees smells and feels. He wants to live and to have his psychology spring from this life. If he intends to write a discourse on swimming, he will want, first of all, to swim-and repeat his swimming until he knows and can express what swimming is. (Underlining my emphasis)

I believe that I have swum repeatedly with my participants in our river. The next stage therefore for me is to express or to attempt to answer the question: “What is student involvement within governing councils?” According to Van der Mescht (1996: 98) I am now reducing the situated descriptions to a general statement. He defines a general statement in the following manner:

A general statement is, of necessity, a cryptic summary, a crystallisation bringing together of the significant themes uncovered in the long and rigorous process of identifying meaning units and creating situated descriptions ... a general description is thus ideally viewed, not as a discreet and independent statement, but a culmination of the descriptive stage of the research process: for while its effectiveness does, to a large extent, depend on the descriptive skill of the researcher, it relies heavily on what has come before to convey its complete meaning (Van der Mescht, 1996: 99).

What comes out strongly from Van der Mescht's description is the fact that at this stage the bringing together of important themes emerging from the data is most desirable. It helped me as a researcher but more importantly the reader to get a general overview of my participants' understanding of the phenomenon under study.

This in turn makes findings presented in this manner more easily comparable to findings by other researchers in the same or related fields (Van der Mescht, 1996:96) How then do I go about getting this one general statement about the phenomenon under study after having interviewed four participants? Van der Mescht (1996:100) argues this point in the following manner:

...This raises the question of selection: on what basis should material be included or rejected for the purpose of producing a single general description. Commonality seems to suggest itself as the most obvious criterion for selection ... phenomenology insists on the uniqueness of each individual's dialogue with his/her world. Our worlds are partially "sharable" (Spinelli, 1989:14). But sharable they are, and it is the task of the researcher to explore commonality as well as uniqueness (Spinelli, 1989). The task ... thus becomes one of organising the aggregate formulated meanings into clusters of themes, which are common to all subjects' protocols.

But Van der Mescht hastens to add that:

the researcher who homes in on commonality only has perhaps adopted too analytical an approach, in an attempt to get the heart of the phenomenon under investigation. But the researcher who remains open to the "greater variability" in a multiple case-study- and therefore includes unique responses- is more interested in constructing a picture that reveals the multi- faceted richness of the phenomenon.

In this chapter therefore I attempt to give a general statement which I hope captures or reveals the multi-faceted richness of the phenomenon under study.

7.2 The general statement

I want to state immediately that this general statement which is to follow is not to be taken as universally valid. But I believe that it captures and faithfully reflects what my participants regard as the role of students within the governing councils of educational institutions.

I am not sure to what extent the statement is more broadly and generally applicable. I leave that to the reader to decide (Van der Mescht, 1996: 121).

7.2.1 How students see their role within governing structures at their institutions

Legitimising the process of decision making emerges strongly as the key role students have chosen for themselves. A contributory factor is the bringing of stability to educational institutions. This has been a burning issue for a long time particularly in Black educational institutions. They feel that their presence and inputs make it possible for them to accept and own their institutions.

But this is possible only when there is transparency. When everybody knows what is happening in his institution, when there is openness, it is possible to understand each other and compromises can be reached whereas if there was none, ignorance and emotions take over and there is anarchy at institutions.

The two factors above lead to a situation where law rules. When people own the activities of the institution because they were involved in their planning and debates, it is easy for them to convince their constituency and relations become good amongst all stakeholders. Therefore a culture of learning and teaching prevails. They see their role therefore as that of making sure that there is rule of law in their various institutions.

What makes these factors above happen is when the institution is willing to transform. This is very difficult in that change is always met with resistance because it threatens the comfort zones of people. Therefore the role of students within governing councils is to make sure that transformation takes place in educational institutions.

The institutions therefore have to empower and capacitate its student body to enable it to fulfill its institutional and national obligations. This is a tall order for some institutions for lack of funds. My participants feel that to be able to function properly the environment must be made to be conducive to allow them to meaningfully take their rightful places amongst other stakeholders.

This then would cater fully for the welfare of students within the various educational institutions. Students' needs are best known to them. Therefore their participation ensures that decisions taken do not affect them adversely.

The factors mentioned above would come to naught if students are not regarded as equals by other stakeholders within the governing council. This has come out strongly in the interviews from my participants. Their role therefore is to see that students are seen as equals, not subordinates to everybody.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION OF THE GENERAL STATEMENT

8.1 Introduction

In chapter one, I stated that there is a lack of clarity on the role for students within the governing councils at educational institutions in South Africa. I painted a picture, which is currently prevailing, where there is tension and uncertainty amongst stakeholders in education in general about the phenomenon under investigation. It is argued in some quarters that students even perceive themselves as co-administrators.

I further argued that another factor, which needed clarification, was their declared demand that they wanted “to rule themselves” which has never been clarified. I stated further that the call by the now defunct NEPI in 1992 to analyse the role of the various constituencies motivated this study. I ended chapter one by stating that students as the protagonists in this debate are the ones who are capable of answering these unanswered questions.

In chapter two I presented an argument for education for democratic participation and the dilemma which this presents to researchers on the phenomenon under study. I showed the shortcoming of the argument that it has failed to listen to and take into account what students have to say about the phenomenon under study. I stated that I believe that the students’ voice needed to be heard and listened to if we wanted to bring stability and good inter human relations in to educational institutions.

In chapter three, I revealed that the method which would suit such a study would be phenomenology. I discussed its features extensively and justified its usage. Why do I repeat these matters above? The reason is that I believe that so far these have resulted in the general statement that I will now discuss.

8.1.1 The general statement explored

The points that emerged from the general description presented in chapter seven can be summarised in the following manner:

- A key role that emerged was the legitimisation of the decision-making process. This was coupled with the following roles:
- The transformation of the institution
- Bringing back the rule of law

- Enforcing transparency
- Empowering students
- Equalisation of status of students with other stakeholders
- Safeguarding the welfare of students

8.1.2 The student and his voice emerges

Van der Mescht (1996: 130) citing Greene (1974) and Griffiths (1993) wrote:

Free people write, as it were, their own histories; they are the authors of their own lives.

The freedom of the self to tell its own autobiography at any stage is an important part of its feeling of self-worth and authenticity.

Perhaps the feeling which comes out most strongly from my participants is the legitimization of the decision-making process. The quotation above underlines this determination by students to write their own histories with their hand and signatures. This notion of the individual or the self emerging is evident in a different study by Van der Mescht. He wrote:

The emergence of the self is, as I have noted, perhaps the strongest feature of the findings of this study. This was, in a sense, to be expected since many of the questions I asked were designed to prompt the respondents to talk about themselves, about their strength and weaknesses, and about how they perceive themselves ... (Underlining my emphasis) (Van der Mescht, 1996: 130).

He states further that “there is no guarantee that certain kinds of questions will produce certain kinds of answers”. In chapter two I argued that in the studies available about the phenomenon, the student’s self-being is absent, perhaps because as Van der Mescht (1996: 130) put it, “the reason for this is that their research was driven by different underlying questions and assumptions, a different methodological stance”.

A point of interest here is that my participants did not just talk about themselves but also about how they feel other stakeholders relate to them and how they feel about that.

8.1.2.1 Legitimizing the decision-making process the key

It seems to me that the issues to be discussed here are the findings of the research. I interviewed four participants resulting in a lot of information. But I reduced the conceptions expressed by my participants to seven concepts as expressed in the introduction of this chapter. I firmly believe that the concepts that I have used can account for most of the empirical variations of the phenomenon under study in educational settings (Giorgi, 1986: 20).

In most of the grievances by students, decisions by the management have been rejected on the grounds that they were unilateral. This came out strongly from the interviews. Some of my participants felt that it was worse in institutions of higher learning where they are treated worse than students in the lower levels of education. The answers I got from my participants revealed the way they felt about the phenomenon under study in a forceful way but in varying degrees. For Lulama, the decision-making process has to be changed drastically to reflect the demographics of the institution. Decisions have to be legitimized by having students being in the forefront of the process. He put this in the following manner:

You may find that the biggest sector is the student sector and therefore their leaders are the people who are significant in terms of governance of student matters as well as the management of the institution (D1).

Lulama's expression is evident in what O'Connell (1991: 134) said when he wrote:

In the context of secondary and tertiary institutions with strong SRC traditions, democracy has become synonymous with majority rule. As students form the majority within these institutions, democracy has often meant that students concerns must predominate. The very implementation of the academic and professional programmes of the institutions are often subservient to student interest.

Where issues arise on the campus or the wider community which students judge to be significant, the democratic process for arriving at a course of action is deemed to be of paramount concern and all other functions involving students must cease during this time. Decision-making time can cut across examination and other institutional arrangements, and adaptations have to be made because the majority wish it (Underlining my emphasis).

Vuyani in echoing what Lulama stated though in different mode felt that the only place where decisions should be taken is the structures i.e. governing council structures, where all stakeholders are represented and where decisions are legitimised and therefore owned by everybody. This point i.e. ownership of the process of decision-making seems to permeate every matter concerned with the phenomenon under study and finds support in the advocates of student involvement (see Snauwaert, 1992 and Fraser, 1988). How then can the process of legitimizing the process of decision-making be achieved? The next section answers this question.

8.1.2.2 Legitimizing the process through transformation

Students felt that institutions were yet to transform and some felt that other institutions had started the process of transformation but were going back to the pre-election period where the heads of institutions “thought” they could do as they pleased. They i.e. students, felt that it was their responsibility therefore to make sure that the transformation of their institutions was carried forward and not stalled.

The question to answer at this stage is what do students mean by this concept? To my participants transformation meant the changing of “systems of operation”, thus a change in the status quo. They believed that only when complete transformation has taken place would normality return to educational institutions. It is then that they believe that they would feel that they are not strangers in their institutions. Thus it was their role within the governing council to make sure that transformation is achieved. O’Connell (1991: 133) in confirming the power of students to transform educational institutions wrote “ student politics is underpinned by the notion of student power”. He elaborates on this notion in the following manner:

The example of the Soweto uprising in 1976 spread throughout South Africa. The initial challenge to the existing relations at black schools came via the demand for democratically elected SRCs (Molteno, 1984; Nkomo, 1984; Hirson, 1979). These SRCs, once constituted, used student power to renegotiate student-society relationships. The success of umbrella associations in utilising the considerable power of the student masses to influence educational change, internally and externally, has demonstrated the value of the SRCs as a democratic vehicle for student concerns within education (O’Connell, 1991: 133).

What O’Connell means therefore is that transformation is the vehicle used by students to look after their welfare if not their wellbeing is at stake all over again.

According to my participants most educational institutions' priorities were not focused on this aspect though institutions were about them. Their role within the governing councils therefore was to make sure that all stakeholders understood that the institutions was about them and for them. O'Connell summarised the notion of transformation as articulated by students thus:

- Democracy and the will of the people
- Education and the community
- Education and non-racialism
- Education and unity

How then can transformation be achieved?

8.1.2.3 Openness the key to transformation

Students felt that a key to the transformation of their institutions was transparency. They believed that they have a right to know and openly take part in all matters of their institution. This finds support in Mill as cited in Morrow (1985: 338):

... the rights of every or any person are only secure from being disregarded when the person interested is himself able, and habitually disposed, to stand up for them.

This notion of transparency therefore is a means of empowerment as far as students are concerned. Students felt that the institutions are places where they spent most of their lives, therefore it is the duty of the educational institution to prepare them for life beyond the institutions. This would enable them as students to participate fully in the development of their societies.

Therefore to be allowed or given enough room to manoeuvre and practice whilst at the institution, they would stand a good chance to survive when they are out of the institution. Thus they must be treated as equals by other stakeholders and nothing should be hidden from them. They do need the protection.

They also feel that accountability by management is part of being transparent. O'Connell has this to say about this notion on the part of the students:

Students have no clearly articulated notion of accountability and that accountability is equated with solidarity. One consequence of this is that allegiance and support is owed to the student's primary community (O'Connell, 1991: 144).

What this means is that students, though they want transparency from other stakeholders, they themselves are not transparent about their own activities. O'Connell states:

In fact, the success of student efforts at attaining democratic participation in affairs that concern them, has often been measured by the extent to which they have won freedom from accountability (O'Connell, 1991: 144).

What have I done so far? I have in this chapter discussed the general statement as it appears in chapter seven. I elaborated on what this statement seems to say to me and eventually the reader and put it into context. The extent to which it clarifies the position of the students, concerning the phenomenon under study, I feel that I have to leave to the reader to decide.

CHAPTER NINE

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

9.1 Conclusion

A conclusion implies more than simply coming to an end. It can be regarded more as an outcome, a finding or the final result of whatever was engaged in. It implies that one has discovered, or come across what one has set out to uncover. It is more than simply an expression of one's opinion that an end has been reached.

A conclusion is, scientifically speaking, a result of a thorough and exhaustive research, which may then be termed "conclusive". The Encyclopedia Britannica explains a conclusion as "whatever necessarily follows from the premises of a properly constructed argument".

The implication of the above definition of a conclusion is that since research on the phenomenon under study has been exhaustively done, nothing lies beyond what has been found or discovered. In this chapter therefore I look at the strengths and weaknesses of the approach, the implications and the recommendations of the study.

9.2 Strengths of the approach

The strength of the approach lies in the fact that the researcher has to "bracket" his a priori knowledge and just "describe" what the participants have to say about the phenomenon under investigation. This kept me on tenterhooks. It made me understand what one can discover by listening, reading over and over again the transcripts and delineating the natural meaning units.

Van der Mesccht in investigating the phenomenon of leadership employing the same approach as used in this study has this to say about the notion of bracketing:

The idea of "reduction" ... seems to me the most difficult to attain, but also the most significant and powerful. The difficulty lies in the fact that "bracketing" is not the same as "forgetting", or putting out one's mind entirely. It goes without saying that one who is doing research in any field will have some pretty strong views on the subject; that is what draws one to the research process in the first place. But the researcher also has questions, questions which he or she genuinely cannot answer, and it is these questions that drive the research.

It is within this genuine questioning, of virtual naivety, that the practice of bracketing plays a key role (Van der Mescht , 1996: 183).

Van der Mescht in this quotation mentions three points which were fundamental to me when I decided to use the approach:

- That bracketing is not the same as forgetting, or putting out one's mind entirely
- That one who is doing research in any field has some strong views on the subject
- That the researcher has genuine questions that he or she cannot answer

It is true that I had my own thinking and understanding of the phenomenon that I was investigating, but I was very much concerned about the tensions amongst stakeholders in the education arena, particularly between management and students in black educational institutions. I had to find out why there was this disharmony. I had to hear from the students what they had to say. I think I did but the reader will decide for himself. Bracketing opened up my horizon on the phenomenon. I did not point my participants to any direction, I let them direct my questioning. In this way I maintained my silence on the phenomenon as required by the approach (Stones, 1988).

The approach demanded that I remain faithful to the data and not contaminate it with my preconceived ideas. As stated in chapter three the technique best suited for this is description. Giorgi as cited by Stones (1988:143) expanded on this when he said:

The operative word in phenomenology is 'describe'. The researcher aims to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon as it appears, rather than indulging in attempts to explain it within a pre-given framework.

As with Van der Mescht in his study of leadership, I found this "a tall order". The tendency at times is to want to interpret what the participants said but "the ideal is to refrain from explicit interpretation for as long as possible, to capture the nature of the experience as it manifest itself for the participant, to keep yourself out of the picture (Van der Mescht, 1996: 184). Describing the protocols gave me an opportunity to get to know my participants in a very intimate way, as is humanly possible.

I fully agree with the statement by Van der Mescht (1996: 185) that:

It is these very features that account for the strength of the phenomenological method, and for the validity of one's findings. The attitude of reduction opens the mind to possibility, rather than probability. But once descriptions have been written and one can compare what one has found out with received wisdom, the overwhelming feeling of surprise; surprise at what has emerged, as if for the first time, at significant element of the phenomenon; and surprise at what has not emerged, despite its strong presence in mainstream literature.

9.3 Weaknesses of the approach

The weaknesses of the approach lie in its strengths. Van der Mescht (1996: 189) put these weaknesses in the following manner on:

- That they are only dependent on in-depth, intensive, subjective interaction with a small number of participants
- That the findings are in no way generalisable
- That the strong presents of the researcher must in some way have effect on the research process
- That the researcher will often be caught in a catch-22 situation

According to Van der Mescht (1996: 189) the matters articulated above have been on the minds of researchers engaged in qualitative research for quite some time. He states that the problem lies in the fact that:

Qualitative research, as an alternative mode of inquiry to the 'more respectable' traditionally scientific research, was still in its infancy. In attempting to postulate its own criteria it naturally resorted to the only vocabulary available at the time, including words like words like "generalisability", "validity" and "reliability".

The question which was on my mind all the time was how will I validate and prove my study to be reliable. The answer was provided by Shapiro as cited in Van der Mescht (1996:189) when he argued that:

Mundane experiences can give ... an always accessible and evolving touchstone for validity reality claims. Thus simply being human provides for validation.

He further state that for the researchers involved “in the construction of reality, there is direct access to understanding and to a form of verification inherent in the lived relation between themselves and the object of their investigation”.

The above arguments gave me the strength to finish and enjoy doing my research without fear that my study cannot be valid.

9.4 Implication of the study

According to Morrow (1985: 346) when we speak of democratic participation we speak “about trying to reach agreement by discussion as opposed to some other methods”. Therefore according to him anti- democratic activities are those which hinder or prevent any individual from exercising or controlling power.

How then can we have a satisfactory situation in our educational institutions? The study has shown that the literature available falls short of the required answer. Should students be treated as equals to educators as the proponents of democratic participation seem to propagate or should they be regarded as inferior as the proponents of view one seem to say? The answer is difficult after I have done the research. A lot needs to be done on this aspect. The implication of the study are:

- Educators involved with educating students for democratic participation must treat their students not as equals but as persons

According to Morrow (1985: 349) to treat a student as a person is

To listen to, and hear, what she is saying; not because it is prudent to do so in order to control or manipulate her with less fuss, but because she, like anyone else in a democratic community, is a source of claims and judgements, and her current claims and judgements are the site on which her education for democratic participation takes place.

This is in keeping with Rogers’ (1980) call for students to be prized and respected. For the educators therefore, it is important that there must be a paradigm shift in the way the away students are treated.

9.5 Recommendation

Much investigation is still needed on student participation. This is a fairly new phenomenon in South Africa. The Australian experience (Van Halen, 1991: 75-79) needs to be investigated to enable South Africa not to re-invent the wheel. Areas which need urgent attention are:

- An investigation of how other stakeholders particularly administrators view the phenomenon.
- An investigation of how the phenomenon has influenced the present thinking of the government.
- An investigation of the effect of the phenomenon on the home and culture of the various population groups in South Africa.
- An investigation of how the phenomenon can be of benefit to the development of the country.

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APPENDIX – NATURAL MEANING UNITS

A: VUYANI – Meaning units

A1: I think if we look at the strategies and tactics of the time of the liberation movement by then people were largely demanding independence in terms of leadership they were wanting freedom. Cosas identified itself by then with a Broader congress tradition which was a tradition that was saying "All South Africans must be free, black people in general and Africans in particular". So although we were students but we were part of the Broader National Democratic revolution which was fighting for self governance

People wanted to be free and cases identified with the community

Students were fighting for self-governance.

A2: So we wanted to rule ourselves in the broader sense of the word as african people and as black people in South Africa. But beyond that I think particularly with regard to education it also meant that even in structures of governance of education we are saying if we are participants to any particular thing we must have a say on how it should be governed.

It was demanded to be part of decision making in schools.

A3: So I am saying that is in line with that slogan and even in higher education that's what we are saying that there must be those forums and that they must be recognised and they must be highest decision making body of the institution.

Forums to be recognised and be highest decision making bodies in institutions

A4: I'm saying this rule ourselves does not neglect the fact that in schools there must be rule of law for instance we may agree on the code of conduct how people should conduct themselves and we should brief that particular code of conduct

A5: That is the kind of environment we are talking about not a loose kind of environment where one does whatever he wants you may held people hostage, you may decide not to come to class and so on

A6: The situation on my institution is very complicated, you remember that there have been these processes of transforming higher education broadly and therefore we have been part of it. But where for the team confused is when the staff association, the student and everyone inside campus manage to chuck out previous administration I think that was in 1990 which was white dominated.

A7: They put in the entirely new administration with new government council without changing the systems.

A:8 When that became a confusion is when people did not understand that was not the ultimate objective of the transformation forces because the transformation forces are saying that you must not only not only change faces in governance you must also change the systems there must be new norms and standards underwhich higher education in South Africa must subscribe and that is what we failed to do as an institution at Fort Hare.

But, the rule ourselves does not mean anarchy

Codes of conduct are necessary tools for good governance.

He feels that anarchy does not have space in schools

In his institution things are complicated.

As an institution they have been involved in transformation in line with education broadly

But confusion took over after the old regime was "chucked out"

The views change in administration but no change with systems.

Seemingly people thought that changing the administration was the ultimate goal.

He believes that the change in forces does not necessarily translate to the change in systems.

He also believes that the norms and standards must change to accommodate the new S.A.

A9: As a student our position is that the institution is not yet transformed In terms of systems, structures of governance and so on. The fact that you still have people for instance in the governing council appointed last year by the president, the fact that you still have an old Fort Hare act that was promulgated in Ciskei that still recognises their representatives of the Ciskei government proves that there is a lot that we have not done.

He makes a point that his institution is not yet transformed.

A10: Representation in very critical committees like financial committee for instance where serious decisions on the future of the institution are taken we are not presented.

He believes that in structures critical to students' well being representation is nil.

A11: we think that there must be effective student representation not only in terms of numbers but in terms of content and this boils down into this question of whether we view student representation as just a consultative thing or just an advisory kind of function that is supposed to be played by students.

Effective student representative is crucial – an effective meaning in content not in numbers.

He rejects the notion that students' role should be advisory or consultative

A12: Our view is that all stake holders in an institution must participate in the governance of that particular institution, must participate in the management of that particular institution although we acknowledge the responsibility of management to manage and administer the institution.

His view is that all stake holders must participate in the governance of the institution.

But he acknowledges the responsibility of administrators and management to run the institution.

A13: but they must account somewhere and in our view they must account in those structures, students structures and worker organisation and so on they must be a forum where in they all meet and discuss issues of interests.

Accountability runs high in his assessment.

This should be in a forum where everyone is represented

A14: policy making is an exercise that is supposed to be stake holder driven and people are supposed to own policy that is implemented by the administration. The only way that they can own it is when it becomes legitimate and the only way which it becomes legitimate is when they've been taking part in developing such policy.

A15 : Not really, an error that the democratic forces have done after 1994 was to disregard the role that is supposed to be played by various stake holders in transformation process.

A16: In the higher education act it's not clear that the role that the students are supposed to be blame its just there is a provision that students must be there beyond that it's not clear what it is that they are supposed to be doing vs the role that is played by the administration

A17: As students we need effective representation and effective means you have to make sure that your capacitate us for students for instance so that you can make meaningful participation

A18: We expect people who are attending classes, people who have assignments right in tests like ordinary students to also attend the same meetings that the administration is attending

A19: So we are saying students should be given capacity, the environment must be made conducive for students to participate effectively.

Democratic forces failed to stipulate what role should each stake holder play in various structures.

The higher education act fails to clear the matter

He feels for students to be effective the institution should capacitate them.

How can students be effective when they do not have the capacity.

A conducive environment should be made for students to be effective.

A20: I'm saying there is a need to change our systems on how we were are operating on our institutions and broadly there need to be a national frame work on how students should play a role in terms of policy making and so on which has not been clear in the higher education act or in any act that deals with transformation of the sector.

A21: the fact of the matter is that that act does not have a clear way of enforcing university administrations or any other tertiary institution to make sure that that co-operative governance is actually adhered to.

A22: Unless there is willingness on the particular administration of an institution of an institution to adhere to that particular act, otherwise as it stands now anyone can do as he likes as long as he says I've consulted for instance if I may quote an example of what I'm saying in this institution.

A23: It's true you know these institutions I think after 1994 in fact even before 1993, 1994, 1995 there was recognition on the part of the administration that immerged because we must remember that also there was a new administration that emerged as the political situation was changing in the country.

A24: There was an understanding from that new administration that immerged throughout the universities in South Africa and technikons that there is a need to recognise students participation, there is a need to recognise for instance even worker organisation and so-on inside campus so that there can be this

A25: if we look at 1997 there is a new trend nationally and it only reach its high speed in 1998. When these institutions were saying for instance the issues of increment all issues around increment were non negotiable which becomes a problem.

He believes a change in the system in his institution is of paramount importance.

Also a national framework should be made to spell out what is role student should play.

The act has failed the students.

There must be willingness to co-operate amongst all stakeholders.

In the years 1993, 1994 and 1995 there was willingness to accommodate students in governance.

There was understanding all around

A new trend has developed in 1998 with non negotiables.

A26: I think the student body you must also understand that its also changing there is a new generation after 1994, a generation that is not necessarily used to struggle and the generation that is largely not politically active.

He feels that the new generation of Students is not used to the struggle.

A27: This generation is conscious of its interests and we would like to safeguard its interest at all costs so you want a leadership that is able to guide that particular desire to safeguard its interest in that those interest must not be necessarily be selfish but also you must be able to translate that desire to fight for interest into a desire to fight for a broader just and democratic society.

But they have aspirations which the leadership of students has to look after.

A28: You see this new attitude of the part of university Administration whilst we say we are entering a new phase in as far as higher education transformation is concerned but we see this new attitude.

He senses a new attitude coming out from management which he is not happy with.

A29: We view this as a disregard of the broader revolution for their emancipation of the poor because what become clear was also that the higher education in particular is becoming highly commercialized if you don't have money you can't have access.

This is disregarding the spirit of the struggle which advocates for massification of students in higher education.

A30: Yes, indeed I think they are becoming reactionary. I think that's how we can summarize their activities because it's not the amount of re-touring that one says that makes him progressive but the actions that they are taken. Although most of them we can trace their background from the progressive access I think their actions can be best summarized to be reactionary.

The administration is becoming reactionary

What is surprising is that most have a background on the progressive movement.

A31: But I think I must also indicate that we also understand that in some instances or to some extent the macro economics strategy of the country is also having an impact on how they should exercise their physical policy for instance.

He understand their problems i.e. economic compels them to act this way.

A32: It does not negate the fact that they have the responsibility as progressive people to make sure that imbalances of the past are actually redressed because you redress the imbalances of the past.

It is unacceptable.

A33: First we in line with that broader vision as students we have engage ourselves in a process of resuscitating institutional forums or what we were calling broad transformation forums. The purpose is to make the systems so that they can be meaningful participation.

He feels that resuscitating B T F S is the cure.

A34: We also need also as students to take a particular role in terms of capacitating ourselves for instance our SRCs we must be able to have a structure that is able to represent students across the board, we must be able to have a structure that is large enough for instance to see to it in all committees but that structure that is also be able to accountable to students directly.

But students need to capacitate themselves also not depend on handouts.

A35: Students must be part of processes because also we are not saying its only the student leadership that must its terrain to represent students and drive processes it must be the actual students.

Not only the student leadership must be involved all students “student parliament”

A36: We are also transforming the systems of the education so hardly we may ultimately achieve this renovation of co-operative governance which in my view is possible but just need a political will from the part of all parties.

This entails changing system within the institution.

A37: Meaningful participation as I’ve said means that we are all participating in terms giving directions and in terms of content not only the question of being present in meetings but for instance we must be able to be capacitated to be able to develop policy.

He feels that meaningful participation means giving direction.

A38: Meaningful means in terms of content there must be submissions clearly from students and people must get used to the fact that students have a role to play.

Most people are not used in having to sit with students and take decision with them.

A39: Don't think most people are oriented to this kind of an arrangement people are not used to getting students putting issues to management its like a new challenge to their authority as management or administration of the institution so I'm saying to deal with both attitude and also systems.

Experience to him is a subjective phenomenon

A40: You see the question of experience is a very subjective thing because you may find out that there are people who are in the administration who were never involve for instance with educational issues know some of them that are in my institution that are in management.

Students at times know more than administrators.

A41: As students sometimes we even better understand some of the background of the issues you can go there and interview all of them you will be surprised to know that some of them don't even know the contents of this higher education act so I'm saying this question of experience becomes a subjective thing.

He feels that experience is necessary but it must not be abused.

A42: If you are experienced you have expertise come we need you but also students if you are saying you have a role to play we also can't close the door for you.

B: MZIMASI : Meaning Units

B1: You first have to transform the minds of the SRC before they enter the government because if you haven't change that mind set of corruption you can assist the management which is corrupt within that technikon because you are coming from that diverse situation.

He feels that the minds of S R C's need to be transformed to ready them for the job at hand.

B2: You are seating at the staff committee and you have to challenge some appointments which have not been done according to the policy and the principles of the human resource regulations or labour relations you have to come with the document that supports your vision and that needs a research.

To be able to cope he needs to make research.

B3: But in terms of student participating in terms at a governance its a good position that must happen because it will be very dangerous when you see a fruitful technikon having a case at a national level and you find that students are disagreeing.

Students participation is a good thing for an institution.

B4: I think let us be all part of the decision and own the process of decision and if the students are there they can owe the process because they were there when the financial decision was taken.

He feels that all stakeholders have to be part of decision making.

B5: we need lot of training to train them to understand what they are doing so that at the end of the day they do not agree to the situation that they are not familiar with, they have to research before the meeting.

Students need training to be able to engage meaningfully

B6: I think another thing of direction we need to manage the balance and look how do they perform as students within the structures and not just being glad that they putting input as to balance that even the situation of saying that alright we evaluate every month all the leaders who are attending the governance structures of the technikon how do you perform at a class level.

The performance of students should be looked after when they participate in governing structures of the institution.

B7: In terms of us in the structures the effectiveness is to always in a situation of reviewing some decision which has been taken maybe other are ill decisions because you know the level of Poole and other people within the management are having that particular trauma of having that particular unilateral decisions.

The review decision which are not in line with their understanding.

B8: Precisely. There is even perception for staff that if you talk to student our voice are final that they ask I'm saying that if we are talking and we are putting facts even joke and say that to Professor Brunyee while I'm leading the constituency that is more than yours and you must listen to me as a director general.

He believes that student numbers make people to acknowledge net that they are a force to reckon with.

B9: Ja, I can't say that it is true or not but I'm saying the students they can be administrators if there is need to be because at the end of the day they need to be aware of their welfare they must be part of the day if the management is going to be there drawing things alone, if we are criticising them they can't change the things you can't be a player and the referee at the same time.

Students could be administrators given the right guidance

B10: Because you have advise us that this is the suitable place because if you think that you can advise a person and say that you mix you do these things and do these things when you want to bake a cake he can do it wrong but if you are there both of you in the kitchen and you do all the mixing and ensure that, the particular baking of cake is running smooth and you are part of that process I think the results you will be very satisfying with.

He cannot play a role of advisor

B11: Ja, I don't think there must be that division because even some national structures if you can do an example in terms of the academic lessons that we are taking Satec is having a principle that there must be a self evaluation students must evaluate lecturers and lecturers must evaluate students let alone the principle there that just to say how do you know the consumer behaviour.

There should be no division of roles.

B12: Other people have done administrative skill during a period of two months and some students are doing these things and they are having those skills its part of experiential training to take to start to be responsible while you are a student so that at the end of the day when you go there at the market level you had that such skills through enhancement by management assisting you in terms of understanding how things are run at the technikon.

Students should be prepared at school for roles beyond the school.

Students should be prepared at schools for roles beyond the school

B13: We are starting to practice the principle of transparency, principle of accountability, the principle of honesty because they are all principles democracy it will go to other direction of start to say that everyone must know everything of a person.

Transparency is being practiced at his institution.

B14: There must be openness towards students, it must not be a role of principal to tell you that today the fees are going to increase by 100 percent, you need to be part of the process so that if those economic indicators, consumer price index are being put there you are part of that process of researching.

Principals are not do things alone, they must involve others

B15: No, not powerful I'm saying this direction the student enrolment is plus minus 4000 and the staff is about plus minus 300 or 259 then it means in terms of consistency quantitatively is too small than mine you see in all that direction.

Students are numerically stronger than the academic staff.

B16: The actual role that we play we ensure that the welfare of the student is being adhere to where we maybe come with some items like for instance if at the governance level.

Their role is to ensure that the welfare of students is guaranteed.

B17: I'm having a double leadership role of ensuring at a certain direction that we have a relationship between Notesa and the SRC and thus that to say Notesa will ensure that within the management perspective we are not victimise as the staff and as the student that to create the student and the staff relationship over a long period.

He plays two roles to ensure the right direction is followed.

B18: What I see around the strategy planning of the technikon is the balance between the academic welfare and the social welfare of the student that's my vision of the technikon.

There must be a balance between the academic welfare of students and the social roles.

B19: I don't think there is an intimidation because as a person we differ in terms of understanding issues, there are issues that you know and there are issues that I do not know that you know and there are issues that we do not know maybe I know then at a level of being intimidated I don't think you share opinions and views and I learn out of your opinions and you learn out of my opinions let alone that other people will not be honest.

The numbers are not a means to intimidate other stakeholders.

B20: I'll do according to observation in terms of the management side I'm having a good in direction the skills, like for instance I'll say there is no meeting or committee that I sit at just that to start when I'm not there they phone me every time and say where are you because they know I'm critical in criticism.

There is good working relationship between him and the institution

B21: The relationship between me and them its good even at human resource even Professor Brunyee when he wants to propose some critical proposals top the Rectorate he consults me and we discuss and look whether these things are not going to have hiccups at the welfare of the technikon and the students.

He is consulted first in all matters concerning the institution

B22: I'm the person that even can sacrifice five minutes whereas I know that I'm late to class, five minutes to listen and then transfer a person that so and so is in the office can you go to that person I'll see after the class how do I refer to you to some management people you see because some problems that have caused some leaders to have no place to students is to become superior to students as that to say no maan I'm going to a class why can't you go to anyone of the SRC.

I am always there for my constituency, visible.

B23: Mondays I have allocation of female res I just go and chat with them and discuss with them issues how do they see the welfare of the housing res, how is the cleaning of their general staff where I have catch up some other ideas that even the general staff is victimised by people who heading them Pritchard a and other things through going to people and discuss with them and I think we need such leaders in this coming 21st century.

B24: I think if we need not to reinvent the wheel its high time that we need to understand that there must be in some committees of the technikon observers when I talk of observers I talk of general membership of the student maybe at a level one or at level two that are not in terms of election elected to the office of the SRC but they are just general student maybe we see a particular student maybe at a level of other student maybe a class rep or society level that starts to identify student whose having a capability to be a leader in this technikon, we sits with these committees so that there is continuity so that when I leave this technikon this year I've left someone who understand these issues then will take the project forward.

Students parliament is necessary to empower students and prepare them for life after school

C: MANDLA – Meaning Units

C1: I think in my present institution the student participation is not very good because we are divided in a number of camps, why I'm saying in a number of camps.

Student participation is not good.

C2: it's because of the areas we came from for example there are people or students who are coming from Transkei they don't really know about their involvement in student activities if you can remember well they grew in a situation whereby the president, the apartheid president was the Matanzimas and the students were not allowed to be involved in toyi-toying, in boycotting things.

The problem is caused by students themselves.

Some come from the Transkei and they do not understand politics.

C3: Coming to the second group coming from Dimbaza, Cradock whatsoever and Johannesburg they are acquainted with these things happening in front of them.

Some come from the former republic they understand.

C4: I said before I identify myself with this group and I am militants.

He identifies himself with the second group.

C5: So in our school we don't have a united family because of these ideologies and some of the students they are affiliated to political organization for example the organization by the name Sasco here at our institution is having an alliance with the ANC, Paso is having an alliance with the PAC so we differ in terms of ideologies.

There is no unity at his institution

There are different groupings PASO and SASCO

C6: I should think to my past experience when I was very observant to observe my president of 1997, it was really difficult sometimes students to be part and parcel of governing council because of these ideologies I was talking about for example the ex-president of this institution I understand he was the member of PAC and he belongs to the student movement Paso.

Observation from the past tell him that things were not good.

C7: I should think I would like one in the governing council to be that sense of belonging being a student you know that I'm belonging to this governing council, I am here to serve this governing.

Stakeholders should own processes.

C8: I should think the governing council in order to be recognised someone must not like to be popular or to be a populist on behalf of other people for example on behalf of the student which is representing the masses meaning that the president or that particular person of the governing council wanted to be superior even to the rectorate.

There must be no one who would want to shine at the expense of others.

C9: There must be that co-operation whatever that is happening they must work hand in hand jointly and I should think to work hand in hand in jointly they must also include whatever decision they are taking they must also include the stake holders.

There is to be co-operation among stakeholders.

C10: I should think our role in the governing council first of all is to transform the way they used to do things which we done clandestinely.

The role of students should transform the institution

C11: Because that individual is representing himself instead of representing the college as the whole including the students. And also I should think the members of the governing council somewhere somehow as a student I would like on my own opinion for them to be second parent because to my experience they don't play the role of being parents most of the time.

Members of the governing council should represent their constituency not themselves.

C12: I should think that on its own it goes with what I was saying before, it goes with tension because in the eighties we've got that tension that we didn't have a chance to differentiate between your black rectorate or your black principal and the white principal.

C13: In fact the motive behind was our own campaigns the anti pass campaigns or we are not going to attend the school and also we embark ourselves on the so called the go slow campaign.

C14: we were saying no we are going to fight this government because we were suspicious by saying some of the principals within our institution and high school we use to say to them they are sell outs.

C15: We were not actual saying we are going to take the part of parents or the part of the principal. It was the situation we see ourselves meaning that the apartheid era those were the strategies we use them meaning to introduce democracy in our country.

We did not demand that we want to take over the roles of the principals.

C16: I should think it is going to be very difficult in this question because I don't believe that students they must be full in participating in whatever things that are happening in our institution because first and for most I believe that we came to our institution to learn as I understand I am a student but I cannot play a role of being a parent.

C17: We can intervene at certain levels as students but the whole process must be conducted by the management and the rectorate hence they are people having the experience of such things.

Students could intervene at certain levels.

C18: I'm totally against of the fact that the students must be fully involved because if you are a student you are fully involved in the activities of the school then definitely at the end of the day you are going fail books.

He is against students becoming fully involved in the activities of the institution.

C19: I should think in conclusion the students must have patience first of all they must have respect meaning that when I'm saying they must have patience they must not rush into things without understanding what is really happening in their surrounding environment and in terms of respect they must be able to link things with their rectorate.

Students should have patience and wait for their turn when they are old.

C20: They must regard those particular persons as their own parents not having some sort of a negative attitude by saying I don't like Mr. So and So because he is like because you cannot judge the book by its cover you need to consult that particular person.

They must regard teachers as their parents.

C21: I think in my institution there is democracy but the democracy that we are having in our institution is being destroyed by both students by both the management and also the staff members. The reason why I'm saying there is democracy its because of my past experience because when I was doing course one I was able to talk whereas I was an STD 1 although according to the rules of the students we were not able to talk being an STD 1.

He thinks that there is democracy in his institution.

But students misuse it.

D: LULAMA – Meaning Units

D1: You may find that the biggest sector is the student sector and therefore their leaders are the people who are significant in terms of the governance of student matters as well as the management of the institution.

Because their numbers are big he feels that their leadership should be respected.

D2: But these leaders are being given minimum chance in terms of raising their views internally to transform and to better the welfare of students because we are more concerned with students.

But unfortunately that is not the case.

D3: We, as SRCs are having a big picture not only to be involved nationally on these policy making forum so that we can be represented there.

As SRC's they have a bigger role to play nationally.

D4: We want that because at the end of the day those policies which are drafted there, come back and become very much effective in terms of negative influence towards the students.

Major decisions are taken nationally and these impact negative on students institutionally

D5: I think the main cause is the fact that the government as well as education department and principals assume that they know students' need since they were students first.

He feels that the department as principals think they know students.

D6: That is a big problem in that we are not as they were as our needs are different to theirs when they were students. They are not well vested with current student needs and demand. We are more sophisticated than them.

That is a big mistake.

D7: But most of the time they do not realize that they are irrelevant as far as current issues are concerned and that is true.

This makes them irrelevant most of the time.

D8: I think what we are doing as SRCs we are trying to adjust them to the present environment so as to ensure that we transform them and empower students in the process.

The S R C is therefore trying to correct them.

D9: We are the biggest sector within so our voice should carry more weight in the running and governance of the institution.

Because of their numbers their voice is supposed to be heard loudly.

D10: If anything is decided without us being involved, we will reject it and the institution will come to a stand still, we have the power to disrupt everything.

As students they have the power to disrupt everything

D11: I believe that we must have equal power in decision making and the running of the college we should be co-drivers of the car.

D12: I believe our role is to ensure that students get equal representation or more as we are the biggest sector and because the institution is about us.

He believes that their role is to make sure that students have equal representation.

D13: No we cannot allow ourselves and be just advisors we must be equal partners in this thing.

He feels he cannot be an advisor.

D14: It is true that I have said that student sector is the biggest sector in the college and therefore the rector as the manager of the college, I don't believe that he can have more powers over us. It is students therefore who should be at the forefront of transformation. We are powerful.

The rector cannot have overriding powers over students because of their numbers.

D15: We work very well with the rectorate. there is transparency, we know what is happening in our institution, relations are good.

He works well with the rectorate.

D16: In governing council meetings we are treated as equals. We debate issues and take collective decisions.

They are treated as equals.
Collective decisions are taken.

D17: But in other institutions though we are part of the decision making process, we oppose them when students feel that we have made a mistake within the governing council.

Students are part of the decision making process.

D18: At times it is difficult in that we need to be capacitated, given things like telephones, fax machines, photocopiers.

Students need to be empowered.

D19: Students need support services to help them cope with the demands on them. We don't have research capacity to engage meaningfully with people older than us and more experience.

This is possible when there are support services in place

D20: Yes I do acknowledge the fact that they have experience but the college is about us.

He acknowledges the experience of the rectorate

D21: I am saying a car does not only need a driver, it needs petrol, tyres, wipers, water etc., to move therefore we are saying that everybody is needed if the institution has to move forward.

The rector is the driver but he needs other components to be able to drive.

D22: I believe that in our institution working together has done wonders but there are things which makes it difficult at times forms to participate fully.

Working together is wonderful.

D23: Time is one of them, reactionary members of staff who are not used to having students dictate terms and students who do not care whether we are moving left or right.

There are obstacles: e.g. time, reactionary staff members and even students.

D24: These could be overcome if students can be educated to take responsibility for themselves and be exposed to the workings of the governing council .

Students need to be educated to take responsibility for themselves

D25: A forum like a student parliament where every student would be represented and student matters discussed by students themselves.

A student parliament is necessary to train students in participatory management.

D26: This would help the country also because people will be trained from earlier in their lives.

The country would benefit if this could be the case.

D27: I believe that we need as S R C in the governing council make sure that our consistency is brought back into line and normalize their aspirations.

There is a need for normality within the institution.