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**AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFICACY OF A CAREER  
PREPARATION PROGRAMME**

by

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Dissertation (in article format) submitted in accordance with the requirements for  
the degree

**M. A. (Psychology)**

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Department of Psychology

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May 2008

I declare that the dissertation (in article format) hereby submitted by me for the M. A. (Psychology) degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

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Natasha Burgess

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**Article 1**

Bridging Programmes in the South African Context:  
The Career Preparation Programme of the University of the Free State

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### Abstract

The Career Preparation Programme (CPP) of the University of the Free State (UFS) is a bridging programme that provides access to higher education. The programme's performance from the year 2003 up until 2007 is explored. Central factors that have been indicated as possible contributors to the success of the CPP are: credit-bearing courses; modules focusing on the improvement of students' academic abilities and quality of life; the enhancement of English language proficiency; and sound strategies for learning and assessment procedures. As students are the *raison d'être* for the development and maintenance of the CPP, consideration of a student's experience and the consumer-orientated philosophy (in terms of programme evaluation and improvement) are essential. The CPP is an operational example of a strategy that successfully increases access to higher education in South Africa.

*Keywords:* higher education, bridging programme, access, student, enrolment.

### Opsomming

Die Loopbaanvoorbereidingsprogram van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat is 'n oorbruggingsprogram wat alternatiewe maniere van toegang tot hoërondewys voorsien. Die program se prestasie met betrekking tot inskrywings en slaagsyfers van die jaar 2003 tot 2007 is ondersoek. Sentrale faktore wat aangedui is as moontlike bydraers in die sukses van die program is: kredietdraende kursusse, modules wat fokus op die verbetering van studente se akademiese vermoëns en lewenskwaliteit, ontwikkeling van Engelse taalvaardigheid en soliede strategieë vir leer- en assesseringsprosedures. Aangesien studente die bestaansrede vir die ontwikkeling en instandhouding van die Loopbaanvoorbereidingsprogram is, is die oorweging van studente se ervaring en die verbruiker-georiënteerde filosofie (in terme van programmevaluering en verbetering) noodsaaklik. Die Loopbaanvoorbereidingsprogram is 'n operasionele voorbeeld van 'n strategie wat toegang tot hoërondewys in Suid-Afrika suksesvol verbeter.

*Sleutelwoorde:* hoërondewys, voorbereidingsprogram, toegang, student, inskrywing.

“Universities exert a very strong gravitational pull on young people. Many see higher education as the natural and necessary next step, even when their marks would not predict success and their chances of obtaining a place are very low” (Teese, 2002, p. 2). The reality is that not every person will benefit from a degree in higher education. Often, political decisions by governments have resulted in disadvantaged groups being deprived of the opportunity to place themselves on the same level as majority groups regarding eligibility for tertiary education. Sawyerr (2002) maintains the view that even once opportunities to access are equalised, university competitiveness prevents all individuals from deriving the benefits of a higher education degree. It is further affirmed by Sawyerr that preference for university admission is granted to those students who have enhanced preparation training, as well as superior academic, cultural and sporting abilities.

This article will provide an overview of a bridging programme, the Career Preparation Programme (CPP) of the University of the Free State (UFS), and illustrate the possible facets that have contributed to its success within the South African context. An indication of the CPP's performance from the year 2003 up until 2007 will be explored through quantitative data related to the percentage of distributions of enrolment numbers, according to subject-specific fields and gender. This may prove valuable in evaluating the programme's performance and revealing any potential future research endeavours, with a specific focus on applicability within the psychological domain. The value of this endeavour lies within the prospect of improving upon an already successful programme.

## The South African Context

South Africa is not the only country dealing with the issue of equality in educational opportunities for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. Several countries such as Australia, New Zealand and America are facing similar situations (Schuh, 2005). Imbalances within the South African education system are predominantly attributed to political decisions carried out during the country's apartheid regime. From the time when the African National Congress (ANC) came into power as the country's ruling political party in 1994, a vital educational transformation process had begun (Cloete & Moja, 2005). This process was aimed at the positive restructuring of the higher education system to try and redress the social indiscretions of the past. This transformation process focused on various sectors such as policy-making and implementation (Rembe, 2005), ensuring equitability in higher education selection and admission procedures (Cele & Brandt, 2005), provision of quality assurance (Fourie & Alt, 2000; Kistan, 1999), maintenance of high academic standards (Strydom & Strydom, 2004), as well as increasing research output (Pouris, 2003). Boughey (2003) conceptualised a start in the shift of focus in higher education from equitable access towards a more efficient holistically functioning education system.

Access is repeatedly presented as an important component in the literature on higher education. An important democratic goal of transformation within higher education is to counteract the inequitable distribution of access along the lines of gender, race, and geographic orientation (Department of Education, 1997). Yet the concept of access is not as simple as merely gaining entry to an institution of study. It is in fact an elaborate notion that at times

proves problematic due to the multidimensional nature of the factors that constitute access (Boughey, 2003).

Cele and Menon (2006) contend that access is an elaborate notion that necessitates the need to take the following into account. Widening opportunities of access for the mere sake of fulfilling equity creates a defeatist situation. Cele and Menon proposed that a situation such as the above may lead to a mass of students only graduating after an extremely lengthy period of time, as well as the possible discontinuation of their studies.

Amidst the complexity of the access issue, attempts to widen access for those students who have the necessary academic, social and emotional potential to contend with academic study at a tertiary education level should be accounted for. Opportunities for the development of skills must be directed towards those students who have the potential to gain success (Department of Education, 1997). In the year 2001 a survey conducted in South Africa indicated that nine out of every ten grade twelve learners saw higher education as "the gateway to employment" (Cossar, du Toit & Visser, 2004, p .3). This illustrates the extent to which South African learners perceive access to higher education as a valuable commodity.

The extensive transformation within the higher education sector has also prompted a sudden increase in the expectations of those who were previously disadvantaged (South African Qualifications Authority, n.d.). Research must still be carried out to establish exactly what these South African students' expectations involve, and whether or not they are rational. As Lowe and Cook (2003) have ascertained, students' unrealistic expectations of higher education may

translate into their failure to attain success at university level. Students who are ill-prepared but are still allowed entry into higher education institutions may suffer within the system, which may impact on them in a negative way, not only academically, but also psychologically.

As confirmed by Ruby (2005), universities around the world are being pressurised to respond to globalisation and an ever-increasing diversity of the student population. In addition, education is increasingly viewed as a commodity and students as the consumers thereof (Cooper, 2007). This growing inclination towards comparing students to customers has necessitated the enhancement of the quality of the student's experience (Tricker, Rangecroft & Long, 2005). This pressure, caused by globalisation and student consumerism, further complicates the South African context, which is already characterised by a hugely diverse and unique student population.

This raises the question of how South Africa as a country is tackling the complexity of the issue of access to higher education. It seems that an array of strategies is being employed. Strategies such as early intervention programmes for at-risk students have proven to be effective in creating a more positive learning environment for students (Parsons & Meyer, 1990) as well as in increasing their skills and awareness around opportunities to access higher education (Swail, 2000). The provision of an array of financial support structures such as bursaries, scholarships and student loans is also effective in increasing access to tertiary education (Swail, Redd & Perna, 2003). An additional strategy utilised is that of implementing bridging programmes. These programmes are significant strategies that provide support to students by assisting them in gaining the necessary qualifications for access to their desired institution of study.

The UFS's CPP is an operational example of a programme that is intended to increase access to higher education in South Africa (Van Wyk, 2003). For this reason research aimed at promoting the programme's continued existence is imperative as most of the aspects affecting these programmes are in a constant state of flux. The South African Association for Academic Development (SAAAD) was commissioned to prepare a national profile of AD and bridging programmes: issues, trends, and policy considerations. In this report the following was stated: the UFS's "Career Preparation Programme is an exception" as it caters for large numbers of students utilising local institutions (Kotecha, 1995, p. 15). The added possibility of being able to duplicate the CPP elsewhere also exists (Kotecha, 1995). This reflects the confidence in the CPP's feasibility and flexibility. Furthermore, in an article featured in the Sunday Times Special Supplement on Higher Education, Pretorius (1998) singled out the CPP as an innovative programme that contributes positively towards higher education. Positive feedback and confidence in the CPP as an alternative access programme from the upper management team of the CPP has also been conveyed. Despite difficulties endured by the CPP, Hay and Marais (2004) maintain that the benefits and positive outcomes of the programme outweigh these difficulties. In a study dealing with the long-term effectiveness of the CPP, Van Rooyen and Huysamen (2000) concluded that CPP students tend to have a better chance at success due to the acquisition of first year university subjects as well as bridging subjects. However, overall academic achievement was lower compared to that of the control group, even when matriculation results were controlled for. In maintaining the standards of the programme, an overview of the possible growth that has taken place within the CPP (from 2003 to 2007) would be a worthwhile endeavour.

## The Career Preparation Programme of the University of the Free State

The CPP was initiated as the Need for Education, Elevation and Development (NEED) Programme in 1993 (Hay & Marais, 2004). The programme was established by the UFS's Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development (CHESD) and was implemented by a consortium of institutions. The development of this programme was necessitated by the inequalities within school systems, financial strains and changing curricula (Hay & Marais).

Kezar proposes that when evaluating a programme, the "foundation" of such an undertaking should be based on the mission statement and goals of that programme (2000, p. 5). In accordance with the above, the aims of the CPP are as follows: (i) to unlock and foster the potential and abilities of those who are capable of successfully pursuing higher education studies; (ii) to widen the access opportunities for historically disadvantaged students to higher education institutions such as Universities, Technikons and Vocational Colleges (these disadvantaged students have failed to obtain matriculation exemption along with the correct matriculation M-score and the CPP offers them conditional exemption); and (iii) to provide both formative and vocationally orientated opportunities of study at higher education institutions within the region of study concerned (Marais, 2005).

### *Distinct Features of the Career Preparation Programme*

The CPP possesses a number of unique qualities. Apart from being an access programme it is also a credit-bearing programme. Students are granted full accreditation for certain subjects

completed during their CPP year, and, as indicated by Jackson (2000), credit granted for prior learning is one of the reasons for success at the University of Phoenix. Credit-bearing modules may qualify as factors contributing to the success of a programme as they may translate into motivating factors for students due to the possibility of being granted exemption for certain modules. Despite the CPP being a significant undertaking from a managerial stance, it is one of the most cost-effective programmes in South Africa due to the collaboration between the institutions involved with the programme (Marais, 2005).

Furthermore, the CPP contributes towards a student's quality of life through the incorporation of two compulsory modules: Course in Skills and Competencies in Lifelong Learning (VBL module) and Academic Language Course (ALC module). Both of these modules are based on the guidelines set out by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) / South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (Hay & Marais, 2004). The CPP is presented at several South African sub-regions. A counsellor is available at each sub-region to support students through the provision of career counselling and assistance with personal problems (Hay & Marais). The CPP thus acknowledges the different psychological needs of students, and, as a result of this sensitivity to individual differences, the requirements of less confident and or successful students are fulfilled (Teese, 2002); a further possible factor contributing towards the programme's accomplishments.

### *Consortium of Institutions*

The CPP is currently offered at several campus sites located in various regions within South Africa, and was initiated at the various sites at different points in time. The presentation of this programme over several geographical locations affords many more students the opportunity to gain access to higher education. This, too, may serve as a contributing factor to the programme's success in widening access. Commencement dates for the various sites are as follows: Free State Region [Bloemfontein - 1992; Bethlehem - 1998; Welkom - 2000; Sasolburg - 2000; and Phuthaditjhaba (Qwa-Qwa) – 2003]; Northern Cape Region [Kimberly - 1999; and Aliwal North – 2002]; and Southern Cape Region [Oudtshoorn – 2001].

### *Admission Requirements for Access to the Career Preparation Programme*

The CPP does not require matriculation exemption as a means of entry into the programme. However, a student that registers for the CPP must have a grade 12 matriculation certificate and a M-score of 12 points, as a sub-minimum. Those students who wish to register for economics and mathematics modules during their CPP year must have taken standard grade mathematics in their grade twelve year. The total M-score can be calculated by adding the scores that coincide with the symbols received in the grade 12 matriculation certificate.

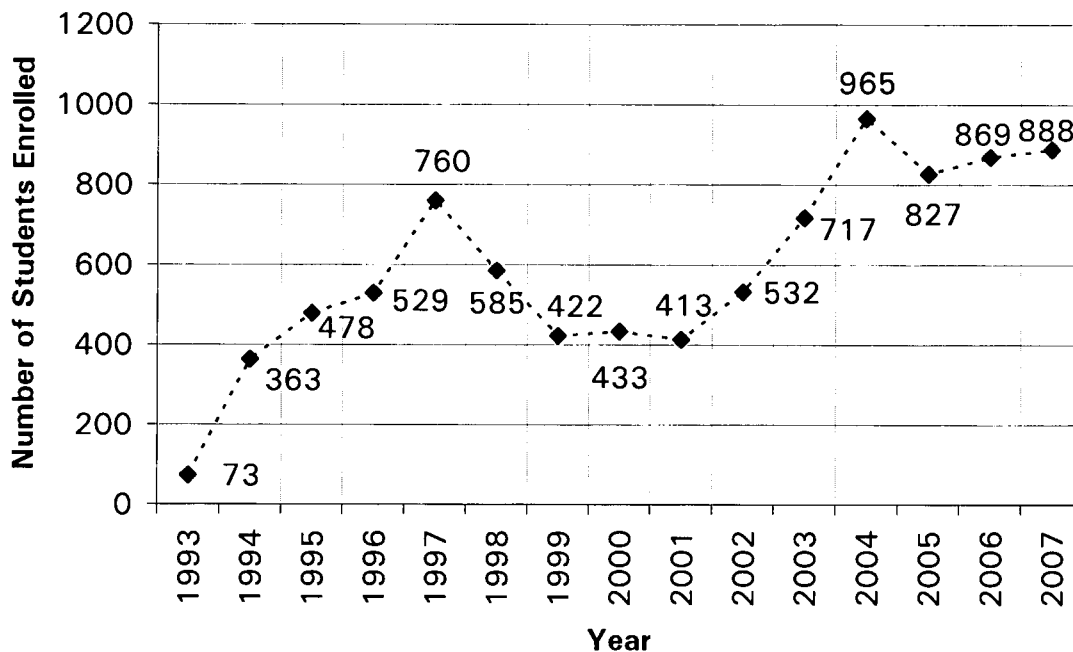
Points awarded according to symbols received for subjects on higher grade are as follows: (A - 8; B - 7; C - 6; D - 5; E - 4; and F - 3). Points awarded according to symbols received for subjects on standard grade are as follows: (A - 6; B - 5; C - 4; D - 3; E - 2; and F - 1).

### *Overview of the Career Preparation Programme Academic Year*

Students are granted the opportunity of selecting a one-year course that falls within three general faculty areas: Human and Social Sciences; Economic and Management Sciences; and Natural and Agricultural Sciences (Primary Education is a recent addition to the various registration categories). Within these three main faculty-specific areas, students may choose between varying combinations of subjects to suit their possible interests. Figure 1 represents the total enrolment of students in the CPP from 1993 (the start of the programme) up until 2007. In 1993 there were 73 enrolments and by 2003 this number had grown to 717. For 2007 the total number of enrolments stands at 888. Therefore, since 1993 the CPP has seen a 91% increase in enrolments. An increase in enrolments translates into an increased number of students with the opportunity to access higher education. In this way access to higher education for the previously disadvantaged is widened. Sudden increases in enrolments were seen in 1997 and 2004, and a steady decline was seen from 1998 – 2001. During the period 1994 – 1997, the CPP expanded the amount of courses available for enrolment to seven, and from 1998 the amount of courses available for enrolment was reduced to three. This may have been owing to a lack of finances at the time and the increase in private colleges (Hay & Marais, 2004). This too may have resulted in the increase and subsequent decline of enrolments (Hay & Marais, 2004). Since the year 2000 the CPP was offered in an additional five regions. This increase in regions of delivery must also be considered as a potential contributing factor to the increase in the number of enrolments. Numerous other factors may also influence student enrolments in the CPP, e.g. financial constraints, wider knowledge of the CPP's existence, greater motivation to pursue higher education studies, as well as social and familial support to enter the programme. As there has

been no known research to verify the above explanations, an in-depth analysis of the factors that influence CPP enrolment is required.

Figure 1. Student Enrolment in the CPP (1993-2007).



As regards enrolments within subject-specific fields in 2003, the percentage of enrolments for Human and Social Sciences was 55%, for Economic and Management Sciences 31%, and for Natural and Agricultural Sciences 15% (Hay & Marais, 2004). The percentage of course enrolments within the different subject-specific areas for 2007 are: Human and Social Sciences - 47%; Economic and Management Sciences - 36%; and Natural and Agricultural Sciences - 16%. It is clear from the above-mentioned figures (2003 and 2007) that the majority of students are registered within the Human and Social Sciences as well as the Economic and Management Sciences. This trend of higher enrolments within these two domains is reflected in the percentages over the four-year period from 2003 – 2007, i.e. a 5% increase in enrolments for

the Economic and Management Sciences and only a 1% increase for the Natural and Agricultural Sciences during the 2003 to 2007 time period. In this same time period the Human and Social Sciences saw a decrease of 8% in the percentage of total enrolments. The slight increase in the Natural and Agricultural Sciences field suggests that the CPP has begun to address the issue of increasing enrolments within this field, as proposed by Hay and Marais (2004). An additional subject area, namely Primary Education, has been included in the CPP since 2006 and has a 1% enrolment of the total enrolments for 2007. This indicates a small yet positive leap in the right direction in that a more even distribution of enrolments in the different subject areas seems to be emerging.

It is evident from the gender distribution CPP enrolments from 1993 – 2007 that the ratio of female to male enrolments has been consistently higher. In the period between 2003 and 2007 there were 25.2% more female than male enrolments. Faleye and Dibu-Ojerinde (2006) found that at a Nigerian university, the science/mathematics related courses tended to have more male than female enrolments. Of the three main faculties (Human and Social Sciences; Natural and Agricultural Sciences; and Economic and Management Sciences), two of these are comprised of subjects that tend to be more science/mathematics-related. Despite this, between 2003 and 2007, females as opposed to males achieved their degree 46.8% of the time. Explanations for why females achieve their degrees more readily than males do may be complex. According to Anastasia (1999), however, a study conducted on gender differences related to perceived importance of college services, established that males expressed less urgency to graduate than females.

Two CPP modules presented at the Further Education and Training (FET) institutions, namely VBL and the ALC are compulsory to all students. These modules play a central role in preparing the student for university life, thus assisting students to cope with the academic challenges of the CPP as well as supplying them with the necessary skills to deal effectively with socio-emotional issues in everyday life. Upon successful completion of these courses, students are awarded certificates which form part of the requirements to gain access to higher education institutions. These courses also play a vital role in aiding the programme by providing for essential cross-field abilities and outcomes, as expressed by the NQF or the SAQA (Griesel, 1999). Considering the significant role these subjects play in the CPP, a brief inspection of the underlying principles of both courses will follow.

#### *Course in Skills and Competencies for Lifelong Learning*

This course spans the duration of the entire year and encompasses the following essential themes: Unit 1 - Motivation and self-knowledge; Unit 2 – Self-management; Unit 3 – Note taking; Unit 4 – Revision and examination techniques; Unit 5 – Healthy living; Unit 6 – Memory; Unit 7 – Reading; Unit 8 – Stress management; Unit 9 – Problem-solving; Unit 10 – Money; and Unit 11 – Time management (Jooste, 2006). Students are also required to be present for at least 75% of the classes presented (Hay & Marais, 2004). This attendance requirement may increase the chances of a certain skill being carried over to the students. Class attendance as a requirement also provides additional opportunity for the lecturer to accurately assess the specific needs of the class and make the necessary pedagogic adjustments. Chung (2004) conducted a study that researched the impact of attendance on achievement and found moderate correlations

between attendance and achievement. Moore (2005) concluded that class attendance is in fact a strong indicator of student motivation. Thus, class attendance may be indicative of a student's motivational level. Thus it is suggested that the CPP selection procedures incorporate screening for a student's motivational level as a means of identifying students that have the potential to prosper academically in higher education.

### *Academic Language Course*

This course also spans the duration of the entire year and aims to achieve the following specified outcomes concerning the English language: use of particular strategies to organise and comprehend texts; identify and understand the functions of discourse markers in texts; make inferences based on a given text; accurately complete comprehension-based and problem-solving tasks in the mode of written presentation; extend vocabulary; write paragraphs and expository essays based on passages read; summarise the main ideas of a written text; develop English language reading skills; express opinions about a variety of issues fluently as well as creatively in the mode of oral discussion; and express information and opinions clearly and with appropriate organisation in the written mode (Van Wyk, 2007). As English is the language of presentation in the CPP (and at university) it stands to reason that a certain degree of proficiency in English is a basic need for the fulfilment of academic requirements. The motivation for this lies in the fact that English has become the de facto medium of instruction within most higher education institutions (Banda, 2000).

### *Pedagogic Learning Approach*

The Resource-Based Learning (RBL) approach was selected as the mode of delivery for the CPP's curriculum. In a RBL approach the emphasis is placed on developing self-study material of a high standard that is accompanied by tutorial support from competent academics (Hay & Marais, 2004).

Maier & Warren (2000) differentiates between three types of resources that may possibly be employed for RBL: (i) *primary resources* - text, video, images and sounds; (ii) *structured resources* – tutorials, exercises, quizzes, guides; and (iii) *experienced based resources* – case-based learning, problem-based learning, evidence-based learning, role plays, field work, practical work and simulations. The CPP acknowledges the use of various additional resources to aid the students during the learning process. Esch (2002) claims that in RBL the central tenet of the learning process is the interaction between the student and the resource. In this approach Esch affirms that resources may include lecturers/facilitators and hence, the student-teacher relationship will play a pertinent role in the learning process. Lessons should be teacher-planned yet student-directed, placing RBL amid teacher-centred and student-centred learning, which once again highlights the importance of the student-teacher relationship (Campbell, Flageolle, Griffith & Wojcik, 2002). Successful completion of the CPP year entitles students to register at institutions such as FET colleges, universities, universities of technology, and vocational colleges. This provides the student with an array of career opportunities after successful completion of the CPP year. Van Wyk (2001) also confirmed that the RBL approach employed by the CPP was helpful with academic development. It was also reported by van Wyk (2002)

that facilitators noted a positive change within students relating to their independence as well as their academic development, which reaffirms the use of the RBL approach.

### *Assessment Procedures*

Puhl (1997) asserts that Continuous Assessment (CA) is a continuous cycle of assessment and evaluation. In this cycle students and teachers are both involved in activities and self-evaluation (EQUIP, 2003). CA holds the advantage of ensuring additional student control over their learning (Puhl, 1997). This may serve as an additional contributing factor towards the CPP's success, as, psychologically speaking, if students are granted a greater sense of control over their learning they are likely to maintain a sense of motivation with respect to their learning. Although CA is not a "panacea for all that is wrong with education", it contributes towards the fostering of a learner's full potential (Puhl, 1997, p. 13). CA is the CPP's chosen form of assessment and appears to be based on a well-substantiated decision. Consequently it is hypothesised that this form of assessment might be an additional contributing factor to the CPP's success.

### *Pedagogic Personnel*

One coordinator is appointed per 11 subjects (all of which fall within the same faculty/department). Coordinators carry the responsibility for all issues relating to these subjects (delivered both locally and within other regions). One learning facilitator is appointed for every 30-40 students per university subject in all the regions offering the CPP. These facilitators are

expected to report directly to the subject coordinators. The ratio of student to facilitator does not exceed 40:1. This is in keeping with the features of the RBL approach (Hay & Marais, 2004).

### *Programme Success Rate*

Since 1996 a total of 1014 degrees were awarded to students who completed the CPP (Daffue, 2007). Amongst these 95 honours degrees, 16 Master's degrees, and 6 M. B. Ch. B degrees were awarded (Marais, 2007).

*Figure 2. CPP Success Rate Percentages (1993 – 2006).*

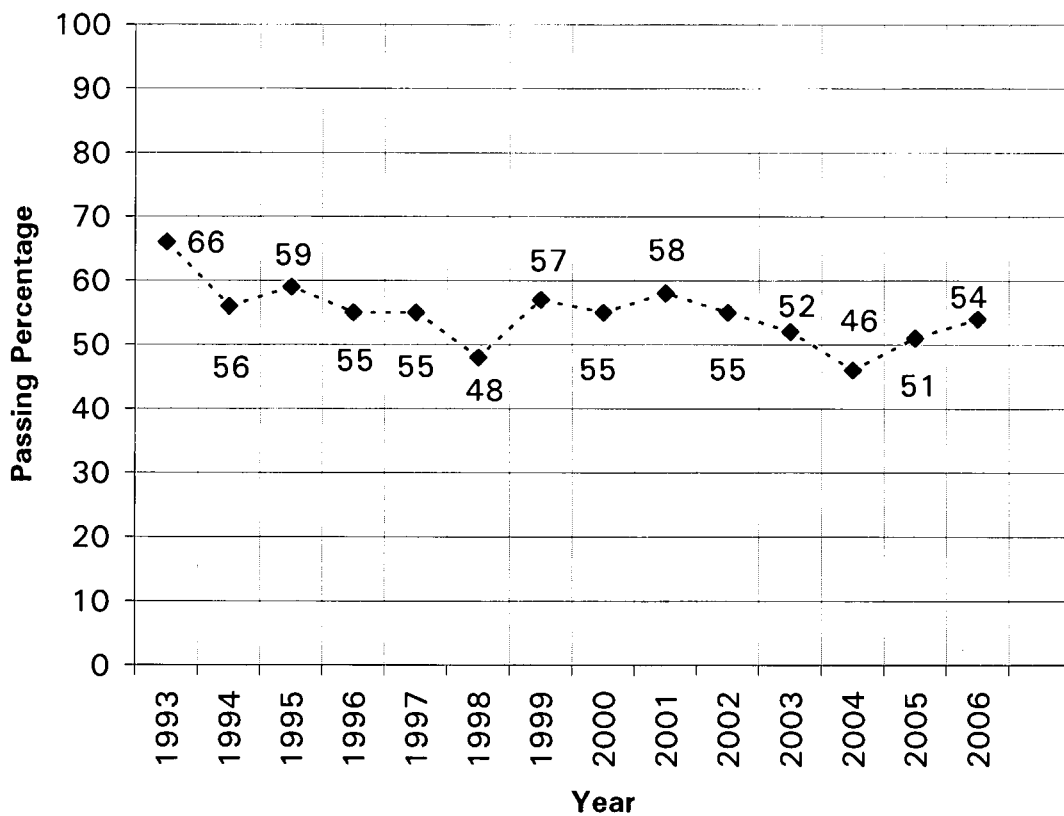


Figure 2 illustrates the success rate achieved for each year since the CPP commenced.

The success rate has remained steady over the years, ranging between 46% and 66%. It may then be beneficial to explore possible approaches towards increasing pass rates by focusing on strategies that can be implemented within the CPP (which serves as a bridging programme between school and university).

### Conclusion

Reflecting on the CPP, central factors indicated as contributors towards programme success are: the offer of incentives such as credit-bearing courses and a chance at qualifying for higher education studies; compulsory modules, namely ALC and VBL, that focus on the improvement of students' academic abilities, and, more importantly, on their quality of life. The prerequisite of 75% programme attendance, a focus on expanding the student's English language proficiency, along with the sound strategies employed for learning and assessment are possible further indicators of success. The economic incentive of the programme's cost-effectiveness has also proven valuable. It seems that the perspective, experience and satisfaction of students within the programme have not yet been established, which creates a vital gap for research. "The increasing perception of students as customers of services puts a stronger focus on improving the quality of the student experience" particularly within a higher education setting (Tricker, Rangelcroft & Long, 2005, p. 1). The notion of "students are our customers" has become a standard principle within higher education (Potts, 2005, p. 54). Nevertheless, Potts (2005) cautions against the higher education consumer model as a potential risk factor for sacrificing quality. Alternatively, Kara and DeShields (2004) contend that students' needs and wants may be

sufficiently satisfied if their institution of study actually followed a customer-oriented principles philosophy. In view of the fact that students are the *raison d'être* for the development of such a programme, consideration of this consumer-orientated philosophy in terms of programme evaluation and improvement is essential. Consequently, future research into the experience and satisfaction of students within the CPP is recommended.

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**Article 2**

A Qualitative Evaluation of a Higher Education Bridging Programme in South Africa

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### Abstract

The efficacy of the Career Preparation Programme (CPP) of the University of the Free State (UFS) was qualitatively evaluated from a phenomenological approach. By way of focusing on the evaluation of the programme through the explication of experiences, the research branched into the refined area of existential phenomenology. The qualitative study also exemplified the significance surrounding an awareness of the researcher's affiliation with the research subject matter. Three groups of participants were selected according to predetermined criteria to ensure their ability to adequately describe and express their experiences. Data was gathered from the participants using the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) and then interpreted using Giorgi's existential phenomenological research method, a four-step method for psychological phenomenological data interpretation. Comparisons were then reported in terms of the various groups' similarities and differences regarding the efficacy of the programme.

*Keywords:* bridging programme, student, phenomenology, existential, experience, university

### Opsomming

Die effektiwiteit van die Loopbaanvoorbereidingsprogram van die Universiteit van die Vrystaat is kwalitatief vanuit 'n fenomenologiese perspektief geëvalueer. Deur te fokus op die evaluering van die program deur ervaring te ontleed, het die navorsing uitgebrei na die meer spesifieke domein van eksistensiële fenomenologie. Die kwalitatiewe studie het ook die belangrikheid toegelig rondom die bewustheid van die navorser se affiliasie met die navorsingsonderwerp. Drie groepe proefpersone is gekies volgens vooraf bepaalde kriteria om toe te sien dat almal die vermoë het om hulle ervaringe voldoende te kan beskryf en te kan uitdruk. Data is ingesamel deur gebruik te maak van die Nominale Groep Tegniek en vervolgens geïnterpreteer deur middel van Giorgi se eksistensiële fenomenologiese navorsingsmetode, wat 'n vierstap metode vir psigologiese fenomenologiese interpretasie is. Vergelykings is daaropvolgend aangetref in terme van die verskillende groepe se ooreenkomste en verskille met betrekking tot die effektiwiteit van die program.

*Sleutelwoorde:* voorbereidingsprogram, studente, fenomenologie, eksistensiële, ervaring, universiteit

Research into a programme's efficacy presents itself as a vast undertaking when considering the various stakeholders and factors implicated therein. Specifically when considering a bridging programme within tertiary education, factors such as change in school curriculum content, management efficiency, level of educator competence and training, as well as student characteristics, attitude and motivation may play a role in influencing evaluations associated with the overall efficacy. To ensure the efficacy of a programme, regular evaluation is necessary, as change within various areas is inevitable. Davies (1997) contends that empirical evidence must be gathered to arrive at conclusions concerning a system's performance. In view of such complexities, gaining a holistic perspective of a programme's functioning is essential.

This article undertakes to evaluate the efficacy of the Career Preparation Programme (CPP) of the University of the Free State (UFS). The CPP is a bridging programme that provides an alternative means of access to higher education for learners that have not attained matriculation exemption. These learners must, however, have obtained a grade 12-matriculation certificate with an M-score of 12 points as a sub-minimum requirement for entry into the CPP. This programme is presented at an array of campuses within the various regions of South Africa. Previous research conducted by the researcher revealed a gap within the programme in that student expectations, experiences and needs were not being adequately addressed through incorporation into programme evaluation (Burgess, 2008). This is an important oversight given that students are the *raison d'être* for the initiation and continuance of such a programme. The researcher's theoretical frame of reference is phenomenological in nature. This particular theoretical framework was adopted as the researcher was aiming to understand how participants viewed their situations by placing emphasis on their subjective experiences and interpretations of

their worlds (Trochim, 2006). De Castro (2003) emphasises that by way of focusing on *experiences*, the research will branch into the more distinguished area of existential phenomenology. This article will provide a brief overview of the approach utilised, namely the phenomenological approach, and more specifically, take a look at existential phenomenological psychology. Preliminary methodological considerations to orientate one to the phenomenological method of qualitative research as well as the specific methodology employed (inclusive of data collection, data analysis and interpretation techniques) will be outlined. The results and a discussion of the data will be provided along with concluding remarks and suggestions for further research.

### Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is deemed the founder of phenomenology (Spinelli, 1989). Husserl affirmed that the term 'phenomenology' is indicative of two conceptions. At one level it is derived from a science that provides a precise scientific method and at another level it serves as a descriptive method. Thus, phenomenology may be conceptualised as both a philosophical paradigm and a qualitative methodology. In addition, Van der Mescht (2004) identified three main features that distinguish phenomenology from other interpretive methods, namely: (i) a focus on the dialogue of individuals within their contexts; (ii) a focus on experiences by means of concrete, verbal data; and (iii) an emphasis on description as opposed to interpretation, whereby bracketing is utilised. Spinelli states that phenomenology can be viewed as a broad term that encompasses various approaches sharing one common feature, that is the "investigation of our experience of the world" (1989, p. 3). Reality is seen as remaining "open to a multiplicity of

interpretations” as each individual attributes similar or dissimilar meanings to an object and may be influenced by an array of socio-cultural variables (Spinelli, 1989, p. 4).

### Existential Phenomenological Psychology

Valle and Halling (1989) contend that existential phenomenology transforms into existential phenomenological psychology when it is applied to human psychological phenomena. They further affirm that behaviour and experience are what psychologists use to make sense of questions relating to the how, what and why of human experience and that most of the natural scientific methods employed in psychology primarily account for the behavioural dimension of the behaviour-experience polarity (Valle & Halling). The existential phenomenological approach is thus distinct in that it addresses issues related to the experience dimension of the behaviour-experience polarity (Valle & Halling).

### Preliminary Methodological Considerations

In qualitative research, material is systematically collected either in written or oral form and is then organised and interpreted according to a specific methodological approach (Malterud, 2001). Phenomenology forms part of the branch of qualitative research. One of the underlying principles in phenomenological research is that of describing and identifying a phenomenon before measuring and quantifying that phenomenon (Mathison, 2006). It also serves as a feasible method for conducting research within the pedagogic sphere (Van der Mescht, 2004). For this reason the phenomenological method was deemed appropriate for evaluating the UFS’s bridging

programme from the students' perspectives. Denzin and Lincoln note that an important backdrop to qualitative research is the biography of the researcher, who articulates the research 'from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural and ethnic community perspective' (2000, p. 18).

Furthermore, McCaslin and Scott (2003, p. 453) describe the researcher as a vital instrument, just as 'the artist is the primary instrument in painting'. This exemplifies the significance of awareness surrounding the researcher's affiliation with the researched subject matter (McCaslin & Scott). Davis (1991) views the end result of data interpretation in research phenomenology as mere descriptions of the researcher's own conception of the actuality of the experience.

Consequently the researcher's personal reflexivity regarding the research process was included as an additional means of ensuring transparency and trustworthiness within the study (Malterud, 2001).

### *Reflexivity*

Reflexivity is defined as 'sensitivity to the ways in which the researcher and the research process have shaped the collected data' (Mays & Pope, 2000, p. 51), that is to say in what way have the researcher's personal experiences, background and preconceptions impacted on the interpretations and conclusions arrived at within the study? The fact that the researcher has been involved in the education field, both academically and occupationally, for a total of six years may have led to the decision to undertake research into the evaluation of a bridging programme. Throughout the research process contact with the participants was limited. However, the techniques employed elicited immediate feedback to the participants. The researcher strived to

employ the same process of data collection and interpretation for each group of participants to ensure that each group had equal opportunity within the research process.

## Methodology

Researchers in academic fields ranging from psychology, pedagogy and nursing, among others, believe that an adaptation of the phenomenological method is necessary to ensure the fittingness for explication of the subject matter being researched (Holroyd, 2001). Data for the study was gathered using Dunham's (1998) adaptation of the controlled technique known as the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). The data was then analysed and interpreted using Giorgi's (1985b) existential phenomenological research method, a four-step method for phenomenological data interpretation. These two techniques actually complimented each other as steps within the NGT were deemed sufficient for fulfilment of the requirements of certain steps, as set out in Giorgi's (1985a) sketch of a phenomenological psychological method.

### *Participants (Co-researchers)*

In psychology, the selection of subjects from an existential phenomenological perspective requires that participants are capable of providing an in-depth description of their experience (Valle & Halling, 1989). Phenomenological research relies on participants that are able to adequately describe and express their experiences. Therefore aspects such as: (i) capability of communicating fluently in English, the CPP's language of instruction; (ii) a willingness to participate and share experiences; and (iii) a recent association with the study's research agenda

(students were attending the programme nine months prior to data collection) constituted the selection criteria. The criteria ensure a more accurate account of personal experiences (Valle & Halling, 1989). Participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique which entails selecting those participants that are deemed capable of addressing the research topic (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Three groups of participants were selected and can be distinguished according to the following characteristics: *group 1* - former CPP students with a combined first semester university average of above fifty percent; *group 2* – former CPP students with a combined first semester university average of below fifty percent; and *group 3* - facilitators, coordinators, administrative staff and counsellors involved in the management of the CPP. Participants from group 1 and 2 were, as stated, former CPP students and had obtained a pass mark for all of the modules in their CPP year. Hence the assumption was that these students have completed the entire bridging programme successfully and have been equipped with the necessary skills to cope at tertiary educational level. For this reason they are better able to reflect on the programme and critically evaluate its efficacy in terms of contributing to coping at university level. By selecting various participants, a wide variety of descriptions may then be utilised when analysing their experiences (Valle & Halling).

#### *Data Collection*

The same set of procedures for data collection, analysis and interpretation were followed for all three groups of participants.

### *Nominal group technique*

The NGT was initially used in social-psychological research as a technique that aided efficient group decision-making (Van de Ven & Delbecq, 1972). The NGT has however been used in various milieu (pedagogy, social work and health) which reveals the technique's flexibility and adaptability (Potter, Gordon & Hamer, 2004). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) ascertain that for research to be effective, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods should be utilised within a paradigm. The NGT is often referred to as a mixed method approach as data generated can be reported both qualitatively and quantitatively (Potter, Gordon & Hamer, 2004). The NGT is a technique that requires a group of five to nine participants (Van de Ven & Delbecq, 1972; Potter, Gordon & Hamer, 2004) but, there are studies in which groups of up to 12 participants were utilised. This technique has a number of advantages over other group processes, for instance the generation of numerous ideas, encouraging equality of input from participants, minimal resource requirements, meeting time is on average 1-2 hours, high degree of task completion, immediate feedback communicated to participants, and the quantitative as well as qualitative measurement of the relative importance of ideas generated (Jones, 2004; Potter, Gordon & Hamer, 2004). Nonetheless, weaknesses may include extensive preparation, consensus by participants on the use of a structured method, requirement of time commitment on behalf of participants, and lack of anonymity leading to a reluctance to express views and opinions (Jones, 2004; Dunham, 1998).

An academic with expertise in the utilisation of the NGT assisted the researcher by conducting three NGT processes; one for each of the three groups of participants. The

academic was independently contracted for the study and in so doing impartiality was maintained. The same process was followed for each of the three groups of participants. As suggested by the Medical Research Council of South Africa (n.d.), the researcher provided the participants with a brief overview of the purpose, risks and benefits associated with the research, and obtained their informed consent. The presence of the researcher also provided opportunities for group observations during the NGT.

Two questions were presented to the research participants during the NGT in order to assist the researcher in addressing the aim of the study, i.e. evaluating the efficacy of the CPP. The two research questions employed during the nominal group process read as follows: (i) Central Research Question: What were your experiences (that is your thoughts and feelings) of the Career Preparation Programme? (ii) Issue Sub-Question: What suggestions can you offer (concerning the Career Preparation Programme, yourself and others) that may help to create a more effective and successful Career Preparation Programme? Moustakas maintains that data obtained for phenomenological research should be drawn from 'first-person reports of life experiences' (1994, p. 84). Questions posed within the nominal process allowed the participants to give their own accounts of how they experienced the CPP. English was deemed the most appropriate medium of communication, as all of the participants had an appropriate level of English language comprehension and communication competencies, determined by the fact that English was their chosen language of instruction for the CPP and at the university.

The participants were seated in a suitable room free from environmental distractions. All supplies (paper, pens, record cards and a flip chart) were catered for. Once all participants were

seated, the nominal group process was explained, roles were clarified and the purpose of the research was discussed by the researcher. Based on Dunham's (1998) procedural suggestions, the following NGT steps were applied:

Step 1 provided the participants with a chance to generate ideas in silence and record these ideas on a blank piece of paper. Step 2 entailed the round-robin recording of ideas, thus allowing each participant a chance to share a generated idea. This idea was numbered and recorded on a flip chart. Step 3 provided participants with the opportunity to engage in a serial discussion on the topics recorded on the flip chart to provide clarity of meaning and importance. Step 4 required the completion of two sub-steps whereby the participants voted on topic priorities, recorded the scores on colour coded record cards, and rank-ordered the cards one at a time. Results of the rank-ordering of topics were provided to participants and the researcher then transferred this data onto tables, as presented in the Appendix.

#### *Method of Data Analysis and Interpretation - Giorgi's Psychological Phenomenological Method*

This phase of the research served to reveal fundamental aspects of participants' experiences (Valle & Halling, 1989). Giorgi's (1985b) existential phenomenological research method, a four-step method for psychological phenomenological data interpretation, was implemented for data interpretation on both the central and sub-question information gathered from each of the three groups. This created a total of six separate data sets (which were gathered and interpreted using exactly the same methods) that could be compared in terms of similarities and differences in group experiences.

*Step 1 – Sense of the whole*

The researcher familiarised herself with the data gathered (Giorgi, 1985a) from the participants presented in the Appendix, through the use of the NGT. This entailed reading the qualitative data gathered to obtain a holistic view and understanding of the participants' language (Giorgi).

*Step 2 – Discrimination of meaning units within a psychological perspective and focus on the phenomenon being researched*

The text was then broken down into manageable units, taking care not to change the language of the participants. Throughout steps 1 and 2 of the NGT (the round-robin phase), the data generated had already been placed into more manageable meaning units by the participants (Dunham, 1998). Refer to the Appendix for the data generated by groups 1, 2 and 3 during the NGT process, which has already been placed into meaning units.

*Step 3 – Transformation of subject's everyday expression into psychological language with emphasis on the phenomenon being investigated*

The meaning units were then transformed into more psychological language by means of the researcher placing significance on the subject matter being investigated. Refer to the

Appendix for the meaning units of groups 1, 2 and 3, transformed into psychological language. This step employs one of the key methods in phenomenology, imaginative variation, wherein the researcher strives to attain the essential meaning of the participant's experiences (De Castro, 2003). This step used to be subdivided into two further and separate steps but most researchers do not subdivide the step as it is proposed that this may lead to a change in meaning (De Castro).

*Step 4 – Synthesis of transformed meaning units into a consistent statement of the structure of learning*

The researcher then engages in synthesising the insights revealed within the meaning units to produce a final account of the psychological structure of the study (De Castro, 2003). Step 4 is supposed to be subdivided into two further steps. According to De Castro (2003) this subdivision remains unclear and most researchers consistently combine the steps and prefer to engage directly in the creation of one synthesised, integrated insight.

## Results and Discussion

The final psychological structures for each of the three groups (pertaining to the central and sub-questions) are revealed separately below.

*Central Question*

*Group 1 – former CPP students with a combined first semester university average of above fifty percent*

Students indicated that the programme provided them with the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations through the access granted to university. This second chance at gaining entry into university also encouraged a feeling of hope and appreciation. Various anxieties related to expectations in the new university environment were alleviated by attending the CPP. Personal growth within the students was attributed to the challenges posed by the process of placing them outside of their comfort zones. The acquisition of skills including mastery of effective communication, self-discipline, divergent thinking and stress management techniques were facilitated through experiential learning. This assisted students in raising their awareness of their academic potential.

There was adequate concrete as well as counselling support received from the CPP personnel which assisted the students in making informed career choices. The willingness of lecturers to impart their knowledge, with the hope of offering additional academic support, fostered a sense appreciation for the lecturers amongst the students. Smaller numbers of students in classes facilitated equality in communication of opinions and feelings amid lecturers and students. Regular engagements within group work activities fostered a sense of affiliation amongst the students.

In contrast to the positive aspects of the programme dynamics, the experience of alienation and unfair treatment along with the communication gaps that persisted between the personnel of the CPP and the CPP students, led to misconceptions relating to what they were permitted to study at university. Further, variations in the university and the CPP work load, assessment procedures as well as lecturing techniques, made adapting and adjustment to the requirements of university academics a frustration for the students.

*Group 2 – former CPP students with a combined first semester university average of below fifty percent*

Opportunities to experience certain aspects associated with the UFS were provided. By way of practicing patience and persistence, the students realised the reality of achieving a degree in higher education. The CPP was said to be beneficial for the students in terms of fostering a communal bond and a sense of affiliation with the other students and lecturers. The development of tolerance towards people of diverse backgrounds was also fostered through the CPP. Students were assisted in passing the relevant subjects via the provision of personal coping mechanisms that dealt with stress management and study skills techniques. Obtaining their future orientated goals was achievable and manageable with a relevant link made possible between the university subjects and the CPP subjects. This unveiled the holistic view of how all subject matter is interrelated and the experiences gained from the CPP served to move students towards greater personal development.

Conversely, some students felt ill-prepared for university pressures and demands as the CPP provided no challenge thereby eliciting the psychological experience of frustration. The perception among some students is that only one quality was mastered, namely how to effectively manage group work situations. It would have been preferable if the CPP had pressures and demands similar to those that are required at university level to create better prepared students. Inconsistencies were evident in this group's views as some students felt that there was no trust in their academic abilities as self-sufficient, responsible adult learners while others experienced a sense of respect and confidence within their capabilities. Campus facilities and timetable coordination was a source of dissatisfaction for the students. Students felt as though they were not able to identify with the CPP or the university as they had been rejected by both when seeking administrative assistance. Conflicting feelings of whether their academic identification of themselves should be as university students or as college students were experienced due to their courses being presented at the college campus yet, the majority of the students intend to study at university.

*Group 3 – former facilitators, coordinators, administration staff and counsellors involved in the management of the CPP*

CPP personnel viewed the students attending the CPP as more self-sufficient and mature than most of the other students on the college campus. The personnel distinguished between the foreign and the local CPP students by the familial and governmental support that the foreign CPP students received. Through personal experiences, personnel were of the opinion that students completing social science subjects have a predisposition to cope less successfully than the other

students. The purpose of helping students learn to make informed choices was defeated by the lack of appropriate pre-entry career counselling services. Thus the holistic impression of the students within the CPP was that of unmet needs within all spheres of development.

The course is beneficial to counteracting the country's history of discriminatory laws and increasing access to higher education. Rational expectations and a realistic outlook of what the future holds were fostered within the students attending the CPP. The programme provides vital life skills required by the normative first year student which eases the transitional phase from secondary education to higher education. Moreover, the CPP functions as a motivating tool for its students by instilling a sense of hope of achieving future goals. Personnel attribute the efficiency of the CPP to the expert organisation of the programme. Additionally the CPP benefits not only students but graduates as well, by providing them with work experience.

Presenting the course in various areas to serve such a wide range of students appears to create unnecessary financial and practical burdens. Efficacy in communication between the management of the various institutions involved in the administration of the CPP is lacking, and this creates ineffective communication channels between the CPP management and the students. Institutional barriers also generate conflict between the CPP and the college personnel moreover, lack of appropriate levels of linguistic proficiency amongst a number of facilitators who lecture in second or even third languages contributes negatively towards the CPP.

*Issue Sub-question*

*Group 1- former students with a combined first semester university average of above fifty percent*

The students want to adopt the identity of 'UFS student' and suggest that by relocating the CPP venue to the UFS campus site<sup>1</sup>, a sense of belonging will be fostered amongst the CPP students as opposed to the feeling of being socially isolated from student life on the UFS campus. Additionally, the need to be physically orientated to the university campus to assist students with the adjustment to their new environment was also expressed. Access to university facilities which are better equipped than college facilities will reduce the levels of frustration experienced by the students when engaging in academic activities. Similarities between assessment techniques of the CPP and the university will promote a natural transition from the CPP to the university which may serve to further reduce the students' experiences of anxiety and frustration. Students indicated that it would be preferable if there were a broader range of selection options relating to subject choices so that they were less restricted when making their career decisions.

An active learning approach that entails student participation in examination preparation should be employed to ensure a thorough comprehension of the study material. Lecturers should also set higher standards regarding academic work in the CPP in order to prompt the students to

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<sup>1</sup> The University of the Free State (UFS) campus site that the students are referring to is the main campus located in Bloemfontein.

set higher standards for themselves. The CPP should strive towards creating an optimally functioning student as well as an environment in which a student's maximum concentration and time management abilities are integrated into the planning of the course time table.

Communication channels between the students and the management must be opened up to avoid uninformed decisions being made regarding future prospects. Helping behaviours from the personnel should be consistent and continuous. The marketing campaign of the CPP needs to be revised and should focus on creating an awareness of its existence amongst larger numbers of potential students. College lecturers and administration staff should be equitable and fair in their treatment of the CPP and College students. Detailed information regarding a course's requirements and possible deadlines should be communicated well in advance to assist students with the decision-making process. The university based computer and communication modules serve as a better foundation than the CPP computer and communication modules. It was suggested that competitive and participative leisure activities, which provide opportunities for constructive use of spare time, should be offered.

*Group 2 - former students with a combined first semester university average of below fifty percent*

Active counsel that addresses the finer details of aspects such as subject combinations which may be of importance to a student's future studies is required. The students experienced

particular personnel actions as barriers that prevented them from accessing information which may have proven valuable in making decisions related to their career choices. Lecturers' expectations of students' capabilities are too low and it is proposed that perhaps by setting higher expectations, lecturers may encourage and motivate students towards greater independence.

Overall pressure regarding academic work and availability of time at university level should be simulated within the CPP. There is a surplus of time in the CPP and it is suggested that a wider array of subject choices be provided. Registration elicits a sense of confusion. The student's campus of preference is indicated yet no information that certain subjects are only presented at certain campuses is made available. This leaves the student with the stressor of securing new accommodation. Access to the UFS facilities is justified as students view themselves as pre-university students. CPP students want to receive equal treatment and privileges as the university students do and suggest relocating the CPP venue to the UFS campus site. To ensure optimal academic functioning and manageability of the academic transition at university, it is recommended that the work at the CPP should be similar in nature to the work at the university and that the modules that are similar in content at the CPP and university be cancelled. The CPP students aspire to maintain a healthy lifestyle however, lack of healthy alternatives within the lunch shops in the CPP vicinity is not provided.

*Group 3 - facilitators, coordinators, administration staff and counsellors involved in the management of the CPP*

Pre-entry career counselling may provide further clarity on the various career opportunities that are available to the students who enrol in the CPP. Students are still to a certain extent dependent on their parents for their basic needs and thus the parents have a right to be informed of what the CPP entails.

The transformation process within the South African education system is a work in progress and patience must therefore be exercised. Cooperation and communication is a general need within the CPP to essentially ensure its effective functioning as a programme. Information about the CPP should be disseminated in different forms to all individuals involved in the programme to facilitate better communication about the programme. Education concerning the unique needs and cultural diversity of the CPP students may lead to a better understanding of and respect for these students. In turn this may facilitate better communication between the lecturers and students.

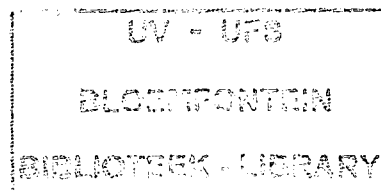
An increase in financial resources may lead to the enhancement of course facilities which may encourage a positive lecturing and working environment. Liaison amongst the wider community of universities also involved in presenting bridging programmes may facilitate the communication and exchange of ideas.

## Trustworthiness

As there are numerous groups with a vested interest in the CPP, data triangulation as a means of ensuring trustworthiness of the research was utilised. In the context of this study, various sources of information concerning the same issue were utilised as participants consisted of two groups of students and one group of personnel. (Guion, 2002). Smith (2004) contends that a comprehensive and detailed account of a phenomenon is acquired when exploring that specified phenomenon from several perspectives. The methods employed were clearly stated and suited to the purpose of the research study.

## Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Phenomenological findings can only be generalised to the researched situation inclusive of the participants that contributed to the findings (Van der Mescht, 2004). Consider however that the main purpose of this research is to provide information on how to improve the current programme. The student participants consisted only of those students that had attended the CPP at the Bloemfontein College campus and not any of the other regions where the programme is also presented. Furthermore, participants had all completed their CPP year. Expanding the research to include students and personnel from other regions was not financially viable and there was a low probability of successfully locating those students that had failed their CPP year. It is suggested that future research combine both quantitative and qualitative research and include a broader scope of individuals affiliated with the CPP.



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## Conclusion

The explicated experience arrived at in this investigation is one of numerous and even limitless definitional possibilities within phenomenological research (Spinelli, 2006). Responses to both the central and issue sub-question presented during the NGT seem to fall broadly into either positive or negative CPP attributes. Participants (amongst the three groups as well as within each individual group) often reported contradictory and inconsistent experiences. This may possibly be due to the fact that in reality, the way in which individuals experience the same phenomena differs.

Despite this, consensus amongst the three groups centres on the following core aspects specifically that the CPP inspires students to fulfil their aspirations and strive towards a better future by assisting them in the attainment of a tertiary education qualification. The CPP serves as a preparatory course for university studies and may enhance its efficacy in this respect by improving upon assessment techniques, workload and the exclusion of repetitive modules. Students perceive CPP lecturers as instrumental in assisting them with their academic issues and acquisition of vital skills in the course.

CPP personnel have nonetheless raised a concern over the English language competencies of second (and third) language lecturers which may serve to hinder appropriate facilitation in the CPP and disadvantage the students in the process. There is also much emphasis on communicative barriers amongst the students, CPP and college personnel due to practices of

exclusion, which seem to be undermining the organisational efficacy of the programme. The two student groups were inclined to highlight their identity confusion. They were college students but felt as though they were not always accepted by the college, yet they also viewed themselves as pre-university students and felt that they should therefore be granted access to the UFS facilities. The two groups of students proposed that the solution to this dilemma was to centralise the CPP to the UFS campus site. Although this is a desired solution, it may very well pose logistical predicaments and thereby actualise as an impractical solution.

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## Appendix

## Group 1: Responses to central question

Group 1		
Central Question		
<i>What were your experiences (that is your thoughts, feelings and opinions) of the Career Preparation Programme?</i>		
NGT Response Code	Response (Italicized sections indicating additions made during NGT Step 3: Serial Discussion)	STEP 3 OF Giorgi's Four-step method - transformation of subject expressions into psychological language
1	It was a challenging programme that provided the opportunity to work much more and much harder.	The programme placed the students out of their comfort zones by posing challenges that led to personal growth.
2	The programme is a good introduction to exactly what university is about. <i>Examples</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>How modules are presented to one.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>How and what outcomes entail.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>How assignments should be completed.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>What lecturers expect from students.</i></li> </ul>	The students felt that many anxieties over what to expect in the new university environment were alleviated by programme attendance.
3	The CPP taught many students to be more organized and professional. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>To prepare for lectures before attending class to increase understanding.</i></li> </ul>	The programme taught other students and the student in question to master the skill of self discipline.
4	Provided me with an idea of the selection of careers I can choose from. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Provided us with a list of courses to follow, careers to choose from, e.g. Human and Social Sciences.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>There was a counsellor available to help with career selections.</i></li> </ul>	The students received concrete (list of careers) as well as counselling (counsellor available) support to assist them in making an informed career choice.
5	The course helped me to be more creative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Learning the skills taught us how to do things differently, brighten things up, how to write an essay and how to be more focused.</i></li> </ul>	The students were able to grasp the notion of divergent thinking which contributed towards improving their academic skills.

6	<p>It revealed to me my learning potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>I too can become a student.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>That there is the possibility that I can handle the University of the Free State modules.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>That I can be more serious about my studies.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The programme raised the student's awareness of his/her academic potential.</p>
7	<p>I think that it is a great programme and it has given me an opportunity to pursue my dreams – a second chance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The programme creates opportunities to do well and get access to university without having matriculation exemption.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Helps us to accomplish our future careers.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Gave us a passion/created an interest in other courses/careers.</i></li> </ul>	<p>A sense of worthiness and fulfilment of aspirations is prompted by the opportunity to gain access to university.</p>
8	<p>We were spoon-fed too much; told what to do and when to do it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>CPP work/module volume was less and more manageable which made it hard for me to adapt to University work/module volume.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The lectures were much longer (more time per lecture than at university).</i></li> <li>▪ <i>CPP had open book tests and exams. At university you have to learn.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>At CPP we were given summaries and told to learn only the notes – at university you must make your own notes.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Differences in university and CPP work load, assessment procedures and lecturing techniques made adapting and adjustment to university academics a frustration.</p>
9	<p>The relaxation exercise they taught us to use before writing an exam – was awesome.</p>	<p>The student felt that practical skills training in stress management techniques were provided.</p>
10	<p>The lecturers were very good. They used all of their knowledge to advise us and provide us with ideas.</p>	<p>Lecturers were knowledgeable and utilised this knowledge to provide academic support for the students.</p>
11	<p>We were able to interact more during the CPP because there were less students, could then also interact more with lecturers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>We were able to express our thoughts that much more.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Students in classes at the CPP were few in number which contributed to the effective facilitation of communication including feelings and opinions between lecturers and students.</p>

12	Learnt good communication skills – which provided opportunities to interact.	By equipping the students with good communication skills, the students became confident enough to interact with other class participants.
13	We worked together more often in the CPP – unity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>E.g. There were many more group work occasions.</i></li> </ul>	A sense of affiliation with other students was experienced due to regular engagements with group work activities.
14	Things that I have learnt in the CPP, e.g. psychology, I can apply in a real life situation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>There was a personal benefit gained.</i></li> </ul>	Experiential learning facilitated a process of development and learning through the acquisition of skills gained from experiences in the CPP.
15	We (CPP students) were treated differently than the other college and university students. We were not taken care of as much / more caring towards college students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Could not vote for Student Representative Council (SRC) because we were not "part of" college or university.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>E.g. Students from hillside needed to get a letter from town to gain access to University of the Free State Library for assignments.</i></li> </ul>	The students externally attributed their experience of alienation and unfair treatment towards the college staff and their perceptions of them as pre-university students who were studying at the college.
16	It was not communicated to us that we could not do everything once we got to university, e.g. You need mathematics to do a B. Com. We thought that we were able to study anything. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Could not breach to study LLB (law) and Medicine. Students need to do a basic degree first – this was only communicated to us at the end of the programme.</i></li> </ul>	There is a communication gap between personnel of the CPP and the CPP students as some of the students had misconceptions relating to what they were permitted to study at university after their CPP year.

**Group 1: Scores for central question - Participant feedback sheet**

<b>Group 1</b>			
<b>Response Number</b>	<b>Scoring Record</b>	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>Ranking Score</b> Top 5 significant units (1 is the most important)
1	5, 5	10	3
2	3, 3, 2, 1, 4	13	2
3	4, 2	6	
4	3, 1	4	
5	1, 3	4	
6	4, 5	9	4
7	5, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5	27	1
8	4	4	
9	1	1	
10	2	2	
11	3, 1	4	
12	2, 1	3	
13	2	2	
14			
15	1, 2, 3, 2	8	5
16	4, 4	8	5

### Group 1: Responses to issue sub-question

<b>Group 1</b>		
<b>ISSUE SUB-QUESTION QUESTION</b>		
<i>What suggestions can you offer (for the Career Preparation Programme, for yourself and for others) that may help to create a more overall successful Career Preparation Programme?</i>		
<b>NGT Response Code</b>	<b>Response (Italicized sections indicating additions made during NGT Step 3: Serial Discussion)</b>	<b>STEP 3 OF Giorgi's Four-step method - transformation of subject expressions into psychological language</b>
1	<p>CPP to have its own venue (<i>like at CUT</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>One venue may equal one administration and then fewer places to go to.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If CPP venue was located on the UFS campus: (i) as students we will know the campus better when we start with our degree studies and, (ii) we may then have better/easier access to all of the facilities.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Venue needs to be bigger to prepare students for being around a lot of other students – we do not want to feel isolated.</i></li> </ul>	<p>By placing the CPP venue at the UFS, the students feel that they will feel a sense of belonging in that they will be using the UFS facilities, familiarizing themselves with the UFS campus and will feel a part of the UFS student community. They will then be able to identify themselves as Free State university students as they have attained membership status at this campus and may now benefit from this.</p>
2	<p>Groups of students should compile their own set of questions in preparation for exams, as an added study method.</p>	<p>Students wish to participate through active learning techniques, such as asking them to construct their own set of examination questions that may be utilized in the actual exam concerned to ensure their thorough comprehension of the study material.</p>
3	<p>Grant CPP students' access to organizations and activities on the UFS campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>We want to be more involved and made more part of the UFS campus.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The students want to adopt the identity of 'UFS student'. Students feel that they should be included in UFS campus life to facilitate a sense of belonging.</p>

4	<p>CPP lecturers should stop spoon-feeding students – help to make them more responsible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Set higher standards (for the CPP students) as at University of the Free State.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>The CPP lecturers should be stricter about due dates, preparation for class and on test marking.</i></li> </ul>	<p>By having lecturers set higher standards regarding academic work in the CPP, students may be prompted to set higher standards for themselves. Due to the motivation produced by seeing that lecturers have faith in their abilities.</p>
5	<p>Assessment techniques in the CPP should be similar to that of the university, e.g. only writing semester tests <i>without class tests.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Teaching techniques also to be the same as at the university.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Homework should be given.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Similarity between assessment techniques of the CPP and university will promote a natural transition from CPP to university. A natural transition may lessen the possibly experience of anxiety and frustration.</p>
6	<p>Communicate to students more clearly and in advance about bridging requirements, e.g. certain subjects needed as prerequisites for certain courses.</p>	<p>To avoid making uninformed decisions regarding future prospects, communication channels between students and management must be opened up.</p>
7	<p>Introduce more university subjects, e.g. allow students with mathematics to also do industrial psychology and business management <i>if they would so choose.</i></p>	<p>Students would prefer a wider range of selection options for subject choices so as to feel less restricted when making career decisions.</p>
8	<p>Continuous guidance with regard to studies and supply of study guides.</p>	<p>Consistency in helping behaviour regarding direction and course administration must be continuous.</p>
9	<p>Change lecture times:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Shorten the periods to 1 hour only - as concentration time is limited.</li> <li>(ii) Present evening classes to allow for more preparation time.</li> </ol>	<p>To create an optimally functioning environment and student, a student's maximum concentration and time management abilities must be integrated into the planning of the course time table.</p>
10	<p>Provide CPP students with student cards to grant them access to UFS facilities, e.g. library, computer laboratories and printing, et cetera.</p>	<p>Access to university facilities (which are better equipped than college facilities) will reduce levels of frustration experienced by students when engaging in academic activities.</p>
11	<p>Provision of geographic orientation (of CPP students) of the UFS campus so that we do not get lost.</p>	<p>Students want to be physically orientated to the university campus (knowing where classes, library and other facilities are located) to assist them in the adjustment to the new environment.</p>
12	<p>Better marketing of the programme so that more people can know about it.</p>	<p>The marketing campaign of the CPP needs to be revised to create awareness of its existence amongst larger numbers of potential students.</p>

13	Supply more information on the course a CPP student wants to study, e.g. wanting to study psychology – need to know about B. Soc. Sc and selection for postgraduate studies.	Detailed information regarding course requirements is necessary to assist student in the decision making process.
14	Remove the CPP N4 courses and keep only the university computer skills and communication skills courses.	The university based computer and communication modules serve as a better foundation than the CPP N4 modules.
15	Timely information about application forms and deadlines for applications. ▪ <i>E.g. social work selections and deadlines.</i>	Information on deadlines in the CPP course should be communicated well in advance to aid accurate decision making.
16	Add fun ( <i>competitive and participative</i> ) sports, et cetera, for stress relief, and <i>better leisure time expenditure.</i>	Competitive and participative leisure activities that provide opportunities for constructive use of spare time.
17	The College lectures and administration staff should try and give equal treatment to CPP and College students.	College (lecturers and administration) staff should be equitable and fair in their treatment of CPP and College students.

### Group 1: Scores for issue sub-question - Participant feedback sheet

Group 1			
Response Number	Scoring Record	Total Score	Ranking Score Top 5 significant units (1 is the most important)
1	5, 2, 5, 5, 5, 5	27	1
2	1	1	
3	3, 1, 3	7	
4	4, 4, 4	12	3
5	3	3	
6	5, 2, 4	11	4
7	1, 1	2	
8	2	2	
9	5	5	
10	4, 4, 3, 3	14	2
11	1, 1	2	
12	4	4	
13	3, 1, 3, 2	9	5
14	2	2	
15	2	2	
16	2	2	
17			

## Group 2

## CENTRAL QUESTION

What were your experiences (that is your thoughts, feelings and opinions) of the Career Preparation Programme?

NGT Response Code	Response (Italicized sections indicating additions made during NGT Step 3: Serial Discussion)	STEP 3 OF Giorgi's Four-step method - transformation of subject expressions into psychological language
1	<p>It is a waste of time – and too easy; it does not prepare you for the big challenge here at varsity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>It (CPP) gave us a lot of time to study – here at university there is pressure for time.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>We only had two major (university) subjects at CPP as well as VBL (Skills and Competencies for life long learning) and ALC (Academic Language Course); at university we have up to six or seven major subjects.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Currently at university, Business Language English (one of the modules) is not even related to business.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The psychological experience of frustration set in as the CPP never provided challenges. That contributed to the student's perception being that of an ill-prepared student with respect to university pressures and demands.</p>
2	<p>It provided me with the opportunity to experience the tertiary institution before I came here.</p>	<p>The CPP provided the opportunity to experience a diverse range of aspects related to the tertiary institution.</p>
3	<p>It made me realize that it's about working hard and dedicating yourself to what you want.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>It helped me learn how to manage my time.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The CPP helped the student come to the realization that his/her dream can be achieved through applying the skills of patience and persistence.</p>
4	<p>It was a stepping-stone towards my career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>After High School I didn't know which career to pursue. After the CPP it became more clear.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The CPP provided the students with a means of obtaining their goals.</p>
5	<p>There is no similarity between university (which is hard work) and CPP (which was easy).</p>	<p>The student would have preferred that the CPP be similar in pressures and demands such as those that are required at university level to better prepare him/her for what is to come.</p>
6	<p>The CPP was advantageous to me.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The attention we got from the lecturers gave us access to</i></li> </ul>	<p>The student found the CPP to be beneficial in terms of it fostering a communal bond and sense of affiliation with the other students and</p>

	<p>talk openly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At the CPP, there were smaller groups so we got to know people and it became like a family.</li> </ul>	lecturers.
7	<p>The CPP is creating a better future for people who didn't do well in matric.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Created an opportunity.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>It is fair enough to create the CPP because they are properly preparing you for university.</i></li> </ul>	The CPP provided students with an opportunity to achieve a future goal.
8	<p>The only good thing about the CPP is that it taught me to work in groups.</p>	This student feels strongly that there was only one quality that he/she was able to master from the CPP experience and that is how to effectively manage group work situations.
9	<p>It helped me understand and tolerate different kinds of people in this kind of institution.</p>	It fostered the development of tolerance towards people of diverse cultural backgrounds.
10	<p>It was more like High School because some of our facilitators called our parents and told them about our grades and everything.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>It felt like the facilitators were following you around and they were telling you to study. Did well.</i></li> </ul>	Some students felt as though there was no faith expressed in their academic abilities as self-sufficient, responsible adult learners.
11	<p>I've learnt how to apply the knowledge gained in my studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>In Psychology (at university) there was a link with CPP.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Also with other subjects, there was a link.</i></li> </ul>	The student felt that a portion of the knowledge he/she was exposed to during the CPP could be linked to the content of university subjects. This unveiled to the student a holistic view of how all subject matter is interrelated.
12	<p>The subjects they (the CPP) taught, gave us access to pass most of the subjects (at university) because they were dealing a lot with personal stuff like stress management and mind mapping.</p>	The student feels that the means in which CPP subjects helped him/her to pass university subjects was primarily through provision of personal coping mechanisms that aided him/her in dealing with stress management and study skills.
13	<p>I gained so much experience, such as self-motivation, self-esteem, problem solving.</p>	The experience gained from the CPP served to move students towards greater personal development.
14	<p>Experienced what it meant to be lectured, not taught.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>They don't follow you around.</i></li> </ul>	Students experienced lecturers as respectful and confident in their capabilities.

15	<p>The campus that we were attending was not good. The food was not good. The breaks that we had were too many and too long.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The class timetable was not coordinated between the college and university: We would sometimes wait from 11:00 AM to 16:00PM for a class.</i></li> </ul>	Campus facilities and timetable coordination was a source of frustration for the students.
16	<p>No sense of belonging. We were just on our own when we had a problem. E.g. Motheo administration would refer us to UFS administration. When you arrive at UFS they claim that they have no information on the CPP. Then UFS sends you to Mrs. Moilwa who then refers us to Mrs. Barnard who gives us a whole list of careers to choose from which, didn't help me.</p>	The students felt as though they could not identify with the CPP or the university as they were rejected by both when seeking assistance.
17	<p>Confusion: We (the CPP students) are considered pre-varsity. So, I didn't understand why the CPP is installed at the college, why not at the University?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>We receive a letter from the UFS telling you that you've been accepted but it does not specify that you will be attending class at Hillside. This was a shock. This also creates a struggle with accommodation and transport, as we did not anticipate that we would be residing at a campus other than the UFS.</i></li> </ul>	The CPP course is situated on the college campus yet, the majority of CPP students intend to study at university and perceive them selves to be pre-university students. This created a struggle as they did not know whether to identify themselves as college or pre-university students and could not receive the corresponding respect and attention from either institution.

**Group 2: Scores for central question - Participant feedback sheet**

<b>Group 2</b>			
<b>Response Number</b>	<b>Scoring Record</b>	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>Ranking Score</b> Top 5 significant units (1 = most important)
1	3, 3, 2, 5, 1	14	1
2	4, 3	7	5
3	5, 2	7	5
4	5, 5	10	2
5	2, 3, 3	8	4
6	1, 3	4	
7	5, 5	10	2
8	1	1	
9	1, 4	5	
10	2, 3	5	
11	4	4	
12	4	4	
13	2	2	
14			
15	1, 5, 4	10	2
16	1, 2, 2	5	
17	4, 4, 1	9	3

## Group 2

## ISSUE SUB-QUESTION QUESTION

*What suggestions can you offer (for the Career Preparation Programme, for yourself and for others) that may help to create a more overall successful Career Preparation Programme?*

NGT Response Code	Response (Italicized sections indicating additions made during NGT Step 3: Serial Discussion)	STEP 3 OF Giorgi's Four-step method - transformation of subject expressions into psychological language
1	<p>There must be a change in the application procedure – there must be subject evaluators or subject advisors.  <i>E.g. Anthropology – to explain what the subject is about.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Most students just choose a subject for the must of attending.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Some people do not read their guides.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The student is expressing his/her need for more active counsel, not based solely on career choice, but in looking at the finer details of what subject combination will prove to be the most valuable in composition for his/her academic programme of choice.</p>
2	<p>They should prepare a student to work hard like in varsity. E.g. on the (test) time table(s) should not have too many gaps between subjects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Shorten breaks.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Should give more assignments.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The overall pressure regarding the academics and availability of time for preparation at university should be simulated within the CPP. This will aid the students in adjusting to the demands when they enter university.</p>
3	<p>There should be a clear picture about where CPP will take place. E.g. At Motheo College or at night time at the varsity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>On reply letter to application</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Ask you to choose campus, e.g. Bloemfontein – Technikon.</i>  <i>When, certain subjects are presented only at one campus – Look for accommodation at 'wrong' campus!!</i></li> </ul>	<p>The students experience confusion as they may elect a campus of preference for study but, are not informed that only certain subjects are presented at certain campuses. This leaves the students with the stress and worry of securing accommodation at a very late stage.</p>
4	<p>They should add one or two subjects –  <i>Waste of time doing only four subjects</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Should add statistics/mathematics as compulsory for people in Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.</i></li> </ul>	<p>There is a surplus of time and this necessitates the need to provide a wider array of subject choices for selection to spend the time constructively.</p>
5	<p>They should allow CPP students access to varsity library books and computers – last year we were struggling.</p>	<p>The students feel as though they are pre-varsity and should therefore be allowed access to use the facilities available to university students. They want to receive equitable treatment and privileges as the university students so that they to can reap the benefits of access to facilities.</p>

6	They should make the campuses more accommodating, e.g. food to be proper food, not vetkoek. (burgers, green salad, etc) - variety	The CPP students are just like any other students who aspire to take care of themselves and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The lack of a variety of nutritional alternatives is not provided by the lunch shops in the vicinity.
7	Must make CPP more challenging. Must give us more work like here at varsity. ▪ <i>Give assignments.</i>	The academic transition and optimal academic functioning may become more manageable when academic work at the CPP is made similar in nature to the work at university especially with regards to providing more assignments.
8	Should cancel communication and one of the (similar) varsity subjects at CPP.	Cancellation of CPP and university subjects which are similar in content to prevent repetition that may lead to frustration.
9	They should not undermine us, like when you come looking for information, you get more administration. E.g. If you want more information about your career you should be able to talk to the appropriate person (e.g. lecturer) at the UFS.	The students experienced differential treatment from certain personnel as their actions prevented students from accessing information that may have proven valuable in making decisions related to career choices.
10	CPP lecturers should not be too lenient on students – more strict – encourage independence.	The student feels that the lecturers' expectations of their capabilities are too low. They should set higher expectations of students' capabilities which would encourage them to move towards greater independence.
11	Must change the campus – bring CPP to UFS.	The students feel that as they are pre-university students with the complete intention of registering at the UFS and therefore the CPP should have a site allocated to it at the UFS.

### Group 2: Scores for issue sub-question - Participant feedback sheet

Group 2			
Response Number	Scoring Record	Total Score	Ranking Score Top 5 significant units (1 = most important)
1	1, 5, 5	11	
2	3, 5, 3, 1, 2, 4	18	
3	1	1	
4	2, 4, 5, 5, 4	20	
5	3	3	
6	1	1	
7	5, 4, 2, 2, 4, 3	20	
8	2	2	
9	2, 2, 1, 1	6	
10	3	3	
11	1, 4, 3, 4, 3, 5	20	

## Group 3

## CENTRAL QUESTION

What were your experiences (that is your thoughts, feelings and opinions) of the Career Preparation Programme?

NGT Response Code	Response (Italicized sections indicating additions made during NGT Step 3: Serial Discussion)	STEP 3 OF Giorgi's Four-step method - transformation of subject expressions into psychological language
1	<p>This programme is really necessary. CPP students are more focused, goal directed and more mature than FET students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Know they want to improve, want to do better and work towards that goal.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Have a better idea of what they want to do.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Have a bigger picture.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Tertiary education is a status symbol.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Students within the CPP course tend to be more self-sufficient and developmentally mature than most other students on the college campus.</p>
2	<p>Important in the South African context: to give persons opportunity to enter HE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Access via satellite campuses.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>If it wasn't for this programme, hundreds of people would have been deprived of the opportunity.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Word of mouth marketing via previous students.</i></li> </ul>	<p>This course is beneficial and necessary to counteract the country's history of political difficulties and limited access to education by increasing access to higher education.</p>
3	<p>Sometimes get the impression that once students have entered CPP they realize that they weren't adequately informed/prepared. (<i>Parents not involved in information session by marketing officer at schools.</i>) (Finances; effort required to succeed; prior learning especially in terms of language skills.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Don't have proper support system – their communities cannot address their needs – parents still illiterate and cannot help their children – not skilled to guide their children.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Personnel are of the opinion that students become aware of their available choices within the CPP after the fact which, according to them may be due to interference or lack of various personal and familial factors.</p>

4	<p>Good in the sense that it is a sifting programme: makes them more realistic about the future – most students come with unrealistic expectations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Don't have information; lack personal skills</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Don't have an idea of workload.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Don't plan or organize.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The CPP fosters a realistic outlook of the future within students which creates more rational expectations of what the future holds for them.</p>
5	<p>Gives them a preview of what varsity is like, also life skills that average first years would be exposed to.</p>	<p>The CPP eases the transitional phase from secondary education to higher education by providing vital life skills that are normative for first year student.</p>
6	<p>Students with social subjects (without English) tend to struggle more with content and general coping. Also observed that this group was less likely to receive bursaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Do not get required marks to apply for certain courses.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Some enter NATED courses (___)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Students with higher M-scores do better. Those with mathematics do better – requirements for entry.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Students completing social sciences subjects struggle to maintain a similar level of academic functioning when compared to those students studying other subjects.</p>
7	<p>Gives people hope. Would not have opportunity to progress in life therefore necessary programme.</p>	<p>The CPP instils a feeling of hope (within the students) which may then serve as a source of motivation for achieving future goals.</p>
8	<p>Practicality is debatable due to logistical arrangements and financial costs – satellite campuses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Costly to run, e.g. guest house bills for lecturers.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Serving such a wide range of students by presenting the course in various geographical locations appears to create unnecessary financial and practical burdens.</p>
9	<p>Programme is well organized – sub regions, subjects – allocation of what is presented and where.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Dates, telephone numbers, photo of counsellor in book, financial information, subject information in booklet.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Personnel feel as though the programme is logistically efficient.</p>
10	<p>Some students enter not knowing what they want to do – due to absence of pre-entry career counselling.</p>	<p>Appropriate pre-entry career counselling is not a service made available to students which may be defeating the purpose of assisting them to learn how to make informed choices.</p>

11	<p>Tiring for me to work with them (CPP students) – they are needy (emotionally unskilled, educationally and financially needy, difficult family circumstances – father absent, lack of coping skills). Yet, they are willing. This exerts great impact on studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Cannot manage time.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Don't think ahead- just surviving.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Cannot plan ahead.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Parents don't plan in children's future – student shared that they spend money on proper funerals, but not on development of children.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Need for counsellors in satellite campuses.</i></li> </ul>	<p>The holistic impression gained of students within the CPP is that they have many unmet needs within all spheres (emotional, social and family) of development and yet they remain motivated to a certain extent.</p>
12	<p>Provides an opportunity for new graduates to enter as facilitators – privilege; exposed to lecturing.</p>	<p>The CPP benefits graduates by providing them with work experience.</p>
13	<p>Definite difference between our students and foreign (Botswana, Lesotho, Nigeria) students (more focused parents and their department of foreign affairs more involved, better prior education).</p>	<p>It appears that foreign CPP students can be distinguished from local CPP on the basis of greater familial and governmental support.</p>
14	<p>Communication gaps between institutions (UFS, CPP and FET colleges). Facilitator meetings help yet students often disadvantaged because incorrect information is given, e.g. requirements for selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Have to assist with registration – no help.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Information not given through – scheduled periods, students with exemption.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Efficacy in communication between management of the various institutions (involved in the administration of the CPP) is lacking and this creates further ineffective communication channels between CPP management and the students.</p>
15	<p>Perceived hostility from college towards CPP (lecturers and students) E.g. Problems making lecture rooms available for CPP. E.g. Upper management not available or do not respond.</p>	<p>Institutional barriers create conflict between CPP and college personnel.</p>

16	<p>Some facilitators are not linguistically skilled which has negative effects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>E.g. some of the communication facilitators are teaching in their second or third language.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Certain campuses lack specific plan for allocation of facilitators for CPP.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Lack of appropriate levels of English language proficiency amongst a number of facilitators contributes negatively towards the CPP and students' experiences within the programme.</p>
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### Group 3: Scores for central question - Participant feedback sheet

Group 3			
Response Number	Scoring Record	Total Score	Ranking Score Top 5 significant units (1 is the most important)
1	5	5	5
2	5, 4, 5, 5, 5	24	1
3	1, 1	2	
4	4, 3, 3, 2	12	2
5	2, 1, 4	7	3
6		0	
7	1, 4, 2	7	3
8		0	
9	2, 3, 1	6	4
10		0	
11	4, 3	7	3
12		0	
13	2	2	
14		0	
15	3	3	
16		0	

## Group 3

## ISSUE SUB-QUESTION QUESTION

*What suggestions can you offer (for the Career Preparation Programme, for yourself and for others) that may help to create a more overall successful Career Preparation Programme?*

NGT Response Code	Response (Italicized sections indicating additions made during NGT Step 3: Serial Discussion)	STEP 3 OF Giorgi's Four-step method - transformation of subject expressions into psychological language
1	Encourage pre-entry career counselling during marketing visits to schools.	Pre-entry career counselling may provide more clarity on the various career opportunities available to students that enrol in the CPP.
2	With time a better educated South Africa will present a better prepared student – it will improve with time – be patient.	Patience must be exercised as the transformation process within education in South Africa is a 'work in progress'.
3	Always keep the bigger picture in mind – see that you are making a difference.	CPP personnel should maintain a positive attitude towards their contribution to the CPP.
4	Improved cooperation between CPP and FET (Further Education and Training College). Via planning meetings. ▪ <i>Through to grass roots level.</i>	The general need for cooperation and communication between all people involved in the CPP at the different levels is essential for effective programme functioning.
5	Better understanding of needs by 're-skilling' lecturers on how to teach this group of students/ selection of experienced facilitators.	Education concerning the unique needs of CPP students may be presented to the lecturers to assist them in lecturing the students.
6	Cultural diversity workshops for facilitators in order to understand students better.	Providing lecturers with education related to the cultural diversity of the students may lead to a better understanding of and respect for students that may then facilitate better communication between lecturers and students.
7	Motivating for more money from government for improved facilities, resources and human resources – e.g. computers – bigger for more students.	An increase in financial resources may lead to enhanced course facilities which may encourage a positive lecturing and working environment.
8	Information/ open day for parents of students whom have been accepted.	The majority of students are still to a certain extent dependent on their parents for meeting their basic needs (financially and emotionally) and therefore the parents should be informed of what the CPP process entails.
9	More information to all the relevant parties (facilitators, parents, community, students, college staff) for better understanding of the programme. ▪ <i>Translation of booklet into home languages.</i> ▪ <i>Video/DVD/SMS service (e.g. exam dates)</i>	Information about the CPP should be disseminated in different forms to all individuals involved in the programme to facilitate better communication about the programme.

10	Improved liaison with other universities re bridging programmes and entry requirements.	Liaison amongst the wider community of universities also involved in presenting bridging programmes could facilitate the communication and exchange of ideas.
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**Group 3: Scores for issue sub-question - Participant feedback sheet**

Group 3			
Response Number	Scoring Record	Total Score	Ranking Score Top 5 significant units (1 = most important)
1	2, 5, 5	12	3
2		0	
3		0	
4	2, 3, 4, 1	10	5
5	5	5	
6	2, 3, 4, 4	13	2
7	2, 5, 5, 3, 1	16	1
8	1, 3,	4	
9	3, 4, 4	11	4
10	2, 1, 1	4	
11			
12			
13			
14			

