A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN A POST-BASIC NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN ONE KWAZULU-NATAL COLLEGE OF NURSING SELECTED CAMPUS IN THE ETHEKWINI DISTRICT

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Declaration

With this, I declare that the thesis hereby submitted titled: **"A Descriptive Analysis of Student Engagement in a Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in One KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing in the Ethekwini District"** is my own independent work. All the resources and materials that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

Student: Date:

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Abstract

Background: There is a growing interest in the concept of student engagement in higher education institutions. Literature reflects that engagement is an important precursor to student learning and success and an antidote to low achievement and disengagement. However, student engagement may be a battle for some students who may not be familiar with the rules of engagement, and they may easily disengage.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to analyse and describe student engagement in post-basic programmes at one selected campus of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing in the Ethekwini District.

Research Methodology: A quantitative approach and non-experimental, descriptive exploratory research design were used in this study. A total of 179 post-basic students participated in the study and data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Data was organised using the SSPS package, Version 15.0 and analysed statistically through descriptive and parametrical statistics. Ethics principles were observed throughout the study.

Results: The results of this study revealed four forms of engagement; emotional, behavioural, academic and cognitive engagement. There were variations however in the levels of engagement. Active participation by the students was identified as the main driver of engagement. Active participation was promoted through class presentations (98%), participating in community-based projects (65%), discussing marks or assignments with the teacher (68%) and prepared two or more drafts of assignments before submitting it to the lecturer (39%).

Barriers to student engagement were explored, and it was established that the lack of information technology resources stood out as the primary impediment. Regarding student engagement across programmes, the results revealed that all participants, irrespective of the programme or specialization, had a fair level of engagement. Differences were noted in few areas. For example, a Pearson Chi-Square test established that there were significant differences in the way participants from different ranks engaged with other students outside of their class to complete an assignment, which is part of academic engagement ($X^2 = 10.812$, df = 4, p = 0.029). A significant difference was noted in relation to participants working with the teacher on activities other than the course work ($X^2 = 13.619$, df = 4, p = 0.009); in this regard, the critical care group more consistently agreed that they worked with the teacher on such activities.

Recommendations:

Student engagement is a multidimensional concept; its definitions seem increasingly complex and diverse, and in some ways student engagement is misunderstood. Therefore a narrow definition of student engagement that is restricted to students' level of involvement in a learning process was one of the recommendations. Furthermore, research on teachers' perceptions of student engagement was suggested to enable the teachers to uphold the standard of nursing education and use teaching strategies that would engage students in their learning. It was also recommended that the college provides information and technological support to develop high-level critical and analytical thinking skills and to enrich educational experiences of the students which they will apply to solve real-world problems in their daily nursing practice.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, especially my late parents.

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I am very grateful to my Father, God for sustaining me throughout my life and blessing me beyond measure.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Over the past decade there has been growing interest in the concept of student engagement (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, Reschly, 2006), associated with academic institution policies that put greater emphasis on student retention, participation and achievement rates (Zyngier, 2008). Kuh (2001) states that the best set of engagement indicators are the "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" listed by Chickering and Gamson (1987); these principles are student-faculty contact, cooperation among students, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task, high expectations, and respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. The literature reflects student engagement as an important precursor to student learning and success and an antidote to low achievement and disengagement (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, Pagani, 2009; Zyngier, 2008; Appleton et al., 2006; Finn, Pannazzo, and Achilles, 2003). Generally, student engagement occurs when "students make a psychological investment in learning".

The literature reflects a number of views regarding the definition of *student engagement*. According to Appleton et al. (2006) and Yazzie-Mintz (2006), there is no agreed definition of this term, but it is generally viewed as a multi-dimensional construct with three main components: behavioural, cognitive and emotional (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, Friedel, Paris, 2003; Finn et al, 2003; Finn, Pannazzo, Voelkl, 1995). The behavioural engagement component captures students' social, extra-curricular and non-academic activities, including interaction with other students. The cognitive engagement component relates to students' thought processes: "students' effort, investment and strategies for learning – the work students do and the way students go about their work" (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006).

The affective engagement component emphasises feelings of connection to or disconnection from their school, how students feel about the school, the ways and the workings of the school and people within and around the school. Affective engagement includes positive and negative reactions to faculty (teachers), classmates, and school. Chapman (2003) pointed out that early research studies on student engagement often focused on the behavioural aspect of engagement depicting students' willingness to participate in routine school activities, such as attending classes, submitting required work, and following teachers' directions in class.

One trend that appears in the literature is research that looks at this phenomenon comprehensively in different contexts (Chapman, 2003). Newman in Zyngier (2008) suggested that student engagement may be seen from three contesting perspectives: the instrumentalist/technical perspective, the social constructivist/individual perspective, and the perspective of critical transformative engagement. The instrumentalist/technical perspective is more traditional in nature, in that engagement is equated with compliance with adult-determined rules and participation in adult-determined and led activities. The educational programmes are teacher-directed, with students expected to conform to the norms set. Hotchkin (2002) gives preference to social constructivist/individualistic engagement rather than an instrumentalist/technical teacher-directed style of teaching, as the latter limits personal

development of students. Social constructivist/individualistic engagement is characterized by the student-centred styles of teaching that involve a variety of innovative ways or strategies to engage students in their learning and to increase achievement in the classroom (Zyngier, 2008). Engagement is envisaged as implicit in active learning, where self-motivation, reflective shared goal-setting, and student choice are located in the lived experiences of the students. The

limitation of this type of engagement is that it is inclined to be disconnected from time, place and space. The social contexts and ideologies are not given special attention (Zeignier and Gale cited in Zyngier, 2008).

Critical transformative engagement, on the other hand, according to Zyngier (2008), perceives student engagement as re-thinking the individualized student's experiences and interests in communal and social terms for creation of a more just and democratic community, rather than just advancement of an individual as observed in individualistic engagement. In programmes promoting critical-transformative engagement the students are located or placed in low socio-economic status communities to encourage students to generate context-driven knowledge from such communities.

Some studies of student engagement include one or two components of engagement (Skinner and Belmont 1993) whilst others include all three components of engagement: behavioural, cognitive and affective (Finn et al., 1995). According to these authors, examining the components of engagement separately divides the students' behaviour, affective and cognitive aspects whereas in reality these components are embedded within a single individual and are not isolated processes. It was also evident in Akey's (2006) study that students who actively engage themselves in learning activities achieve academically and in life. Similarly, Finn and Voelkl (1993)claim that their own research demonstrated clear relationships between student engagement and academic achievement. It is important to note that student engagement in instructional activities decreases as students get older, as a result of influences from both within and outside school (Marks, 2000; Brewster and Fager, 2000; Anderman and Midgley, 1998). Studies by Krause (2005), Chapman (2003), Furrer and Skinner (2003), and Skinner and

Belmont (1993) showed that student engagement may be a battle for students who may not be familiar with the rules of engagement, and they may easily disengage. Disengaged students are passive and give up easily in the face of challenges (Krause, 2006). They become anxious, frustrated or even angry about their presence in the classroom; they can be withdrawn from learning opportunities or even rebellious towards teachers and classmates. In the same way, Akey (2006) asserts that students who are convinced that they lack the ability to succeed will not make an effort to engage in classroom activities. They tend to be anxious and more fearful of revealing their ignorance and they also fear that educational interaction will result in embarrassment and humiliation; this, in turn, inhibits them from believing in ways that might help them, such as asking questions when they are confused or engaging in trial-and-error problem solving.

In the study conducted by Lippman and Rivers (2008) it is evident that disengaged students are at risk of poor academic achievement. McMahon and Portelli (2004) argue, however, that because disengaged students in the classroom perform more poorly than their disruptive peers the disengagement can go unnoticed and unresolved, since disengaged students do not disrupt the classroom environment. Krause (2005) and Chapman (2003) stated that to make engagement meaningful teachers should prepare, support and empower students with strategies to build on positive engagement experiences, and manage the conflicts which inevitably arise from attempts to engage with the challenges of classroom activities. Akey (2006), in his study on student engagement, supports this view by emphasising that teachers should create collaborative, supportive environments with high but achievable standards to enhance student engagement. The study by Anderman and Midgley (1998) revealed that although it may seem that teachers have no control over students' attitudes about learning, they do in fact have control because when

students enter school their level of interest and desire to engage in learning is also heavily influenced by teachers, administrators, the school environment and their classmates, and to a very large degree, students expect to learn if their teachers expect them to learn (Anderman and Midgley, 1998).

Studies by Akey (2006), Krause (2005) and Thomas (2002) showed that academic staff plays a key role in contributing to students' engagement with their study and the learning community as a whole. Thomas (2002) also argues that relationships between staff and students seem to be fundamental to attitudes towards learning and coping with academic difficulties. This author further states that if students feel that staff believes in them, and care about the outcomes of their studying, they seem to gain both self-confidence and self-motivation and their work improves. Similarly, Betts (2009) states that the research by Chickering and Gamson reveals that knowing faculty – and faculty's concern – assists students to get through challenging times and enhances students' intellectual commitment. In thesame way, Akey (2006) states that relationships between students and teachers and the climate in the classroom are positively associated with levels of student engagement and academic competence. Michael (2009) also states that since learning is (ideally) far from being a passive process, a good relationship between teacher and student usually allows for a more receptive and exchange of information or knowledge. Furthermore, research by Chen, Lattuca, Hamilton (2008) indicates that faculty does matter: their engagement in the teaching and learning functions affects the quality of student engagement. A study by Mohtar and Yusoff (2009) on sustaining student engagement in the classroom reveals that some students do not interact because of the fear of giving a wrong answer and being thought of as stupid. In other cases, the student-teacher interaction is sometimes restricted by culture. For example, in some Far Eastern cultures questioning a teacher can be seen as a

challenge to the teacher's authority (Mohtar and Yusoff, 2009). These authors further state that teachers also create a barrier to interaction by controlling students on how to respond to their questions. Furthermore, the text used or topic taught by the teacher may not stimulate the discussion, or the questions asked may not require students to give opinions, and this does not encourage student-teacher interaction. In contrast, Anderson (2004) pointed out that asking questions from lecturers is critical to students' learning. Students who are comfortable with asking questions should do so during a lecture, tutorials and after class. This indicates student engagement in their learning. However, some students perceived asking questions as a sign of ignorance in their early education, and in their tertiary education the desire to understand did not always supersede past experience; consequently some students look to strategies such as e-mail and asking friends in order to avoid direct contact with the teacher and public exposure (Anderson, 2004).

The literature shows that conducting surveys on student engagement was first conceived in 1998 in developed countries such as Australia, the United States, and New Zealand. Most of these studies focused, however, on general education (Archambault et al., 2009; Yazzie-Mintz, 2006; Australian Council for Educational Research; 2009). In South Africa, the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) is being piloted on a national level by the division of Student Development and Success at the University of the Free State (SASSE, 2009). The study is being conducted in collaboration with the Council on Higher Education as part of the investigation into the development of a 4-year undergraduate curriculum and undergraduate education in general. The aim of this survey is to identify the conditions and drivers of success that would lead to the identification of impact activities that contribute to the improvement and success rates in the South African context.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Zyngier (2008), the majority of research has focused on the more observable indicators that are related to behavioural engagement, and few studies have focused on the cognitive and affective domains of student engagement or looked at all these three domains. Pontius and Harper (2000) also pointed out that there is a trend in institutions of higher education to focus on undergraduate students and hence devote less effort to engaging the graduate and professional student population. According to Pontius and Harper (2000), graduate and professional students have specific needs and face developmental challenges that may differ from those experienced by undergraduates. Murphy cited in Zyngier(2008) reported that students are often left out of the discourse on student engagement and are traditionally objectified and omitted from this dialogue because they are configured as the products of formal education systems. As a result, most of the research presents the educators' perspective. Zyngier (2008) asserts that giving voice to students may provide a more authentic understanding of what student engagement means for school and classroom practice and how this practice can be promoted to improve students' academic achievement. Chapman (2003) highlighted a number of methods of measuring student engagement: checklists and rating scales completed by teachers, observations, work sample analyses, and case studies. This author pointed out, however, that one reliable way of measuring student engagement is through information reported by the students themselves, hence the rationale for targeting students in this present study. It is also claimed that teaching programmes using innovative curricula – such as the competency-based curriculum which is used by the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing – promote student engagement. Therefore analysing student engagement in an innovative, post-basic adult learning programme that caters for students from diverse backgrounds is of interest, with the focus on the students' perspective.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyse and describe student engagement in post-basic programmes at one selected campus of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing in the eThekwini District.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To describe the different types of student engagement in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus
- To describe ways that promote student engagement in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus
- To describe barriers that hinder student engagement in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the different types of student engagement in a post- basic course /programme in a selected campus?
- How is student engagement promoted in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus?
- What are the barriers that hinder student engagement in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Literature reflects that the concept of student engagement is based on the constructivist assumption that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally

purposeful activities. However, learning is seen as a 'joint proposition' which also depends on institutions and staff providing students with the conditions, opportunities and expectations to become engaged (Coates, 2005). The findings of this study have a potential to provide concrete evidence of the status of student engagement in a post-basic programme in a selected campus.

The notion of student engagement is essential because it enhances student learning, personal and professional development as well as success. The performance of at risk student in terms of grades and persistence significantly improves. The results of this study can be utilised to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of nursing education system nationwide. This study could form the basis of the process of curriculum review to improve students' levels of active participation in their learning. From the findings of this study, the nursing education institution can evaluate itself and develop more effective strategies to engage students thus enhancing teaching and learning. The study findings could also enhance faculty and staff development by focusing initiatives on effective educational practices that have been shown to maximise students' opportunities to succeed. The findings could also serve as a reference for further research on student engagement.

Recommendations are made that the relevant key players in nursing education take action that will help improve the quality of nursing education and practice, enhancing the production of competent and proficient clinical nurse specialists who will render comprehensive health care.

1.7 Operational Definitions

Student engagement: In this study, student engagement is defined as the amount of time and effort students spend on academic activities and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success as well as the ways in which institutions allocate

resources and organise learning opportunities and services to induce students to participate in and benefit from such activities (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2005).

Post-basic Nursing Course: This refers to a programme of education and training approved by the South African Nursing Council (No. R.212 of 1993 as Amended by No. 74 of 1997) which leads to a clinical nursing qualification that confers on the holder thereof the right to register such qualification as an additional qualification in one of the following areas: Child Nursing Science; Medical and Surgical Nursing Science; and Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science.

Post-basic Nursing Programme: In this study, post-basic nursing programme refers to Child Nursing Science, Critical Care Nursing Science, Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science, Operating Nursing Science and Orthopaedic Nursing Science (South African Nursing Council Regulation 212 of 1993 as amended by no. 74 of 1997).

Student: A person, who is actively engaged in a study, devoted to learning and seeks knowledge from professional teachers and books. In this study, this term refers to a post-basic student who is registered with KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing with the aim of qualifying as a clinical nurse specialist (English Oxford Dictionary)

Campus: A campus is a learning site or learning centre controlled and administered by the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing, designated to offer post-basic courses (Oxford Thesaurus Current English)

For the purpose of this study the following terms are used interchangeably, **teacher, instructor, professor, and faculty,** and are defined as the person assigned to instruction for a particular course in a college or university (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, English Oxford Dictionary).

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework underpinning this study has been developed from the reviewed literatureand was adapted from the student engagement theory proposed by Kuh et al. (2001).The fundamental idea underlying engagement theory is that students must be meaningfully engaged in learning activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success. Engagement theory describes engagement as "the student's psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding or mastering knowledge, skills or crafts that academic work is intended to promote (Reschly& Appleton, 2003; Newmann, 1992). Influenced by Finn's (1993) participation-identification model, student engagement theory accentuates that students should participate in school activities and identify with the school for successful performance. The major concepts in this framework are: (a) drivers of engagement, (b) components of student engagement and (c) engagement outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates these concepts.

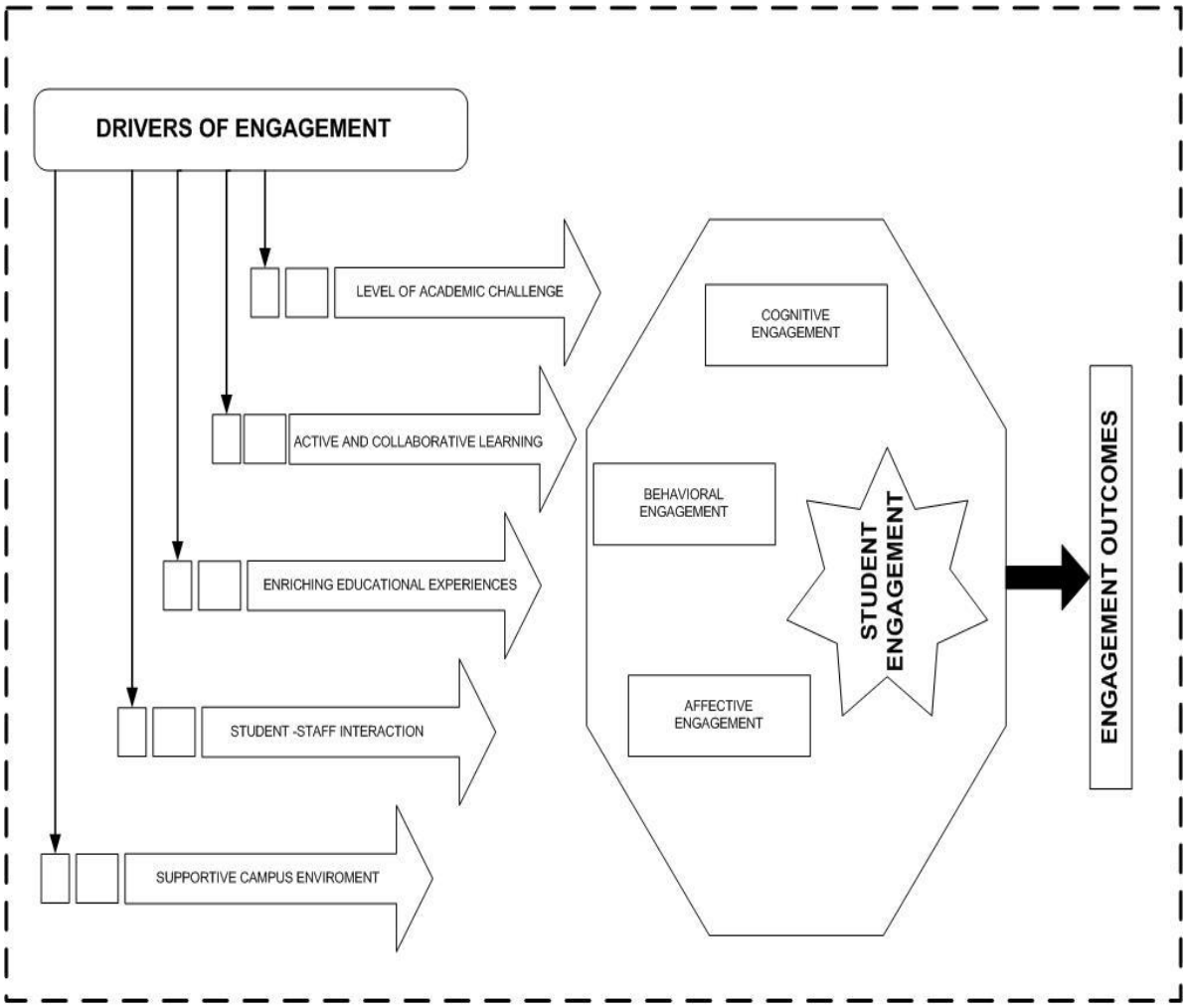

Figure 1: Student Engagement Framework (Adapted from Kuh, et al, 2001, p11)

1.8.1 Drivers of Engagement

The *drivers of student engagement* are based on the South African Survey of Student Engagement (2009)' benchmark of effective educational practice which includes level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, enriching educational experiences, student-staff interaction and supportive campus environment.

According to Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates (2005), *level of academic challenge* focuses on whether students find their academic work intellectually challenging and creative

since this is regarded as central to student learning and high-quality higher education experiences. This is achieved by setting high expectations for student performance and holding students accountable for performing at such levels. The *level of* academic *challenge* can be measured by the amount of time students devote to studying and other academic work, preparing for classes, reading assigned and other books and writing reports and papers, and the extent to which students engage in activities that require analysing, synthesising, applying theories and making judgements as well as setting standards that compel students to work harder.

Regarding *active and collaborative learning* as one of the drivers of student engagement, Kuh et al. (2005, 2006) state that students learn when they are intensely involved in their education and have opportunities to think and apply what they are learning in different settings. Students have to learn through collaborating with others in the process of solving problems and in mastering difficult material, this prepares the students for the problems they will encounter during and after the course. Students are expected to ask questions in class and contribute to class discussions, make presentations in class, work with other students on class projects inside and outside of class, participate in community-based projects as part of a course and discuss ideas from readings with other students and staff outside the class. Kuh et al. (2005) assert that through *student-staff interaction* students learn how experts think first-hand and how to solve practical problems. The academic staff members become role models, guides and mentors for continuous lifelong learning. Such a relationship affords students an opportunity to talk to staff about their career plans, discuss ideas and readings with staff outside class, receive prompt feedback from staff, and work with staff members on research projects. According to Van De Weghe (2006) student-teacher support increases the level of student engagement.

Kuh et al. (2005) also state that *enriching educational experiences* serve as a driver for student engagement. Educational programmes, including **c**omplementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom, augment the academic programmes and facilitate student engagement. According to Kuh et al. (2005), experiencing diversity teaches students valuable lessons about themselves and other cultures. These authors are of the view that if used appropriately, such programmes can help students to synthesise, integrate and apply knowledge. Regarding *supportive campus environment,* Kuh et al. (2005) are of the view that students perform better and are more satisfied in academic institutions that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus than in academic institutions that do not. A supportive campus environment can be measured by assessing the extent to which institutions provide: support for students' academic and social success, positive working relationships between students, academic and administrative staff who help students cope with non-academic responsibilities and by example, student support programmes, orientation programmes, advising networks, and peer support such as tutorials. The drivers of student engagement represent important student behaviours and institutional factors that are related to engagement and positive educational outcomes (SASSE, 2010).

1.8.2 Components of Engagement

Reschly and Appleton (2003) state that engagement theory depicts*four components of engagement* which are related to student engagement: *academic, behavioural, cognitive and affective. Academic engagement* is identified by on-task behaviours that signal a serious psychological investment in class work; these include attentiveness, doing the assigned work, and showing enthusiasm for this work by taking initiative to raise questions, contribute to group activities and help peers. In academic engagement, it is important to determine and understand

what motivates students to participate in the required tasks in order to achieve school success. *Behavioural engagement* refers to students' actions in social extracurricular and non-academic school activities, including interaction with other students, the ways in which students interact within the school community. It also includes being a good citizen in school, getting to school regularly and on time, participating appropriately in class activities, getting homework done on time and avoiding disciplinary infractions. This dimension can be thought of as engagement in the life of the school (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006, Trowler, 2010).

Cognitive engagement, also known as *intellectual engagement* describes students' effort, investment and strategies for learning – the work students do and the ways students go about their work. This dimension, which focuses primarily on engagement during instructional time, can be described as engagement of the mind. It includes being competent, autonomous and relevant, believing in the need for school and classes to achieve goals, and believing that school matters. It also incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills. *Affective*engagement also known as *emotional engagement* refers to feeling connected to others and having a feeling of belonging and identification with the values and goals of the school. Largely focused on students' internal lives but not always expressed in observable actions or behaviour, this dimension can be described as engagement of the heart (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006,Trowler, 2010). The components of engagement and drivers of engagement are intertwined and both underline the importance of a focus on student engagement (SASSE, 2010)

1.8.3 Engagement Outcomes

Student engagement outcomes, according to the theory of engagement, are measured in terms of student progression and success.

1.9 Dissertation Outline

This report is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1: This chapter provides introduction and background to the study. It also presents the problem statement, purpose statement, objectives of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, and operational definition of terms.

Chapter 2: This chapter presents reviewed empirical literature and is organised according to themes which are presented as subheadings. They include: conceptualisation of student engagement, theoreticalbasis of student engagement, approaches toassessing student engagement, alternative approaches to measuring student engagement, and teacher–student/student–peer interaction. Additional themes include enhancing student motivation and engagement, strategies employed to foster student engagement, and obstacles hindering student engagement.

Chapter 3: This chapter presents the research methodology that was followed in this research. A quantitative approach was employed in this study, in conjunction with a descriptive exploratory research design; an outline of how data was collected and analysed is also presented.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents quantitative findings which were analysed through the use of SSPS package, Version 15.0, together with discussion of results.

Chapter 5: This chapter presents a discussion and interpretation of research findings, together with recommendations and conclusion.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This review focuses on the literature and previous studies on the conceptualisation of student engagement, approaches to assessing student engagement, alternative approaches to measuring student engagement, the teacher–student/student–peer interaction, enhancing student motivation and engagement, fostering student engagement, and obstacles to student engagement. The theoretical framework that guides this study is also presented. However, it should be noted that the studies reviewed are confined to western countries because no published information exists on student engagement in Africa, including South Africa.

2.2 Conceptualisation of Student Engagement

The concept of student engagement is complex and difficult to define in scope, but Krause (2005), in her study on understanding and promoting student engagement in university learning communities, takes the position that student engagement refers to the time and energy and resources students devote to activities designed to enhance learning at university. Krause as cited in Stefani (2009) subsequently expands on this definition, positing that the well-adjusted and engaged student is one who assesses and reassesses his or her thinking as transitions and opportunities to engage in different ways, continuing through and beyond the first year of university. Stefani (2009) contends that there are two equally important aspects to the concept of engagement: how the students experience university and university level teaching and learning (which in itself is a multifaceted issue), and whether the curriculum offered is designed to "engage" students. Consistent with Krause's definition of student engagement, Kuh et al. (2005)

state that student engagement is first and foremost the time and energy devoted to studies and the other activities offered at college which reinforce and enrich learning.

Kuh et al. (2005) see student engagement as referring to the ways that the college uses its resources and organises its programmes of study, its learning activities, its assistance and support services, and its academic activities to encourage students to participate, thus favouring their satisfaction, persistence and graduation. Since student engagement contributes to student success, it is relevant to put in place the conditions and practices that will elicit this engagement. In the same way, Newmann (1992) contends that engaged students make a psychological investment in learning; they devote substantial time and effort to a task when they care about the quality of their work and when they commit themselves because work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value. They try hard to learn what school offers. Coates (2006) notes, however, that relatively few universities have taken up the challenge of finding out whether students are using the resources that are on offer to learn productively. Fletcher (2005) argues that meaningful student involvement is the process of engaging students as partners in every facet of school change for the purpose of strengthening their commitment to education, community and democracy. Fletcher (2007) makes the point that students are engaged when they are attracted to their work, persist in it despite challenges and obstacles, and take visible delight in accomplishing their work, and adds that students who are engaged show sustained behavioural involvement in learning activities accompanied by a positive emotional tone. They select tasks at the border of their competencies, initiate action when given the opportunity, and exert intense effort and concentration in the implementation of learning tasks. They show generally positive emotions during ongoing action, including enthusiasm, optimism, curiosity and interest.

Cantwell (2008) also claims that student engagement can be conceptualised as engaging in behaviours that promote good educational practices and learning.

Coates (2005) sees the concept of student engagement as being based on the constructivist assumption that learning is influenced by the way an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities. Coates claims that in constructivism students construct knowledge as they learn, therefore teachers should provide students with activities which include hands-on learning. Coates further states that student engagement is transformed from passive, disconnected activities into a process promoting student achievement and school improvement. Similarly, Hein (1991) states that learning is an active process whereby the student needs to do something. John Dewey, often seen as one of the 20th century's most influential thinkers in the discipline of education and study of successful educational practices, focused his attention on the ways in which students learn and on helping teachers make changes in the classroom that encourage positive learning outcomes. He also believed that learning is not a passive process and that teachers are guides who help lead students into an engaging environment of learning, and that in so doing the teacher and student both become active subjects in the learning process. Dewey believed that teachers should provide activities which engage the mind as well as the hands, which he called reflective activity.

Markwell (2007) also states that student engagement is the extent to which students are actively engaged in – actively committed to and actively involved in – their own learning, and that this lies at the heart of any worthwhile notion of student engagement. Markwell (2007) identified elements that contribute to student engagement, among these being hours of personal study (alone or in a group), the degree and effectiveness of active study, engagement with the

discipline the student is studying, engagement with and through a range of available learning resources including online media, and a sense of belonging to the college as an institution. In the same way, Astin cited in Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) proposes a theory of involvement which emphasises that students learn by being involved and that involvement positively contributes to a range of outcomes including persistence, satisfaction, achievement and academic success. Contrasting with this theory, McMahon and Portelli (2004) assert that the notion of engagement does not interrogate the content of what amounts to academically worthwhile engagement.

Guthrie (2004) contends that the student uses four engagement processes: (i) time on task, which refers to paying attention to text and sustaining cognitive effort; (ii) affect surrounding engagement which is active, goal-directed, flexible, constructive, persistent with focused interactions with social and physical environments; (iii) engagement which is more cognitive, pointing to the depth of processing during learning and cognitively engaged students thinking conceptually during learning activities; (iv) engagement which is more activity-based, referring to amount and diversity of students' activities in and out of school.

Coates (2006) argues that while earlier, more behavioural work emphasised "time on task" or academic learning time, contemporary interpretations focus on cognitive, affective and behavioural phenomena, and that for current purposes student engagement can be defined as the person's involvement with the educationally relevant activities and conditions that are instrumental to his/her learning. Consistent with Coates, Klem and Connell (2004), Hu and Kuh (2001) define and measure two forms of engagement: ongoing engagement and reaction to challenge. Ongoing engagement refers to students' behaviour, emotions and thought processes

over the course of the school day. More specifically, behavioural engagement includes the amount of time students spend on work, the intensity of their concentration and effort, the tendency to stay on task and the propensity to initiate action when given the opportunity to do so. Emotional engagement is demonstrated when the students apply the learning concepts to their own life experiences and express the desire to learn the material, with heightened levels of positive emotion during the completion of an activity. Cognitive components of engagement include students' perception of how important it is to do well in school. Klem and Connell (2004) state, however, that reaction to challenge is a less frequently utilized component of engagement. Students' reaction to challenge refers to their coping strategies for dealing with a challenge, particularly whether they engage or withdraw when faced with a perceived failure in school.

Krause (2005) and Chapman (2003 a) consequently state that to make engagement meaningful teachers should prepare, support and empower students with strategies to build on positive engagement experiences and manage the conflicts which inevitably arise from attempts to engage with the challenges of classroom activities. Akey (2006), in her study on student engagement, supports this view by emphasising that teachers should create collaborative,supportive environments with high but achievable standards to enhance student engagement.

The literature reviewed clearly states that student engagement is a driving force behind learning and is important in the college and university experience because it is a positive influence for student learning and personal development. It is notable that engaging students in their learning is primarily the responsibility of the teacher, who becomes less an imparter of knowledge and

more a designer and facilitator of learning experience and opportunities. This suggests that student engagement enhances learning more than traditional methods of instruction; hence Smith, Sheppard, Johnson &Johnson(2005) state that the real challenge in college and university teaching is not covering the material for the student, it is uncovering the material with the student. Many researchers in their description of student engagement assert that students who actively engage in their learning are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores and thus become academically successful (Willingham, Pollack & Lewis, 2002; Jablon and Wilkinson, 2006; Klem and Connell, 2004; Finn and Voelkl, 1993)

2.3 Approaches to Assessing Student Engagement

In contrast to cognitive, content-based competencies, student engagement emphasizes the psychosocial dimensions relevant to the learning experience. These psychosocial dimensions include "the amount, type, and intensity of investment students make in their educational experiences" (Miller, Amsel, Kowalewski, Beins, Keith, & Peden, 2011).

Assessment of student engagement allows teachers to monitor and adjust teaching strategies as a function of changes in students' motivation, attitude and involvement in their own learning process. Miller et al (2011) further state that student engagement goes beyond cognitive outcomes or active learning to include attributes like intrinsic motivation, positive affect, persistence, effort and self-confidence. The complexity of student engagement mandates considerable variability in the means of assessing engagement in any given course. As Laird, Smallwood, Niskode-Dossett, &Garver (2009) state, student engagement can be monitored informally (formative assessment) and formally (summative assessment). Additionally, Jennings and Angelo (2006) contend that formative monitoring of engagement includes instructor

observation of student behaviour; administrative data such as attendance, assignment submissions, adherence to assignment guidelines, students' self-report of activity through diaries, focus groups or informal questionnaires. The teacher may utilise classroom observations of student behaviour as immediate indicators of engagement in response to a specific instructional strategy or class session.

According to Franklin (2005), a student who is engaged actively participates in class activities, utilises decision making or problem solving skills during a discussion or question and answer method of engagement. Franklin further states that the teacher can assess the students' investment in their learning activities and this may be demonstrated through increased use of mastery learning strategies. Assessment of students' psychosocial engagement with course learning material can be done through self-report data. Jennings et al (2006) suggests that the teacher can develop informal questionnaires to assess for specific aspects of engagement relevant to course topics, teaching strategies or instructional modes as well as to obtain feedback from students regarding their perceptions and attitudes towards teachers, peers and school. Student engagement assessment should according to Jennings et al (2006) include amount of time students spend with course material, frequency and quality of course-related interactions with faculty and peers, and the active use of learning resources. In formal measures of course engagement, varied definitions of student engagement have led to the emergence of a number of different scales designed to measure students' investment in a specific course for example the National Survey of Student Engagement.

According to Handelsmann, Briggs, Sullivan &Towler (2005) many studies assess engagement at the macro-level including projects and National Survey of Student Engagement. The survey

assesses engagement as a global quality that students have in relation to elements such as level of academic challenge and supportive campus environment. In a study conducted by Chapman (2003 b) other methods used to assess student engagement are revealed. These include checklists and summative rating scales completed by teachers, where students' willingness to participate in school tasks is assessed.

2.4 Alternative Approaches to Measuring Student Engagement

Coates (2006) emphasises that student engagement was developed, in part, to challenge conceptions of educational quality. In her study on the specification and measurement of student engagement Coates asserts that measuring studentengagement provides information about individuals' intrinsic involvement with their learning and the extent to which students are using educational opportunities todeveloptheir talent. Assessing student engagement in key educational processes provides an indirect measure of educational outcomes. Student engagement measures provide direct and coincident information about students' involvement, and such data can be used to evaluate and manage the quality and efficiency of university education in student learning outcomes.

Alternative approaches for measuring student engagement include administrative data that can be used to obtain broad information about students' involvement with learning. Such data can be easily sourced from information systems or attendance records but it makes assumptions about the behavioural nature of academic learning which might be difficult to sustain. More subtle measures can be obtained through direct naturalistic observation of participants, although field work of this kind can be highly intrusive, behaviourally-focused, resource-demanding and difficult to generalize (Chapman, 2003, b). Time or activity diaries can be also completed by

sampled students. Such diaries offer a means of gathering rich longitudinal type data from students, although they also place heavy demands on participants. Interviews and focus groups can provide a means of developing rich insight into student engagement, but are expensive, difficult to standardize and can provide unrepresentative information. A further possibility is continuous assessment of students' levels of engagement done on a daily to weekly basis (Coates, 2006). Yazzie-Mintz (2006) notes that time-on-task is often used as a measure of student engagement, following the logic that the more time spent on a particular task, the more engaged the student is with activity, but a critical aspect of the quality of engagement with any particular task is the importance students that place on that activity.

2.5 Teacher–Student/Student–Peer Interaction

Studies reveal that teachers are key players in fostering student engagement. They work directly with the students and typically are the most influential in a student's educational experience (Akey, 2006; Garcia-Reid, 2007).

Fletcher (2005) states that relationships between students and teachers in school, and among students themselves, are a critical factor in student engagement. This is especially true among students considered to be at risk and lacking positive faculty or other adult interactions. Smith et al. cited in McMahon and Portelli (2004) stress that engagement is not an aspect of the student psyche alone, therefore if students are to be engaged in their learning, other key players in the process, particularly the teachers and administrators, must be engaged as well. Smith; Johnson & Johnson (1998) further state that engaged students exist within a climate created by engaged and engaging teachers and administrators who operate within engaged schools located within communities. Consistent with the study by Smith et al. (1998), Yazzie-Mintz (2006) states in her

report on the 2006 High School Survey of Student Engagement that student engagement can be described as the student's relationship with the school community (teachers and peers), the structures (rules and facilities), the curriculum, and content.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005) state that a student's interaction within the classroom has considerable influence on his or her level of engagement with the larger institution; this interaction includes both the extent of a student's participation in peer culture and the frequency and quality of his interaction withthe teachers. Additionally, Singhcited in Mortar and Yusoff (2009) in the study on sustaining student engagement in classroom discourse warns that the teacher-student relationship is also important in influencing student participation. If the teacher is "authoritarian" and is seen by the students as the centre of all knowledge, then this creates a barrier to communication. If the student is not allowed to question critically the "teacher's words" then this is a monologue where there is no real communication because there may be no understanding and this makes the student not to engage. Sheard; Carbone & Hurst (2010) warns that with the advent of web technologies and widespread use of courseware resources provided via learning management systems, many students no longer see value in attending lectures. New communication technologies enable students to communicate via email rather than face-to-face, on campus.

Austin (1993) explains that increasing student and teacher interaction, both inside and outside of the classroom, fosters student development and increases the likelihood that students will be satisfied with their experience at the institution. Kuh and Hu (2001) found that student-teacher engagement encourages students to devote greater effort to other educationally purposeful activities. Similarly, studies by Volkwein, King and Terenzini (1986) and Salter and Persaud

(2003) show that teacher contact is directly and positively related to a student's academic performance. According to Kezar and Kinzie (2006) and Kuh (2009), the result of teacher–student contact is usually that teachers become role models, mentors and guides for continuous life-long learning.

In their study of the role of college faculty in student learning and engagement, Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) utilise the Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education proposed by Chickering and Gamson (1987), which outline seven engagement indicators predicted to directly influence the quality of student's learning and their educational experiences. Five of the principles advanced by Chickering and Gamson were directly relevant to the current study, namely encouraging contact between students and faculty (teachers), encouraging cooperation among students, using active learning techniques, communicating high expectations, and encouraging active learning. Also following Chickering and Gamson, a number of other researchers – in particular Astin (1993), Tinto (1993; 2000) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) have documented the strong association of both formal and informal teacher–student contact to enhance student learning. Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) further state that these interactions influenced the degree to which students became engaged.

Relationships between students and teachers, and the climate in the classroom, are positively associated with levels of student engagement and academic competence. Many researchers contend that most students will not do their best in class when they feel that teachers do not have an interest in them or care about their future. Students can sense whether the teacher cares or is simply "going through the motions" (Jones, 2008). Students need to feel that teachers are involved with them, know and care about them. It is very difficult to structure classroom learning

to incorporate the interests and experience of all students when teachers do not know their students (Klem& Connell, 2004; Akey, 2006;Crosling, Heagney& Thomas 2009).

In the same way, Palmer cited in Reyes (2007) states that to engage students in the classroom the instructor must take enough interest in them to know them. The students will in turn engage theinstructor in learning interaction. The studentsalso need to feel that they can make some important decisions for themselves, and that the work they are being asked to do has some relevance to their lives, present or future; this is what is referred to as autonomy support. Hu and Kuh (2000) emphasise that an engaging university environment leads to higher levels of student engagement both in and out of the classroom, although with some studies revealing that faculty talk dominates between 80% and 98% of the time in most college classrooms, conventional wisdom would suggest that in such an environment collaborative learning and active learning are quite limited. Students who engage in collaborative learning tend to invest more quality time in learning and enjoy these experiences more than traditional lecture mode (Tinto, 1997).

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) argue that while many students must work to cover college costs and acquire career-related experiences, it is reasonable to assume that, because time is limited, working during college likely reduces the amount of time available for interacting with faculty. From a different perspective, Umbach, Padgett and Pascarella (2005) claim that relatively few studies have examined whether working inhibits student–teacher relationships, in or out of the classroom, or the amount of effort students put into their studies. Tinto (2009) suggests that students should be provided with clear and high expectations, academic and social support, and with feedback that also serves as an early warning for teachers to step up support and student involvement through learning activities such as problem-based learning that stimulates student-

faculty and student-peer interaction. Studies by Kuh (2009) and Anderson (1999; 2004) revealed a range of teacher–student interactions, among which were asking questions, discussions on subject matter and social events, discussions on counselling, feedback on academic performance, participation in a research project and work committee, discussions relating to a course and its demands, e-mail and internet, and phone contact.

Akey (2006) and Fioriello (2009) state that the student–peer interaction is the level of interaction between students in the classroom activities that are designed to promote learning. Collaboration among peers occurs when students work together in pairs or small groups to solve a problem, complete a project and achieve a common goal. The student's collaboration with others in solving problems or mastering difficult tasks prepares the student to deal with messy, unscripted problems he will encounter daily, both during and after college. It is noted from above studies that the researchers are in general agreement that interaction both between teacher and student and between student and peers has a dramatic effect on student learning and engagement, thus increasing academic success.

2.6 Enhancing Student Motivation and Engagement

Motivation and engagement have been described as students' energy and drive to engage, learn, work effectively and achieve to their potential at school, and the behaviours that follow from this energy and drive. Motivation is about energy and direction, the reasons for behaviour, why we do what we do. Engagement describes energy in action; the connection between person and activity (Ainley, 2004). A variety of factors contribute to motivation and engagement; these include the nature of the pedagogy students receive, relationships they have with their teachers, parents' attitudes towards and expectations for their children, peers, class climate, school culture

and structure, socio-demographic status, gender and age (Martin, 2008). Similarly, Akey (2006) states that student motivation is also significantly influenced by a supportive network of relationships. A supportive caring social environment where teachers show interest in students' lives in and out of school motivates students and promotes engagement in learning. Akey (2006)further states that, to motivate students, standards and expectations must, however, be clear and genuinely achievable academically. Students are most likely to be academically engaged when goals are set at an appropriate level – one that challenges them and allows them to experience a sense of competence and accomplishment.

Skinner and Belmont (1993) also assert that teacher involvement includes items that tap teacher's affection (liking, appreciation and enjoyment of the student), attunement (understanding, sympathy and knowledge about the student), dedication of resources (aid, time and energy) and dependability (availability in case of need). This involvement is essential as it facilitates the teacher's adjustment of teaching strategies and so motivates the student to engage in learning.

Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) compared NSSE data from 137 schools, which included 42,259 student questionnaires and 4,337 faculty questionnaires. Student questionnaires examined engagement levels, while faculty questionnaires examined faculty attitudes and behaviours. Umbach and Wawrzynski found that attitudes of faculty members can have a significant effect on the college student experience, in and out of the classroom. Faculty members' behaviours and attitudes markedly affected students and the level of engagement with university learning. The findings suggested a significant relationship between positive and affirming instructor attitudes

and higher levels of student engagement. This suggests that faculty members play an important role in student learning and engagement, contributing to a positive college experience.

Brewster and Fager (2000) contend that to enhance student motivation teachers should make students feel welcome and supported and respond positively to student questions. Faculty should work to build quality relationships with students, especially those considered to be at risk and without other positive adult interaction; this is a critical factor in student engagement that allows students to foster a sense of connection with school. When a student completes an assignment that does not meet the expected criteria the teacher should give her or him one or more opportunities to tackle the task again, with guidelines on how to achieve the desired result. The teacher should also evaluate the student's work as soon as possible after project completion and be sure that feedback is clear and constructive. To enhance motivation and engagement, the student should be evaluated based on the task, not in comparison to other students.

The school should also make student motivation a priority by creating a school culture that emphasises the importance of academic achievement and designing schoolwide symbols to show students that learning is valuable and that the entire staff is invested in students' success (Brewster and Fager, 2000). Voke (2002), in her study on motivating students to learn, emphasises that when those close to the child nurture her sense of self-worth, competence, autonomy and self-efficacy, the child comes to view herself as "competent and able", and her freedom to engage in academically challenging pursuits and capacity to tolerate and cope with failure are greatly increased.

2.7 Strategies Employed to Foster Student Engagement

According to Crosling, Heagney & Thomas (2009), higher education institutions have traditionally offered new students a 'Welcome' or 'Freshers' week on arrival, using teacher-centred methods of communication to convey the status of the institution and overload students with information. More recently, there has been greater recognition of the need to induct students into the wider higher education environment through more student-centred strategies, to enable students to learn about and understand the expectations and culture of higher education. Crosling et al. further state that some institutions are now introducing "longer and thinner" induction that starts earlier and last beyond a week. This, they say, provides a more effective opportunity for new students to assimilate and make sense of information provided, to socialize with staff, peers and existing students through a range of activities and to feel that they belong to a higher education community at their institution. This facilitates early engagement, which could include provision of timetables, course handbooks, reading material, and summer schools, and students benefit as they are prepared for their course.

Student engagement can be fostered through staff–student and student–student interaction. Encouraging contact between students and faculty is the first principle of Chickering and Gamson's influential work on effective teaching and learning. Chickering and Gamson (1987) identified several practices undertaken by university faculty and personnel that are known to lead to higher student engagement in undergraduate education. Fostering an environment that encourages contact between student and faculty was recognized as a "good practice" and is important to the success of an engaged university. A study by Kuh (2003) using the National Survey of Student Engagement instrument agrees that students are more engaged with the university as a whole if there is accessible contact with their instructors and professors in and out

of the classroom. They also found that prompt and early feedback by the instructor to the student is a good practice in undergraduate education. Prompt feedback is also a common expectation of the average college student (Kuh, 2005, 2006). It is equally important that classroom instructors communicate high expectations for student academic performance and learning, while developing active learning among all students in the classroom. Chickering and Gamson (1987) described active learning as the process of talking, writing, relating to and reflecting on what is being learned, rather than passively receiving information. In essence, core components of active learning are student activity and engagement in the learning process.

Studies reveal that it is crucial for the teacher to know the students, their needs, aspirations, motivations and subgroup differences, and to develop targeted strategies so as to maximize possibilities for engagement. In large lectures student interaction can be fostered through question and answer sessions and a range of interactive activities which help to break down potentially alienating barriers created by the large group anonymity syndrome. (Astin, 1997; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Krause, 2006). The college classroom serves as the focal point for student experiences and interaction with teachers and peers, therefore managers and faculty have a responsibility to provide classroom settings that are mentally stimulating to foster student engagement. Faculty must promote student engagement by embracing the principles underlying the good educational practices that emphasise the central theme of the classroom as student learning and give the students good reasons to be part of the learning community (Koljatic & Kuh, 2001; Krause, 2005; Jones, 2008; Crosling et al. 2009).

Diekelmann (2005) examined the concept of engagement in the classroom with nursing students and teacher as co-creators of a learning environment. Nursing instructors, who reported levels of

boredom while teaching in the classroom, also had students in their classrooms who were not engaged in the learning process. For positive student outcomes in the classroom, teachers must be willing to explore new processes and change the environment of the classroom. Diekelmann (2005) believes that classroom engagement and learning increases in classrooms in which teachers actively listen to their students. The ability to foster engagement in the classroom is more than a list of techniques; rather, it is a narrative pedagogy in which teacher and student are co-creating and learning together. Teachers who nurture engagement in the classroom will do more than teach what they already know. They will encourage and engage themselves and their students to embrace a narrative pedagogy. This narrative pedagogy encourages dialogue and thinking with peers and students in an environment in which learning and knowledge is also sought outside the classroom. This will not only engage students while they are students in higher education, but encourage them to become life-long learners.

Coates (2006) states that the teacher should produce resources to help students learn about engagement, expose them to a variety of engagement activities, and transform passive engagement into other more productive styles of interaction with learning. Coates (2006) further encourages teachers to give students feedback promptly and to take student's feedback seriously to enhance student engagement. The student responsive curriculum is a means to promote student engagement. The curriculum in a broad sense, or the teaching and learning programme, provides an ideal forum for approaches and strategies that encourage students to engage both academically and socially, and to build institutional commitment (Crosling et al. 2009; Akey, 2006).

Research by Handelsman et al. (2005) revealed four factors of classroom engagement which have been reliable indices of student engagement and are actually important in fostering student engagement in the classroom: (a) skills engagement, which refers to the degree to which students practice skills that promote learning; (b) participation or interactive engagement, which refers to engagement that occurs in relation to others; (c) emotional engagement, which refers to the degree to which students internalize class information and experiences; (d) performance engagement, which refers to student engagement directed towards performance on graded materials and includes factors such as the importance students place on getting good grades and doing well on tests.

Students should be allowed to participate and share information in class to help them learn and become engaged. Teachers should also assign challenging but achievable tasks for all students, including those at risk and needing remedial support (Brewster &Fager, 2000). Similarly, Morse, Anderson, Christenson & Lehr (2004) emphasise that teachers should monitor students who have poor attendance and poor academic performance and should present tasks that are moderately challenging and at different levels of difficulty so that all students are actively involved. Students become more involved if work is interesting, challenging, and connected to learning (Jones, 2009). Morse et al. further state that principals play a role in providing practices that provide support resources and information to students who are at risk of experiencing learning difficulties. The studies emphasise that teachers should ensure that course material relates to students' lives and highlight ways in which learning can be applied in real-life.

Drawing connections between information taught and real life, such as everyday social issues and personal concerns of the age group of students, is highly effective in engaging students in the

lesson. Research indicates that students value learning that they consider meaningful, relevant, valuable and worthy of their efforts (Akey, 2006; Osborne, 2000; Irvin, 2007; Skinner & Belmont, 1991; Brewster & Fager, 2000).

Studies reveal that to promote student engagement teachers should allow students an opportunity to develop their own learning goals and in the process of their learning ascertain whether they are meeting those goals – and if not met, discuss strategies that might be used to ensure that the goals are attained (Tannen, 2007; Morse et al. 2004). Akey (2006) suggests that a teacher can create either an end of the year academic goal for the class as a whole or a specific goal for each individual student – cautioning, however, the goal should be challenging but attainable. According to Tannen (2007), Jones (2008) and Crosling et al. (2009), strengthening student engagement necessitates cooperative and collaborative learning in which students are organised into structured discussion groups and work on tasks that engage cognitive aspects and promote reflective thinking. Peer teaching and class presentations should be encouraged to improve students' communication, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Active student involvement in learning is more engaging than listening to a lecture. Moreover, varying instructional strategies add interest and increase engagement, although even the most exciting activities lose their appeal if done continually. Voke (2002) stresses that all students must have opportunities to participate in the decision-making processes of the school and to regulate and direct theirown learning. Students shouldbe encouraged to take responsibility for being self-determined and autonomous , for when choices are given to students, the evidence is clear that student motivation, learning and performance are enhanced. The school should be physically and psychologically safe to promote student engagement.

A study by Devlin (2008) indicates that student engagement can be fostered using online and electronic equipment in the classroom. In contrast, Krause (2005) argues that putting lecture notes on the web is not a substitute for effective lecturing where student engagement is encouraged by integrating activities such as problem-solving into the lecture timeslot. In the same way, Berque (2004) asserts that when teachers use technology such as PowerPoint to enhance their presentations, students are rarely engaged in interactive learning activities – which require moving beyond a presentation to a new concept called interaction system.

Kuh (2001) states that providing opportunities and incentives for students to be engaged in educationally diverse and purposeful activities is highly related to increased acquisition of knowledge, openness to diversity and other associated cognitive and personal gains. In contrast Brooks et al., as cited in Brewster and Fager (2000) caution that rewards should only be given when they are clearly deserved, because giving a prize for minimally successful work sends the message that minimum effort is acceptable and the reward then becomes meaningless. In the same way, Jones (2008) states that schools and teachers need to reflect on the appropriate use of rewards that will increase the level of student engagement. Coates (2007) in his study on a model of online and general campus-based student engagement asserts that students tend to see online systems as a significant part of their campus-based education, as playing a formative role in their knowledge construction activities, as legitimating and contextualizing their learning activities, and as providing broad forms of support as such online systems enhance student engagement.

2.8 Obstacles to Student Engagement

Voke (2002) asserts that despite the research on promoting student engagement many schools do not provide students with a learning environment that foster it. Numerous obstacles make it

difficult for schools to engage students; without sufficient time, for example, teachers cannot prepare simulations or organise projects. Educating students for engagement may also require greater financial investment as teachers seek to supplement the school's standard materials and resources. Large classrooms and traditional methods of teaching hinder student–teacher contact and do not facilitate student engagement. Too much focus on tests can lead teachers to adopt a narrowed curriculum, dampening students' interest and intrinsic motivation to the subject or learning. Studies reveal that students who feel alone and isolated from social relationships that would enhance learning do not engage; thus lack of learning relationships hinders student engagement.

Developmental factors and students' perceptions about their own abilities also play into their level of engagement in learning. The older students are, the less likely they will be to take risks and engage themselves fully in activities in which they are not sure they will succeed, and failure following high effort appears to carry more negative implications, especially for their self-concept of ability. Students' attitudes about their capabilities and their interpretations of success and failure further affect their willingness to engage themselves in learning. As students grow older, their motivation to engage in learning may be influenced by their social group (Brewster &Fager, 2000; Jones, 2008).Skinner and Belmont cited in Brewster and Fager (2000) state that the decrease in student engagement may be a result of unmotivated students or of school practices that fail to sufficiently interest and engage all learners. Hughes and Pace (2003) used data from the NSSE database to examine student retention and attrition. They reported significant relationships between student engagement and persistence as well as between student engagement and academic performance. They also found that students who reported experiencing positive interactions with faculty advisors were less likely to withdraw from school.

Additional findings revealed that a large percentage of students, who withdrew from college, reported that they never made a class presentation or worked with other students on class projects.

2.9 Conclusion

Engaged behaviour is demonstrated by an eagerness to enter into a task and a quickness to settle into a concentrated effort to think critically and reflectively about the activity. Because the task is of personal interest and relevance, the individual is unwilling to abandon the task easily; on the contrary, an engaged learner will invest extra time and energy to persevere even when faced with obstacles and frustration. Student engagement influences the quality of learning as well as personal development in students, and in turn, student engagement is influenced by the characteristics of students, teachers, teaching strategies and school environment (Kuh, Cruce & Gonyea, 2005).

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures used in conducting this study. It includes the study design, study population, study setting, sample size, sampling methods, criteria for selection of sample, and data collection instrument. Data management and analysis, ethical issues, and plan for dissemination of results are also discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Research Approach

A quantitative approach which is guided by the traditional positivist paradigm was adopted in this study. According to Polit and Beck (2004), traditional, positivist 'scientific method' refers to a general set of orderly, disciplined procedures used to acquire information. A quantitative approach was the best approach in this study because the research question dictates that the data collected would best be analysed from a statistical perspective. The emphasis then was on measurable quantitative information, which would generate findings that are grounded in reality. Quantitative research method focuses on measuring a range of social and individual objects, events and processes (Polit & Beck 2004).

3.3 Research Design

A non-experimental, descriptive exploratory research design was used in this study. According to Polit and Beck (2004) a descriptive exploratory design is employed when little is known about the topic, and provides information about the phenomenon as it naturally occurs. In the context of this study, the views of post-basic nursing students on student engagement had not been documented before at the selected campus or in South Africa, especially in nursing education;

therefore a descriptive exploratory design was suitable for this study. This is a new area of interest in nursing education.

3.4 Research Setting

As stated by Polit and Beck (2004), research settings are more specific places where data collection occurs. The setting can influence the way people behave or feel and how they respond to questions. this study was conducted in a natural setting where participants study, namely one of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing campuses situated in eThekwini district. This campus is designated to offer post-basic programmes because it is considered affluent in human and material resources and can fulfil the needs of the post-basic students. The duration of post-basic programmes is one year, and the campus has two intakes per year, in March and September. This facility provides for the five post-basic programmes targeted in this study, namely, child nursing science, critical care nursing science, midwifery and neonatal nursing science, orthopaedic nursing science, and operating theatre nursing science.

3.5 Population

Polit and Beck (2004) define the population as the total set from which the individuals or units of the study are drawn. The target population is an entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. In this study, the target population was 210 post-basic nursing students admitted in March and September to one KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing selected campus in eThekwini District. The students are seconded by the various hospitals in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga to undertake post-basic courses in Child Nursing Science, Critical Care Nursing Science, Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science, Orthopaedic Nursing Science, and Operating Theatre Nursing Science.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Technique

According to Polit and Beck (2004), the overriding consideration in assessing a sample in a quantitative study is its representativeness. A representative sample is one whose key characteristics closely resemble those of the population; if this is not the case the external validity of the study is at risk. In this study, probability sampling was used, thus each student in the population had the same probability of being selected. A stratified random sampling was used, and the desired number of students was selected proportionally according to the population size of the post-basic programme. The number of questionnaires distributed was 210 and 179 were duly completed and returned. The response rate was 85%, therefore the total sample size was calculated to be 179.From 179participants,51% (n=91) were in the March intake and 49% (n=88) were in the September intake. The sample comprised post-basic students from the Child Nursing Science, Critical Care Nursing Science, Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science, Orthopaedic Nursing Science, and Operating Theatre Nursing Science programmes. The participants were numbered, and a table of random number was used to get the required sample size (Polit and Beck, 2004).

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

Polit and Beck (2004) state that in a study that adopts a positivist paradigm, data is gathered by conforming to a specified plan, using formal instruments to collect the necessary information. The data was therefore collected by using a well-structured and ordered self-reporting questionnaire. The advantage of using questionnaires in this study was that confidentiality would be ensured. It was quicker and easier to collect large amounts of information from a reasonably large sample using this format (Polit and Beck, 2004). A list of constructs was generated that would define the variables of interest in this study. The questionnaire was adapted from two

instruments (SASSE, 2009; NSSE, 1998) designed to measure student engagement. The items were grouped into demographic data, academic engagement, behavioural engagement, and emotional/affective engagement. The responses to items were scored using a four-point Likert scale of strongly agree (4) agree (3) disagree (2) strongly disagree (1).

3.8 Reliability and Validity

Maree (2010), Polit and Beck (2004) posit that validity and reliability serve as a means of ensuring the rigour of the research process and research findings.

3.8.1 Reliability of the Instrument

According to Maree (2010), reliability is the extent to which a measuring instrument is repeatable and consistent. This means that the same instrument, if used at different times or administered to different subjects from the same population, will yield similar findings. Polit and Beck (2004) state that the reliability of the instrument can be assessed in different ways. In the context of this study, reliability of the instrument was checked by a test–retest method. The researcher administered the same instrument to a sample of ten individuals on two occasions; and thereafter the first set of answers was compared with the second set, as advised by Polit and Beck (2004). The group of one-year midwifery programme students was used to test the reliability of the instrument because they were not part of the study. The comparison procedure was performed objectively by calculating the correlation co-efficient, which was 0.82. According to Maree (2010), correlation co-efficient of at least 0.8 is regarded as acceptable.

3.8.2 Validity of the Instrument

Maree (2010) defines validity of an instrument as the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure. Content validity was used to check whether the instrument accurately reflects the specific intended domain of content. As stated by Politand Beck (2004), content validity is concerned with the sampling adequacy of the content area being measured. Expert judgements can be used to determine a content validity index, which provides input from different experts on relevance (Polit& Beck, 2004).This method was utilized by obtaining the expertise of a panel from the School of Nursing in the area of research and nursing education with the aim of ensuring that the items in the instrument adequately covered the critical content and measured what it intended to measure. Research objectives, questions, and concepts from the conceptual framework were matched with the items on the instrument. See Appendix1.

3.9 Data Collection Process

After obtaining permission from the Campus Principal, arrangements were made with the Heads of Departments to collect data from the students. A special meeting was held with the students during lunch time on their lecture day. The purpose of the study was explained and all their ethical rights. The students were requested to sign the consent form, which was kept separate from the questionnaires they had to complete. Once they had given informed consent, the questionnaires were distributed and it was explained that completing the questionnaires would take a maximum of 30 minutes. The researcher was in the room to assist those who required some form of assistance and to answer those who had questions. A box was provided for the participants to drop completed questionnaires. The process of data collection took about two weeks to accommodate all the post-basic students, because their lecture days were not on the same day. The researcher personally collected the completed questionnaires.

3.10 Data Analysis

The purpose of analysis is to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studied and tested, and conclusions drawn (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche&Delport, 2009). Statistical procedures are used to analyse quantitative data. Therefore, in order to capture the data, a computer statistical package (SPSS Version 15.0) was used. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. This made it possible to arrange numerical data in an orderly and readable manner and to estimate population parameters**.**In this study, frequency tabulations, cross-tabulations for categorical variables while ordinal variables were summarized by group, using summary statistics such as median, inter-quartile range and range. Non-parametric statistics were used to determine differences between the five programmes. Likert scale ordinal variables were compared within the five programmes using Kruskal Wallis tests. Binary or nominal variables were compared within five programmes using Pearson's Chi Square test. SPSS version 15.0 or Intercooled Stata Version10 were used for analysis. Ap value <0.05 was considered statistically significant. A statistician was consulted for guidance on how to analyse data.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

A research application form accompanied by a Research Proposal was submitted to the Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for ethical approval. Permission to conduct research was requested from the Department of Health, KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing and from the Principal of the campus offering post-basic courses. Accurate and complete information about the study was given to students so that they fully understood the investigation and could consequently make a decision about their possible participation. The students were informed about voluntary participation and the right to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time

without intimidation. The researcher was extremely cognisant of the need for confidentiality, particularly because students would not be at ease to respond about their teachers. Therefore it was explained to the students that their privacy and identity would be safeguarded and they were requested not to write their names on the questionnaires but to write false names on the consent form to disguise their identity. The students were also informed that information would be handled with strict confidentiality and data obtained would be only accessible to the researcher and would be used for the purpose of this research project. The researcher reassured the students that they would not be coerced for participating in the study and that the contents of the questionnaire were known only to the researcher, and that they should therefore be free in answering the questionnaire.

The students were informed about their anonymity and it was explained that nobody, including the researcher, would be able to identify the participants in relation to the questionnaires. The study did not present any risks related to the physical, psychological, social or legal aspect of the participants. The study did not have any benefits for the participants but the information attained could be used to improve the teaching and learning process in the campus as well as nursing education nationwide. An information sheet explaining the purpose of the research was attached to the consent form. A written and signed informed consent was obtained from the participants before the commencement of the study. None of the campus staff were allowed into the room during explanation about the study, signing of informed consent form or answering of the questionnaire, so as to protect the participants.

According to De Vos et al. (2009), informed consent ensures the full knowledge and cooperation of subjects, while also resolving, or at least relieving, any possible tension, aggression, resistance or insecurity of the subjects.

3.12 Data Management

Data were stored in a locked cupboard in my research supervisor's office in the University of KwaZulu-Natal and will be shredded after five years. Captured data were kept on a computer with a special login password. Data were used merely for the purpose of this study.

Chapter 4
Quantitative Research Findings

This chapter contains the analysis of data and presentation of the results. The aim of the study was to analyse and describe student engagement in a post-basic nursing education programme in one KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing selected campus in the EThekwini District. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 15.0. Data was coded, entered, analysed and verified by the researchers. The data was analysed by tallying and tabulation. Data analysis (statistics) was verified by a qualified statistician. Data was described using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and was also presented in the form of graphs and tables from the SPSS programme. This data takes the descriptive as opposed to the inferred meaning of the possible relationships.

4.1 Sample Realization

4.1.1 Total Sample

The target population for this study was 210 post-basic nursing students. The number of questionnaires distributed was 210, and 179 were duly completed and returned. The campus offering post-basic programmes has two intakes per year; of the 179 participants, 51% (n=91) were in the March intake and 49% (n=88) were in the September intake. The response rate was 85%; therefore the total sample size was calculated to be 179. Data reflected that the total sample, 100% (n=179), comprised 22% (n=39) Child Nursing Science students, 24% (n=43) Critical Care Nursing Science students, 21% (n=37) Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science students, 15% (n=27) Orthopaedic Nursing Science students, and 18% (n=32) Operating Theatre Nursing Science students. See Figure 1.

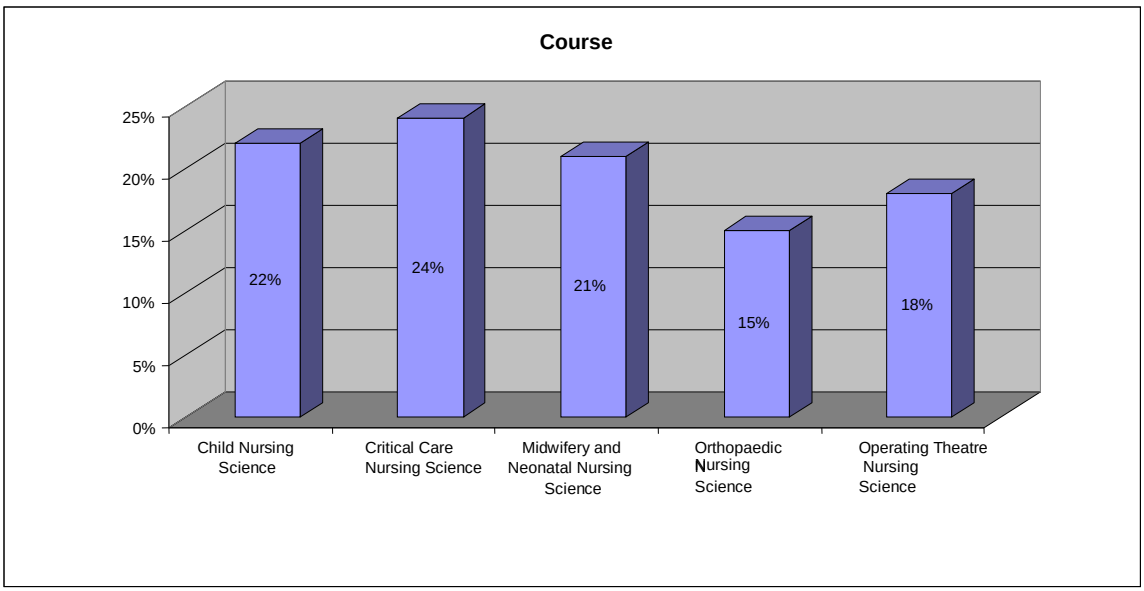

Figure 1: Courses / Areas of Specialisation

4.1.2 Demographic Data

Age and years of experience

The findings revealed that the students were matured, with the mean of 40.49 and a standard deviation of 8.426 because of the differences in the ages of participants with the minimum age as 25 and maximum age 58. Years of experience ranged from 3 to 32, with the mean of 13.80 and standard deviation of 6.950. See Table 1.

Table 1: Age and years of experience

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Age in years	176	25	58	40.49	8.426
Years of experience in nursing service	179	3	32	13.80	6.950

Gender

Historically, the percentage of female students in nursing programmes is much higher than that of male students; of the 179 students who participated in this study, 94% (n=169) were females and 6% (n=10) were males. See Figure 2.

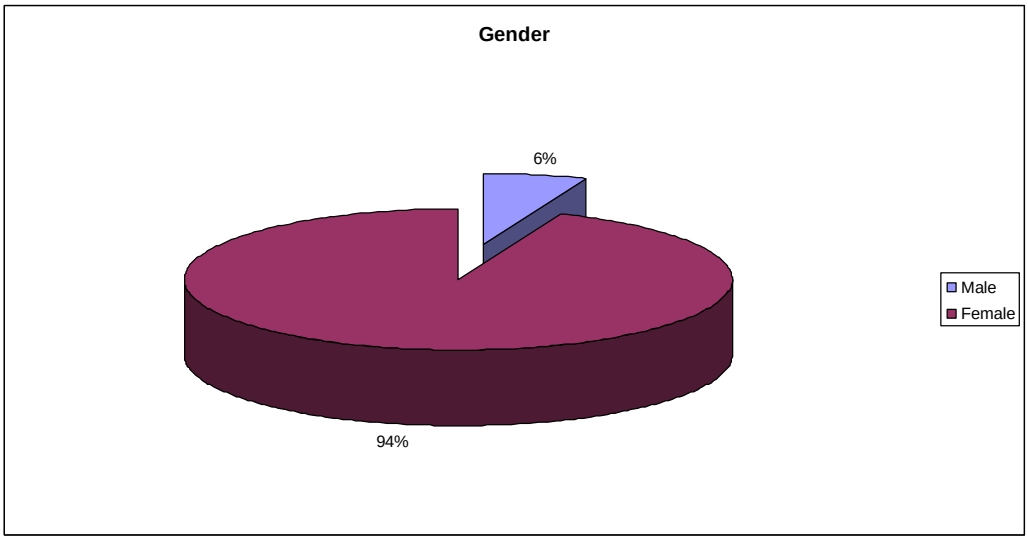

Figure 2: Gender

Duration on the programme

The duration of the post-basic programme is one calendar year, according to the South African Nursing Council Regulation 212. In line with this regulation, data reflected that 51% (n=91) of the participants had been in the programme for twelve months, while 49% (n=88) had been in the programme for eight months and were left with four months to complete the programme/course. See Figure 3.

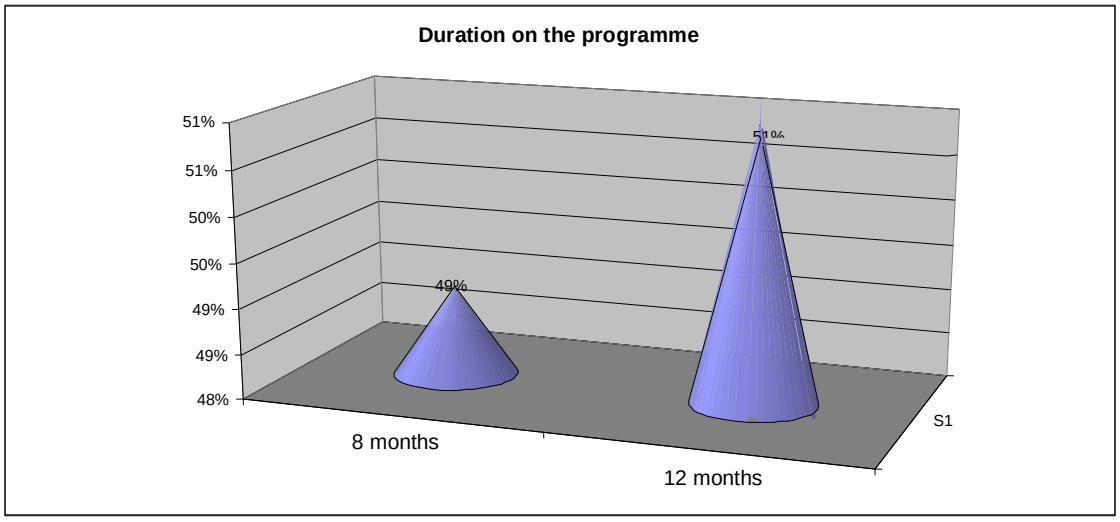

Figure 3: Duration of enrolment in the programme

English as home language

The literature shows that student engagement is influenced by the language used at home and the language used as a medium of instruction. Thefindingsinthis study revealed that only 20.1% (n=36) of the participants had English as their home language and 79.9% (n=143) had English as their second language. See Table 2.

Table 2: Home language

English as home language	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	36	20.1%
No	143	79.9%
Total	179	100%

Reasons for participating in post-basic studies

The majority of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that wanting to get skills to use in the workplace was their reason for engaging in post-basic studies(96%; n=172); 94%; (n=168) strongly agreed or agreed that they wanted a post-basic qualification; 59% (n=106) strongly agreed or agreed that money incentive was their reason for engaging in post-basic studies; and 57% (n=102) strongly agreed or agreed that their reason for engaging in post-basic studies was because they enjoyed being in school and furthering their studies. See Table 3.

Table 3: Reasons for participating in post-basic studies

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Wanted a post-basic qualification	98 (54.7%)	70 (39%)	4 (2.2%)	7 (3.9%)	179 (99.8%)
Wanted to get skills to use in my workplace	150 (83.7%)	22 (12.2%)	5 (2.7%)	2 (1.1%)	179 (99.7%)
Enjoy being in school and furthering my studies	30 (16.75%)	72 (40%)	30 (16.75%)	47 (26%)	179 (99.5%)
Because of monetary incentive	35 (19.5%)	71 (39.6%)	25 (13.9%)	48 (26.8%)	179 (99.8%)

4.2 Findings on Various Forms of Engagement

4.2.1 Emotional Engagement

Engagement with the college

Studies show that schools that engage students promote a sense of belonging and consequently student engagement; in this study most participants, 63% (n=113) strongly agreed or agreed that if given a chance may come back to study in this particular college; 90% (n=161) agreeing and

strongly agreeing that they like their college; 89% (n=160) expressing commitment to the college and 78% (n=139) indicating that they feel as an important part of the college. 161 strongly agreed or agreed that they cared about their nursing college. This indicates that the participants were emotionally connected with the college. See Table 4.

Table 4: Engagement with the college

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
If I could be given a chance to choose a nursing college to do my post-basic course, I will choose this one again.	38 (21%)	75 (42%)	38 (21%)	28 (16%)	179 (100%)
I care about my nursing college.	35 (19.5%)	126 (70.3%)	16 (9%)	0 (0%)	177 (98.8%)
I am committed to my nursing college.	122 (68.1%)	38 (21%)	16 (9%)	3 (1.7%)	179 (99.8%)
I feel an important part of my nursing college.	31 (17.3%)	108 (60.3%)	25 (13.9%)	12 (6.7%)	176 (98.2%)

Boredom in class

In this study, emotional engagement was measured in terms of engaging with learning material and active engagement in class. Although a few participants (n=44; 25%) indicated that they were bored in class and found learning material irrelevant (n=26; 15%), most participants felt that material for learning was interesting (n=129; 72%) and relevant (n=153; 86%) therefore they were not bored in class. In support of these findings, the literature indicates that students actively

engage themselves with work that builds on their interest and prior knowledge as well as relate to real-life situations. See Table 5.

Table 5: Boredom in class

Boredom in class	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Material for learning not interesting	14 (8%)	30 (17%)	57 (31.8%)	72 (40%)	173 (96.8%)
Material for learning not relevant	16 (8.9%)	10 (5.58%)	73 (40.78%)	80 (44.69%)	179 (99.95%)

4.2.2 Drivers of Engagement

Active learning

One important educational practice shown to be a driver of student engagement is the incorporation of active learning techniques. In support of this, the findings of this study indicated that a reasonable number of participants were actively engaged in their learning. This was reflected by their ratingof activities that promoted active learning – for example, making a class presentation (n=175; 98%), participating in a community-based project as part of the course (n=116; 65%), discusses marks and assignments with the teacher (n=121; 68%) and prepared two or more drafts of their assignment before submitting it (n=105; 59%). See Table 6.

Table 6: Active learning

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Made a class presentation	120 (67%)	55 (30.7%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)	178 (99.4%)
Participated in community-based project as part of the course	70 (39.1%)	46 (25.7%)	13 (7.3%)	43 (24%)	172 (96.1%)
Discussed marks or assignment with the teacher	22 (12.3)%	99 (55.3%)	29 (16.2%)	28 (15.6%)	178 (99.4%)
Prepared two or more drafts of an assignment before submitting it	45 (25.1%)	60 (33.5%)	42 (23.5 %)	30 (16.8%)	177 (98.9%)

4.2.3 Cognitive Engagement

Learning Coursework

Frederick et al. (2004) believe that cognitive engagement draws on the idea of investment; it incorporates thoughtfulness and willingness to exert the effort necessary to comprehend complex ideas and master difficult skills. Studies also reveal that the more students study a subject as part of their coursework, the more they know about it. Additionally, the more students perceived their institution to emphasise the importance of scholarship, competence, and critical thinking, the more they desired to learn independently, pursue intellectual ideas, and gain knowledge in an array of disciplines. In other words, the higher the intellectual expectations set by the institution,

The more engaged students tended to be. In line with this, the findings of this study indicate that (n=168; 94%) of the participants strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their programme emphasised the importance of learning coursework. However, 5% and 1% (6%) strongly

disagreed or disagreed that their programme emphasised the importance of learning coursework. See Figure 4.

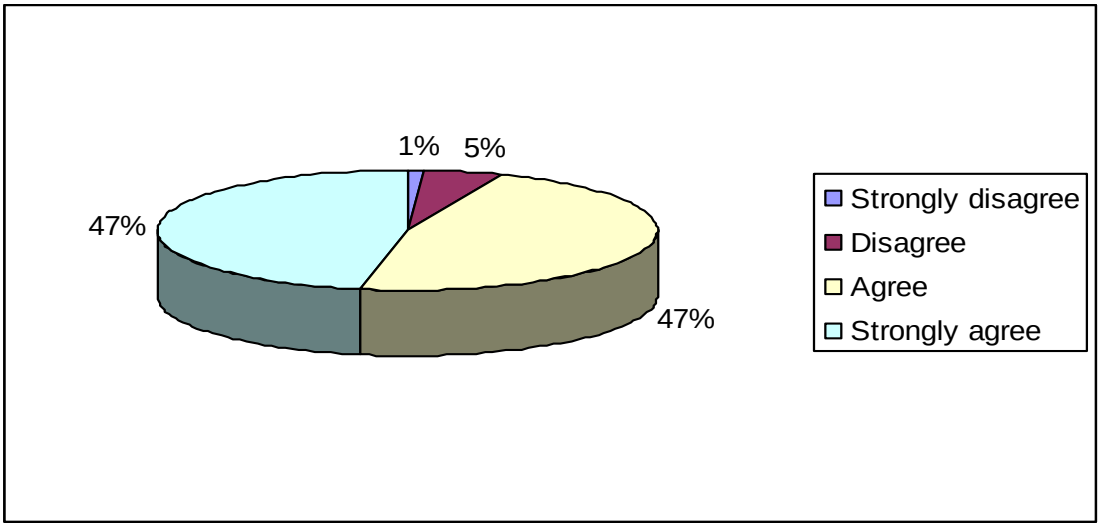

Figure 4: Learning Coursework

Engagement in higher order learning

Studies on improvement on student engagement found that while students' attitudes to learning varied greatly, those who engaged in higher forms of learning such as analysing, synthesising and evaluating tended to be most engaged. In this study, most participants were engaged in higher order learning and critical thinking. For example they were involved in analysing basic elements of an idea or theory (n=146; 82%); making judgement about issue of information, agreements or methods (n132; 74%); applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in solutions (n=94; 52%), learning from discussing questions that have no clear answers (n=154; 86%); examining strengths and weaknesses of own view son a topic or an issue (n164; 92%) and completing a task that required a lot of thinking and mental effort. See Table 7. (Some of the totals are not 100% because of the missing values).

Table 7: Engagement in Higher Order Learning

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Analysing basic element of an idea experience or theory	42 (23.5%)	125 (70%)	1 (0.6%)	8 (4.5%)	179 (100%)
Synthesising and organising ideas information into complex interpretations	29 (16.2%)	117 (65.4%)	11 (6.1%)	20 (11.1%)	177 (98.8%)
Making judgements about issue of information, agreements or methods	17 (9.5%)	115 (64.2%)	18 (10%)	27 (15%)	177 (98.8%)
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in solutions	42 (23.4%)	52 (29%)	2 (1.1%)	4 (2.2%)	100 (55.8%)
Examining strengths or weaknesses of your own views on a topic or an issue	42 (23.4%)	122 (68.1%)	0 (0%)	14 (7.8%)	178 (99.4%)
Learning from discussing questions that have no clear answers	55 (30.7%)	99 (55.3%)	6 (3.4%)	17 (9.4%)	177 (98.8%)
Completing a task that required a lot of thinking and mental effort	85 (47.5%)	90 (50.2%)	0 (0%)	3 (1.7%)	178 (99.4%)

Active learning strategies

While teachers become the facilitators of learning, the students, in turn have to actively engage in the learning process with their teachers, peers and subject content. From the findings of this study it was found that most participants were involved in learning activities that promote student engagement, however, 94% (n=169) of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that a lecture method was used to teach them. Conversely, literature reveals that most students find current teaching methods such as lectures to be less engaging. See Table 8.

Table 8: Active learning strategies

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Engaged on lecture	63 (35%)	106 (59%)	4 (2.2%)	3 (1.7%)	176 (98%)
Engaged on teacher-student shared responsibility	70 (39.1%)	102 (57%)	5 (2.7%)	1 (0.6%)	178 (99.4%)
Engaged on small group activities, discussions, role play	23 (12.8%)	69 (38.5%)	6 (3.4%)	2 (1.1%)	100 (55.8%)
Engaged on student presentations	107 (59.7%)	67 (37%)	4 (2.2%)	1 (0.6%)	179 (100%)
Engaged on experiential learning	35 (19.5%)	54 (30.2%)	9 (5%)	2 (1.1%)	100 (55.8%)
Engaged on hands on practice	92 (51.4%)	78 (43.5%)	6 (3.4%)	2 (1.1%)	178 (99.4%)

Counselling as a component of student engagement

Although 36% (n=64) of participants disagreed that they attended the counselling or help session to enhance understanding of the course content, 22% (n=39) of participants agreed that they attended the counselling or help session. In line with these results the literature reveals that not all students will take the initiative to seek assistance; moreover, students may not know when or how to ask for assistance, whether it involves asking an instructor for help, utilising tutorial services, or meeting with the teacher or counsellor. See Figure 5.

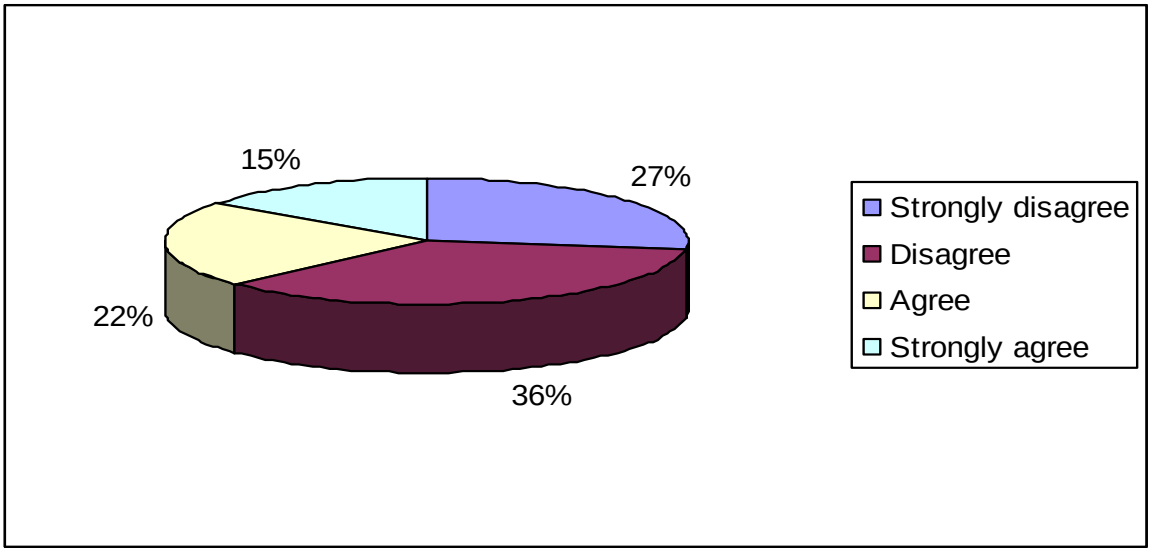

Figure 5: Attended counselling

Active involvement

As participants were encouraged to participate in active learning, most of them indicated that they acquired skills in writing, critical thinking, problem-solving, individual learning and using technology. See Table 9.

Table 9: Active involvement

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Total
Writing effectively	73 (41%)	102 (57%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.1%)	177 (98.8%)
Thinking deeply and critically	73 (41%)	100 (56%)	2 (1.1%)	3 (1.6%)	178 (99.7%)
Learning on your own	67 (37%)	57 (32%)	28 (16%)	26 (14.5%)	178 (99.5%)
Using computing and technology skills	41 (22.9%)	66 (36.8%)	44 (24.5%)	26 (14.5%)	177 (98.8%)
Solving real world problems	62 (34.6%)	71 (39.6%)	6 (3.3%)	37 (20.6%)	176 (98.1%)

Community Engagement

About 55% of participants perceived themselves as being able to make their community a better place. This reflects that their participation in community projects made them emotionally engaged with the communities they served and have greater understanding of the communities, resulting in changes in attitude and in the degree to which they want to be involved in their communities. See Figure 6.

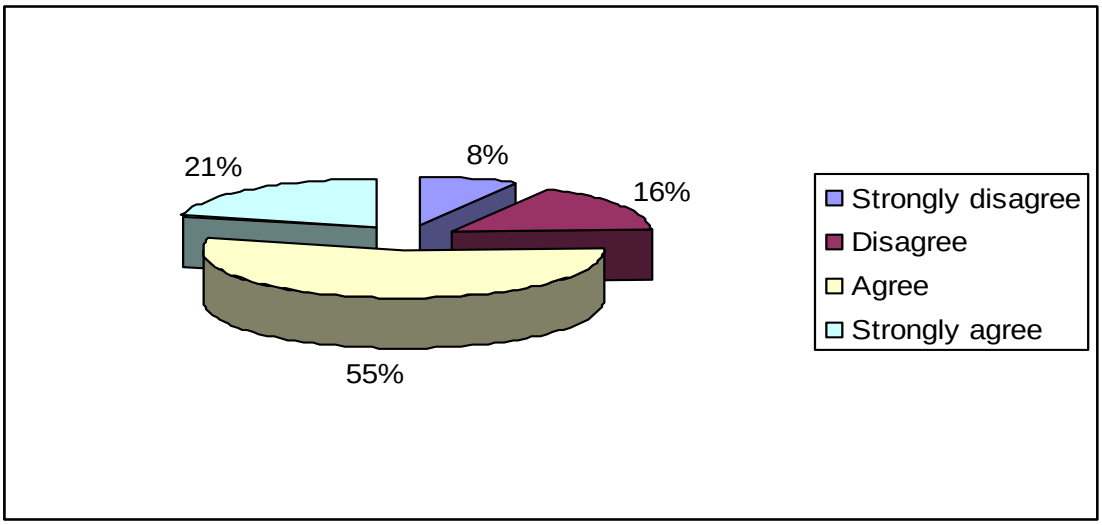

Figure 6: Community engagement

4.2.4 Behavioural Engagement

Use of information technology to enhance student engagement

According to the literature, information technology, particularly e-mail, elicits student engagement and develops relationships between students, their teachers and peers, in class and outside the class. In this study, however, almost all participants, 77% (n=138) and 20% (n=36), strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they used e-mail to communicate with the teacher. This, according to the literature, negatively impacts on student engagement. See Figure 7.

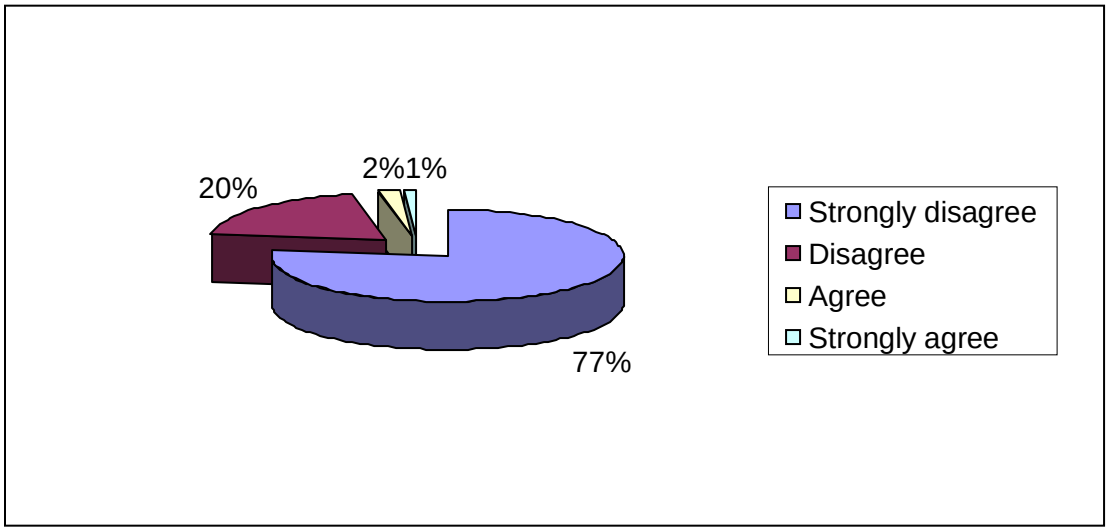

Figure 7: Used e-mail to communicate with the teacher

Used internet to discuss or complete assignment

Table 10: Used internet to discuss or complete assignment

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	41	22.9
Agree	30	16.8
Strongly disagree	68	38
Disagree	38	21
Total	177	98.7

About 38% (n=68) and 21% (n=38) of participants indicated that they never used the internet to discuss or complete an assignment. However, studies show that the internet is widely used for students to acquire up-to-date information and to assist them understand assignments. See Table 10.

Fostering engagement through teacher-student interaction

Studies have shown that when students interact with teachers inside and outside the classroom, they tend to learn first-hand information. Hence, NSSE suggested that teachers should be role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning behaviour of the students. Additionally, teacher activities such as being responsive to students' questions would be related to increased engagement. In this study, participants perceived their relations with teachers as good, though 51.9% indicated that they did not work with the teacher on activities other than course work. This implies inadequate social engagement with teachers, which is also important in enhancing learning opportunities. See Table 11.

Table 11: Fostering engagement through teacher-student interaction

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Discussed marks or assignment with teacher	22 (12%)	99 (55%)	28 (15.6%)	29 (16%)	178 (99%)
Accessed teacher for assistance and consultation as needed outside of class	42 (23%)	85 (47%)	20 (11%)	32 (17.8%)	179 (100%)
Teacher responsive to students' questions	45 (25%)	123 (68.7%)	3 (1.6%)	8 (4.4%)	179 (100%)
Worked with teacher on activities other than course work	8 (4.4%)	37 (20.6%)	93 (51.9%)	41 (22.9%)	179 (100%)

High Expectations as an indicator of student engagement

According to Miller et al. (2011) a major component of the students' college experience involves setting and trying to exceed one's own goals and expectations. Such standards may be self-imposed, come from friends and family, or may be inherent in the educational environment of one's academic institution. High levels of expectation to perform, produce greater engagement among students in academic and cognitive tasks.Teachers can expect high academic standards but they have a responsibility to create educational experiences for students that are challenging, enriching and extend their academic abilities and should support students to achieve these standards. In line with this, the findings of this study revealed that 57% and 37% (94%) of the participants strongly agreed and agreed respectivelythat they worked harder than they thought they could to meet standards or expectations. See Figure 8.

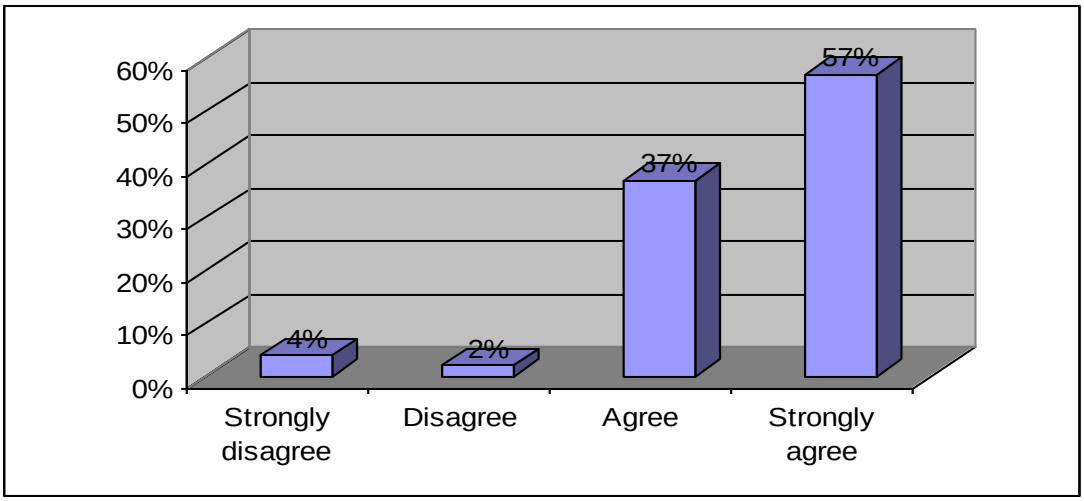

Figure 8: Worked harder than you thought you could to meet standards or expectations

Students' use of time to promote engagement

Almost half the participants (47%) agreed that they spent more than 3 hours per week preparing for class, studying and doing homework; however, 11% of participants strongly disagreed that they spent more than 3 hours per week preparing for class, studying and doing homework. Only 43% of participants indicated that they reviewed notes weekly and 17.9% strongly disagreed that they reviewed notes weekly.

Students' behaviour that foster student engagement

Literature reveals that participating in educational activities allows for knowledge to be integrated, promotes personal development and student engagement. In this study, 53% of the participants strongly agreed that they participated in a study partnership with classmates to prepare for a test or examination, 64% of participants agreed that they evaluated the value of information, arguments or methods, 50.8% of participants agreed that they asked the librarian for resources for academic work and 49% strongly agreed that they learned actively on their own to identify research and complete a given task. See Table 12.

Table 12: Students' behaviour to foster student engagement

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Participated in a study partnership with your classmate to prepare for a test or examination	94 (53%)	67 (37%)	11 (6.1%)	6 (3.3%)	178 (99.4%)
Evaluated the value of information, arguments or methods	31 (17%)	114 (64%)	7 (3.9%)	25 (14%)	177 (98.9%)
Learned actively on your own to identify research and complete given task	88 (49%)	82 (46%)	2 (1.1%)	7 (3.9%)	179 (100%)
Asked librarian for resources for academic work	44 (25%)	91 (50.8%)	20 (11%)	23 (12.8%)	178 (99.6%)

Came to class without completing reading or assigned task

Some participants (54%) in this study came to class without completing reading or tasks that were assigned to them, however, 46% of participants indicated that when they came to class, reading or assigned tasks were complete. This, according to the literature, indicates that some of the participants were not engaged. See Figure 9.

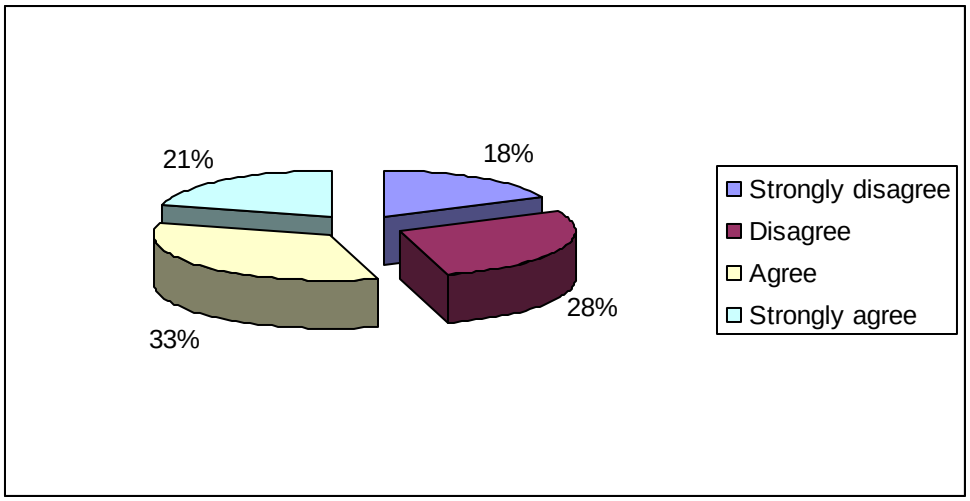

Figure 9: Came to class without completing reading or assigned task

Level of Engagement in class in the five post-basic programmes

The results reflected that all participants, irrespective of the programme or specialisation, had a fair level of engagement. This was established through a Pearson Chi-Square which showed significant relationship between the participants' course and engagement in class (X^2=29.777, df=12, p= 0.03). A Pearson Chi-Square test established that there were significant differences in the way participants from different disciplines/ranks engaged with other students outside of their class to complete an assignment, which is part of academic engagement (X2 = 10.812, df=4, p= 0.029). There were no significant differences between the various ranks in relation to completing the reading on the assigned task (X2 = 7.997, df = 4, p= 0.092); in other words, irrespective of rank, participants did come to class unprepared for the task. There were significant differences between ranks in relation to receiving or discussing their marks with the teacher, which is also part of academic engagement (X^2 = 9.984, df = 4, p= 0.041). There were no significant differences according to rank in relation to receiving prompt feedback from the teacher on their academic performance (X^2 = 1.894, df = 4, p= 0.755).

A significant difference was noted in relation to participants working with the teacher on activities other than the course work ($X^2 = 13.619$, df = 4, p= 0.009); in this regard, the critical care group more consistently agreed that they worked with the teacher on such activities.

In questions related to cognitive engagement, Fisher's exact test established that there were no significant differences; for example, there was no significant difference in relation to applying theories and concepts to practical problems, which is part of cognitive engagement (Fisher exact = 0.080). There was no significant difference in relation to completing a task that required a lot of thinking and mental effort between ranks (Fisher exact = 0.192). There was also no significant difference in relation to engaging in shared teacher-student responsibility (Fisher exact = 0.204). The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to assess emotional engagement of students and there was a significant relationship between the rankings of the variables across disciplines ($X^2 = 13.539$, df = 4, p = 0.009). It was not, however, established within which rank the differences occurred. When behavioural and cognitive engagement was assessed against rank with a Kruskal-Wallis test, there was no significant difference within these variables ($X^2 = 7.64$, df = 4, p = 0.105 and $X^2 = 1$; 9+9, df = 4, p = 0.745 respectively).

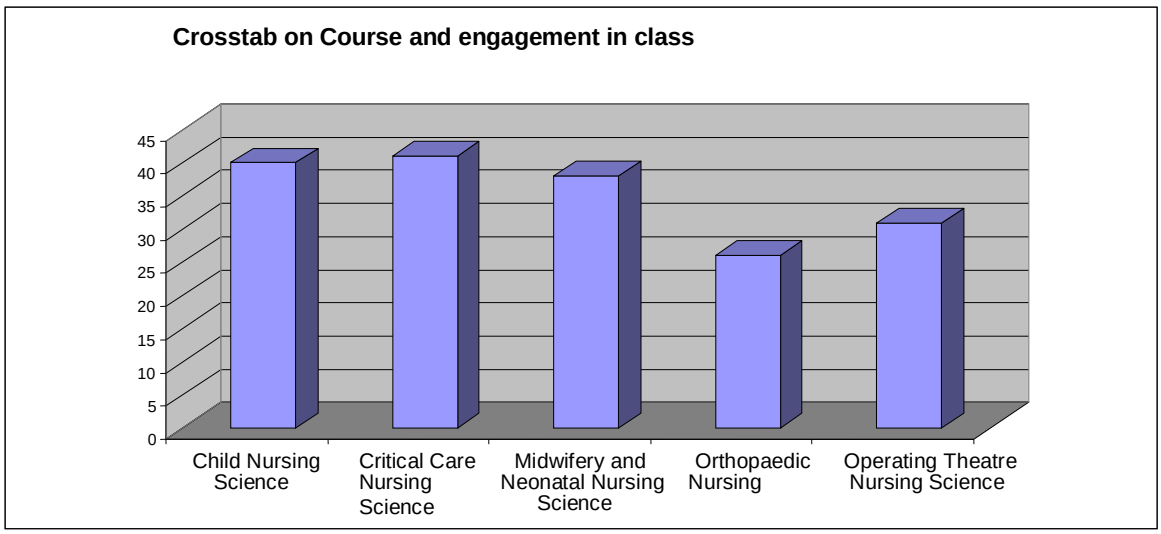

Figure 10: Cross-tabulation on course and engagement in class

4.3 Conclusion

The chapter presented a detailed descriptive analysis of the quantitative data. The findings of this study revealed some important similarities among participants of the different programmes such as emotional, behavioural, and cognitive engagement.

Analysis and interpretation of the data by course or programme provided more insight into the engagement activities of individual courses or programmes. The majority of engagement items were in line with engagement literature, though a few were not; for example, most participants never used e-mail to interact with theirteachers and peers, neither did they use internet for current information or to discuss or complete assignments. It was evident in this study that teachers play a major role in student engagement as they provided a welcoming environment that made participants have a sense of belonging, and they were also accessible inside and outside of the classroom, provided counselling to the participants who were in need of it, and provided activities that enriched participants' learning, such as learning opportunities in the community. In addition there were participants who were involved in a variety of activities that indicated that

the campus promotes student engagement, such as reviewing notes weekly, class presentations, working harder to meet standards or expectations and engaging in higher order learning, thus facilitating critical thinking.

Chapter 5
Discussion/Interpretation, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion and interpretation of the findings in line with the reviewed literature on the phenomenon of this study as well as recommendations and conclusion. The aim of this study was to analyse and describe student engagement in post-basic programmes offered at King Edward Campus, one of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing campuses in the eThekwini District. The objectives of this study were: to describe the different types of student engagement in a post-basic course/programme at a selected campus, to analyse student engagement in a post-basic course/programme at a selected campus, to describe how student engagement is promoted in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus and to describe barriers that hinder student engagement in a post-basic course/programme at a selected campus. The students who participated in this study were (n=179) and were registered for Critical Care Nursing Science (n=42), Child Nursing Science (n=40), Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science (n=38), Operating Theatre Nursing Science (n=32), and Orthopaedic Nursing Science (n=27).

5.2 Different Types of Student Engagement in Post-Basic Courses/Programmes

Student engagement, according to Anderson (2004), is facilitated by students' interest and/or willingness to participate in educational activities and also by their desire to be successful in educational activities. In this study, driving forces included having the desire to engage in post-basic studies, with 83.7% of participants wanting to gain knowledge and skills to use in the workplace, and 54.7% wanting to attain a post-basic qualification. However, only 19.5% of participants engaged in post-basic studies because of monetary incentive, and 16.7% of

participants indicated that they enjoy being in school and furthering their studies. It was established that the students who participated in this study were involved in various types of student engagement which were legitimised as emotional, behavioural, academic and cognitive engagement. In this study, 67% of the participants showed behavioural engagement by participating in community-based project as part of the course. Yazzie-Mintz's definition of cognitive engagement involves the work students do and the ways students go about their work; in this study 92% of the participants were strategic and applied theories to solve practical problems. Christenson et al. (2008) also describe student engagement as comprising emotional, behavioural and cognitive engagement; they describe behavioural engagement as observable indicators, while cognitive and affective engagement are internal indicators requiring an understanding of students' personal meaning of experiences and performance.

5.2.1 Emotional Engagement

From the findings of this study, 63% (n=113) of the participants were emotionally engaged as they would choose the same campus again to do their post-basic course. These findings are in line with how Van DeWeghe (2006) defines emotional engagement: that it ranges from simple liking to deep valuing of or identification with the institution. In this study 89% (n=160) of the participants showed that they were committed to their nursing college and 77.6% (n=139) indicated that they felt an important part of the nursing college. According to Yazzie-Mintz (2006) and MacMahon and Portelli (2004), this reveals participants' sense of connectedness with the school environment. In this study, emotional engagement was also demonstrated by 71.8% participants who viewed the learning material as interesting, while 25% were emotionally disengaged as they indicated that they were bored in class. Most participants (85.7%) related material for learning to their life experiences, as compared to 14.5% who described material for

learning as irrelevant and resulting in boredom. In a study by Diekelman (2005) on the concept of student engagement, nursing instructors reported levels of boredom while teaching in the classroom.

Coates (2009) and Brewster and Fager (2000) recommend that the teachers must ensure that course material relates to students' lives and highlight ways that learning can be applied in real-life situations to increase student engagement. Additionally, Appleton et al (2006) also warn that students who are bored, unmotivated and uninvolved easily disengage, and that the teacher has a responsibility to provide rich, interesting and appealing content in formats that students prefer. Similar views are held by Diekelman (2005) who believes that for positive student outcomes in the classroom, teachers must be willing to explore new processes and change the environment of the classroom. The results of this study reflected that most participants (60%) felt that work was challenging, while 35% described work as too difficult to understand and cope with. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (2006) also warns that a student who perceives that course work is difficult may disengage – may, for example, fail to complete assignments or homework, or attend class. Additionally, Jones (2008) suggests that teachers should not keep students hostage by requiring that they complete all the isolated basics before they have an opportunity to engage in challenging and applied experiences.

The findings revealed that 89% of the participants disagreed that there was no interaction with the teacher or that the teacher was dominating the class; however, 7.3% of the participants agreed that there was no interaction with the teacher because the teacher was dominating the class. Tinto (1997) states that learning has often been thought of as a spectator sport in which teacher (faculty) talk dominates the environment. Tinto further states that some researchers

report that faculty talk dominates 80–98% of the time in most college classrooms. This, according to Tinto (1997), favours assertive students who dominate 10–20% of the class time vested in student feedback and therefore limits collaborative and active learning.

About 56% of the participants strongly disagreed that they only took notes during class and 4% strongly agreed. Reyes (2007) contends that taking notes in the college classroom is a common practice that is expected of students by many faculty members as a way of staying focused in class. Conversely, Miller et al (2008) claim that taking notes in class is passive in nature and it is not an activity that encourages engagement.

From the results of this study it was found that 48.6% of the participants strongly disagreed that the teacher occasionally came to class and they worked on their own most of the time. Consistent with these results literature reveals that to promote engagement, teachers must make themselves more available to students – and not solely for discussing an upcoming exam, but also to interact with students on a personal level. Furthermore, frequency and quality of contact with teacher and student has repeatedly been shown to be an independent predictor of student persistence and enhances student engagement (Miller et al, 2011; Betts, 2009). The results of this study showed that 26.8% of the participants strongly agreed that they worked with other students on projects during class and 12% disagreed. It was also found that 39% of the participants worked with other students outside of class to prepare class assignment. These results are in line with Parsons and Taylor (2011) observation that emotional engagement is considered to exist when students have positive attitudes and reactions towards school, teachers, learning and peers. In this study the working relationship with other students depicts students' feelings of connection to learning and

peers. According to Crosling et al (2009) emotional engagement influences students' sense of belonging, their motivation and achievement.

5.2.2 Behavioural Engagement

Behavioural engagement was reflected in a number of ways in the study. For example, the results of this study revealed that 69% of the participants reported that teachers responded to their questions. As stated by Miller et al. (2008), the teacher's response to students' questions is related to student support and increased student engagement. It was also established from the findings of this study that 47% of the participants spent 3 hours and more per day preparing for class, studying and doing homework, whilst 11% of the participants spent less time. Although 43% of the participants agreed that they reviewed notes weekly, 18%of the participants were behaviourally disengaged in terms of "time on task" because they strongly disagreed that they reviewed notes weekly. As Reyes (2007) has stated, the students' level of commitment and maturity contributes to student engagement. Krause (2005) suggests that support structures such as academic reinforcement and counselling session must be in place to help the less engaged students. In this study it was found that 67% of the participants discussed marks or assignments with the teacher, while 31% never discussed marks with the teacher. While 70% of the participants accessed the teacher for assistance and consultation as needed outside of class, 29% did not.

As indicated in the literature, teachers are able to better diagnose individual students' needs and make decisions about what will help the student; personalizing teaching, small group projects, and one-on-one relationships between student and teacher increase motivation and engagement (Jones, 2008) to meet abilities of the student. About 57% of participants received prompt

feedback from the teacher on academic performance and clinical assessments. This, according to Foster (2008), demonstrates that teachers are available to students and care about them; in this way students are inspired and quality student engagement and satisfaction in the classroom is promoted.

From the findings of this study it was found that 67% were genuinely engaged with the world outside of the classroom through community-based projects as part of the course. Kuh (2009) believes that when volunteer work and community action are associated with a programme of study, students can enrich formal learning while improving the quality of life in the community. Although 16% (n=29) of the participants of this study disagreed that they worked on projects or assignments with peers, they identified themselves as loners, preferring to work alone, which seems to conflict directly with the notion of student engagement. Conversely, the majority of participants 84% (n=150) worked jointly, sharing ideas and knowledge during preparation of assignments and projects in and outside class. These findings are in line with what the South African Survey of Student Engagement (2010) describes as active and collaborative learningbased on the premise that students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are required to reflect on their learning. The results of this study are not in line with literature which promotes use of technology to access information because only 40% of the participants agreed that they used the internet to discuss or complete an assignment and 59% disagreed. Similarly, only 3% of participants used e-mail to communicate with teachers or peers and 97% did not. This, according to Kuh (2009), indirectly affects student engagement. Furthermore, Kuh (2009) and Trowler (2010) warn that there is no substitute for human contact with the students, whether it is in person or via electronic mail therefore it is essential that teachers reserve and dedicate a considerable amount of time to students.

It emerged from the findings of this study that participants were engaged in activities that naturally contribute to a much higher level of student engagement; for example, 57.5% contributed to a class discussion. About 97.7% of the participants made a class presentation and asked questions during class. Literature reveals that students who ask relevant questions demonstrate an enquiring mind. Additionally, when students are excitedly engaged in their tasks and asking deep and interesting questions, the teacher experiences joy, and joy is a lot less tiring than the frustration that comes with student apathy (De Frondeville, 2010). However, 54% of the participants agreed that they came to class without completing reading or assigned tasks. These results indicate a decrease in time-on-task, which Yazzie-Mintz (2006) describes as a measure of student engagement, and the logic goes that the more time a student spends on a particular task, the more engaged the student is with that activity. The findings of this study were in line with student engagement literature as 75.8% of participants used the library for resources for academic support. Kuh and Gonyea (2003) report that when institutions set high academic standards students use the library most intensively. Such students are likely to work hard and attempt projects requiring integration and application thus using higher-order skills to foster student engagement.

According to Van De Weghe (2008) behavioural engagement refers to physical participation such as following rules and procedures, adhering to classroom norms, paying attention, taking part in class discussions and participating in school activities. The participants of this study were in line with Van De Weghe's definition of behavioural engagement, as most of them demonstrated engagement in a variety of activities. In essence, students who are engaged show sustained behavioural involvement in learning activities accompanied by a positive emotional tone (Skinner and Belmont, 1993).

5.2.3 Cognitive Engagement

From the results of this study it was established that the participants were engaged in cognitive activities, as 69% of participants analysed the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory. In line with these results, Trowler (2010) warns that the more students practise analysing or problem solving, the more adept they become. It was also found that 65% of the participants agreed that they synthesised and organised ideas, information, arguments or experience into more complex interpretations and relationships and making judgments about the issue of information, examining how others gathered and interpreted data and applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in solutions. Coates (2008) found that while students' attitudes to learning varied greatly, those who engaged in higher forms of learning such as analysing, synthesizing and evaluating tended to be most engaged. Yazzie-Mintz's definition of cognitive engagement involves the work students do and the ways students go about their work. In line with this definition, 92% of the participants in this study were strategic and applied theories to solve practical problems. The findings of this study revealed that 46.9% of the participants were involved in learning coursework as required in the programme. This is in line with Krause's (2005) recommendation that teachers should actively encourage commitment to study by attaching importance to studying and spending time on academic work.

About 23% of participants strongly agreed that they examined strengths and weaknesses of their own views on a topic. Participants also indicated that they learned from discussing questions that had no clear answers. The findings of this study revealed that 97% of the participants completed a task that required a lot of thinking and mental effort. Consistent with these findings,

Kuh(2009) describes cognitive engagement as a desire to go beyond the minimum school requirements; a preference for challenge. Kuh further states that students seeking to improve their competence are likely to seek challenges and they tend to respond to failure by increasing their effort.

5.2.4 Academic Engagement

The findings of this study revealed that 95% of the participants developed work related skills such as hands-on practice. This is in line with the study conducted by Kuh (2009) who affirms that various measures have been implemented to reinforce learning and provide concrete applications and that many colleges incorporate a "practical training and experience" component in their programmes of study. It was established in this study that 97% of the participants learned to write effectively and think deeply and critically.

Literature reveals that writing has a major role in student learning and engagement as it promotes critical thinking and intellectual curiosity. Students not only learn to write, they also write to learn (Palmer, 2009; Jones, 2009). According to Newmann (1992), academic engagement includes psychological investments and efforts toward learning, mastery of skills and crafts, and participation in the different knowledge developing tasks. The findings of this study are in line with this definition as 54% of the participants indicated that they would make their community a better place. According to Trowler and Trowler (2010), citing Bensimon (2009), productive engagement is an important means by which students develop feelings about their peers, professors, and institutions that give them a sense of connectedness, affiliation, and belonging, while simultaneously offering rich opportunities for learning and development. The majority

(97%)of participants in this study made class presentations and participated in role play, discussions and experiential learning. In line with these findings, Crosling et al (2009) believe that students should be given opportunities to give presentations to the class to improve English language and to gain presentation skills. Additionally, Palmer (2009) warns that teachers should get students to teach each other and to learn from each other because this engages them more than the teacher doing a solo act.

5.2.5 Level of Engagement Across the Five Post-Basic Programmes

The findings of this study revealed that all participants, irrespective of the programme or specialisation had a fair level of engagement. These findings indicated a significant relationship between the participants' course and their engagement in class with a p-value of 0.03.There was clear evidence of a relationship between the participants' course and their engagement with a p-value of 0.05. However, similarities and dissimilarities in engagement were established. For example, in academic engagement, participants from different ranks showed marked variations in how they engaged with other students outside of their class to complete an assignment ($p = 0.029$). Conversely, participants from different ranks showed no differences in relation to completing the reading on the assigned task ($p = 0.092$). This indicates that participants across programmes were not prepared for the assigned task when they came to class. On the other hand, a significant difference was noted in relation to participants working with the teacher on activities other than course work ($p = 0.009$). Here, participants from the critical care group more consistently indicated that they worked with the teacher on activities other than the course work. The study found no significant variation among participants according to differing ranks in questions related to cognitive engagement. For example, there was no significant difference in relation to applying theories and concepts to practice problems (Fisher exact was 0.080).There

was no significant difference in relation to completing a task that required a lot of thinking and mental effort (Fisher exact = 0.192). Participants' emotional engagement was assessed and the results showed a significant relationship in variables across disciplines (p = 0.009). Behavioural engagement was assessed against participants' rank and the results revealed no significant difference within these variables (p = 0.105 Kruskal-Wallis test).

5.2.6 Promotion of Student Engagement in Post-Basic Programmes

One of the objectives of this study was to describe how student engagement is promoted in post-basic programmes at a selected campus. In this study, the students' reasons for engaging in post-basic studies were investigated in order to discover ways in which to better engage the students and to adapt to students' needs. For example, 83.7% wanted to acquire skills to use in the workplace therefore the teacher and institution have a role to play so that the students achieve their goal. According to Klem and Connell (2005), focusing on increasing student engagement rather than on improving grades or test scores can actually foster greater gains in students' academic, emotional, social and behavioural achievement. According toKuh (2009), "student engagement represents the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of the college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" This, according to Astin (1999), is critical for higher education as institutions face increasing pressure to improve student outcomes such as retention, persistence, success and completion. This pressure is to ensure the effectiveness of the quality of education. The quality of education can be measured by student engagement (Kuh, 2009). In this study, effective educational practices were used to measure how student engagement was promoted in post-basic programmes (SASSE, 2009, 2010; NSSE, 2006, 2008).

5.2.7 Level of Academic Challenge

Level of academic challenge focuses on whether students find their academic work intellectually challenging and creative, which is crucial in student learning and educational quality (SASSE, 2010; NSSE, 2006). In this study, most participants (94%) indicated that their programme placed a significant emphasis on spending time studying and doing academic work. About 60% of the participants indicated that work was challenging. Literature reveals that teachers should actively encourage commitment by attaching importance to studying and spending time on academic work. Teachers should also challenge students with more work than they think they can handle, encouraging them to develop high-level critical and analytical thinking skills (Krause, 2005; Palmer, 2009). From the findings of this study it was established that 57% of the participants worked harder than they thought they could to meet the standards or expectations of the course or programme. The participants in this study indicated that they engaged in a series of activities that related to their studies. For example, almost all participants (93.5%) were engaged in analysis of the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory as emphasised in the programme. Only 17% of the participants reported that the programme never emphasised synthesis and organization of ideas, information, arguments or experience into more complex interpretations and relationships.

Most participants (73%) indicated that they applied theories and judgment and examined the strengths and weaknesses of own views on a topic or issue as emphasized in the programme. In this study, 97.5% of participants revealed that they completed a task that required a lot of thinking and mental effort; 55.7% agreed that they learned from discussing questions that had no clear answers, and only 12.8% did not. This was intellectually challenging and engaging and also promoted student engagement. It was found in this study that 47% of participants were

committed to learning as they spent more than 3 hours a day preparing for class, studying and doing homework. The participants also indicated that they were engaged in speaking and writing as part of academic work and that they gained skills in speaking and writing. Hu, Ching& Zhao (2011) state that when students are intellectually engaged they experience serious emotional and cognitive investment in learning.

5.2.8 Active and Collaborative Learning

According to SASSE (2010) and NSSE (2006),active and collaborative learning is based on the premise that students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are required to reflect on their learning. In this study, participants reported high levels of participation in active and collaborative learning activities. For example, 50.8% of participants worked onan assignment or project that required integration of ideas or information from various sources, and 53% strongly agreed that they participated in a study partnership with classmate to prepare for a test or examination. Research findings confirm that active learning in groups, peer relationships and social skills is important in engaging learners (Kuh et al, 2006). In this study, 53% of participants worked in partnership with their peers in and outside the classroom to prepare for tests and class assignments, solve problems or master difficult course material. This is in line with many studies which emphasise that collaborative learning significantly increases knowledge acquisition and critical thinking skills which will be useful throughout one's lifetime. This could include creating assignments that challenge students to seek answers beyond those presented in their basic textbook, and ensuring that thought-provoking discussions and debates are a normal classroom occurrence (Miller et al, 2009; Miller et al, 2011; Kuh, 2009; NSSE, 2008).

In this study, 49% of participants learned actively on their own so they could identify areas of research and complete a given task, while 5% worked with their peers to identify areas of research and complete a given task. Most participants (87%) actively asked questions during class, while 13% thought that it was not necessary to engage in this act. About97%ofparticipants actively participated in their learning by contributing to a class discussion; this shows confidence and motivation for ongoing active learning and student engagement.

In line with these results, Rowse (2009), in his study on strategies for increasing student engagement, warns that teachers should not cover every single angle of a topic because students will have no need to ask questions or delve into topics on their own; teachers should therefore purposely leave one angle uncovered so that students can figure it out on their own, thus promoting student engagement.

Literature reveals that the avenue by which teachers can promote engagement in their classroom is to incorporate shared learning opportunities whereby groups of students work together to reach a shared goal and contribute to one another's learning. Whether it is through the use of problem-based learning as an instructional method challenging students to seek solutions to real-world problems, a student integration programme, or simply small-group collaboration, allowing students to actively learn from one another both in and outside of the classroom affords them tremendous gains in academic interest and development. In other words, collaborative learning produces more deeply involved students (Miller et al, 2011). In this study, 97% of participants revealed that they were actively involved in class as they made class presentations which encourage students to dissect information so as to synthesise and organise ideas into more meaningful interpretations. In support of this study, Nguyen and Trimarchi (2009) in their study

on promoting student engagement and active learning posit that active learning requires students to be able and willing to go beyond the first phase of raw information acquisition (e.g., lectures and texts) and engage in higher-order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This activity might also require some levels of discovery learning and group interaction (classroom engagement).

5.2.9 Teacher-Student Interaction

Increasing student-faculty interaction integrates students more deeply in their educational experience. Studies indicate that the degree of student-faculty interaction influences a variety of important educational outcomes, including student engagement (Astin, 1993).From the results of this study it emerged that there was teacher-student contact, with 70% of participants indicating that they contacted their teachers inside and outside the classroom for assistance and consultation. The teacher-student interaction influenced student engagement as teachers created good educationalexperiences that were challenging and enriching, thus enabling participants to develop expertise to solve practical problems. Literature reveals that teacher-student interaction also helps students to get through rough times and keep on working (Miller et al, 2009; Koljatic and Kuh, 2001; Kuh, 2009; Tinto, 1997; Chickering and Gamson, (1987).

In this study 69% of the participants indicated that the teacher responded to their questions – which promotes student engagement because asking questions denotes interest and engagement in class related activities; 67% of the participants discussed marks with the teachers and 57% received prompt feedback from teachers on academic performance and clinical assessments. Kuh (2009) states that feedback focuses on the progress made and areas that need to be improved in order to satisfy educational requirements and objectives. Additionally, Kuh contends that

frequent and quality feedback is highly instrumental in fostering teacher-student interactions and thus promoting student engagement. The findings of this study revealed that the majority of participants (75%) did not work with the teacher on activities other than coursework and only 25% of participants did. Miller et al. (2011) report that studies by Endo and Harpel and by Astin on how different types of student–faculty interactions impact various student outcomes revealed that increased informal teacher–student interaction predicts improved development of problem-solving skills (i.e., seeking the best possible answer even if it takes a long time and seeking knowledge for its own sake). Informal interaction also facilitates progress toward intellectual goals such as acquiring skills for self-directed learning and acquiring abilities to raise questions while also improving satisfaction with the college experience.Additionally,Kuh (2009) suggests that the colleges should structure their programmes of study, their environment and their practices in order to facilitate as much interaction as possible between teachers and students.

5.2.10 Enriching Educational Experiences

Kuh (2007), SASSE (2010) and NSSE (2006) contend that complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augment the academic programme. In line with this, the results of this study indicated that the campus provided learning opportunities in which participants participated to enhance their academic programmes. For example, 69% participated in community-based projects as part of the course. According to Miller et al. (2011), much as community service clearly benefits the community, it also benefits the individuals providing the service in increasing their academic outcomes, self-esteem, and civic-mindedness. According to Kuh et al. (cited in SASSE, 2009), community service provides students with opportunities to synthesise, integrate and apply knowledge. In this study most participants indicated satisfaction with their educational experience and reported experiences with class presentation, drafting

assignments, integration and application of knowledge to practical settings, as well as experiential learning.

The majority (75%) of participants used library resources for academic work and to enhance their knowledge, while 25% did not. Kuh and Gonyea (2003) investigated the impact of the library on engagement, reporting that when institutions set high academic standards students use the library most intensively. Such students are likely to work hard and attempt projects requiring integration and application, using higher-order skills. Literature encourages students to use information and communication technology to augment their learning and to facilitate collaboration between peers and teachers (Kuh, 2009; SASSE, 2010). Conversely, the results of this study diverge from the literature in that 76% of the participants strongly disagreed that they used information and communication technology; for example, they never used the internet to gain current knowledge and never used e-mail to communicate with the teacher or peers.

5.2.11 Supportive Campus Environment

The findings of this study established that among the strongest predictors of student engagement was the participants' perceptions that the campus environment was supportive. This was reflected by the participants' report that quality teacher–student and student–peer relationships prevailed at the campus, as 70% of participants were able to access the teacher for assistance and consultation outside of class and they also worked with other students in and outside the classroom. Only 21.8% of participants attended the counselling or help session to enhance the understanding of the course content. This served as academic reinforcement for students who were struggling with academic issues. Ames and Archer cited in Miller et al (2011), warn that success should be defined as improvement and progress rather than as high grades, emphasising

the value of effort and learning rather than focusing narrowly on high ability, and explaining errors and mistakes as a natural and productive part of the learning process. Academic achievement is not the only positive outcome associated with student engagement; job-related skills are also an important outcome, and in this study 94.5% of participants indicated that they were engaged in hands-on practice, such as participation in community-based projects as part of the course, and counselling was provided to participants with personal work-related issues to enhance student engagement in clinical practice. This is in line with Cox (2010) who believes that a supportive campus environment should respond to students' needs, aspirations, values, goals, and expectations.

In this study 88.8% of the participants were involved in experiential learning. These findings are consistent with Kolb (1984) who in his theory of experiential learning states that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience". According to Kolb, experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences. Students perform better and are more satisfied at universities that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus (NSSE, 2006, 2007).

5.3 Barriers to Student Engagement

In this study, 37% of participants indicated that they did not feel that they were part of the college; this indicates that the participants were not emotionally engaged with the college. According to Zepke and Leach (2011), institutional cultures are the key to student engagement; therefore students must feel that they are accepted and affirmed, that they belong. The findings of this study suggest that 75% (n=134) of participants did not work with the teacher on activities

other than course work, such as committees, student life activities and social activity. Miller et al. (2011) warn that to promote engagement, teachers must make themselves more available to students, and they must show a willingness to informally discuss a broad range of topics that will help students grow both intellectually and personally. This study also found that 76% of participants did not use the internet to discuss or complete assignments, nor e-mail to communicate with the teacher. According to Marshall (2007), the website enhances the teaching and learning experiences of the students and the lecturer, students participate actively in the unit, interact and collaborate with each other and with the lecturer, and do so within a safe environment. Additionally, the students also work together on projects that are meaningful and which are directly relevant to their own disciplines.

5.4 Conclusion

Although there is limited literature on the engagement experiences of post-basic students, some findings in this study are consistent with most literature regarding factors that promote student engagement, such as level of academic challenge, teacher-student interaction, active and collaborative learning, enriching educational experiences and supportive campus environment.

There is therefore a dynamic interplay between student engagement, the quality of student learning and the teaching and learning context. However, viewed in this context, student engagement becomes a multifaceted construct, and when students experience these multiple forms of engagement, the likelihood of success increases. From the findings of this study it was established that enhancing student engagement is a fundamental strategy for improving success and outcomes. The concept of student engagement has two critical features: (a) the amount of time and effort students put into educationally purposeful activities within the institution, and (b)

how well the institution encourages students to participate in these activities. In understanding student engagement it is therefore imperative to recognize that there is a shared responsibility placed upon the institutions to ensure that students 'efforts are fostered.

5.5 Limitations

The sample for this study was drawn from one of the campuses of KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing, and as data was collected from only one institution it is not feasible to generalise the findings to another population of students in any campus offering post-basic courses. Another limitation of the study was using a sample composed predominantly of black females (as a result of current nursing profession demographics); this would also limit generalisation to a more diverse group.

5.6 Recommendations

Student engagement is a multidimensional concept; its definitions seem increasingly complex and diverse, and in some ways student engagement is misunderstood. Therefore a narrow definition of student engagement that is restricted to students' level of involvement in a learning process is essential. This study only determined how students viewed their engagement in class and teachers were not involved; there is consequently a need for further research as literature reviewed indicated that students and teachers have different perceptions of adequate student engagement. It is recommended that data be collected by interview, observations and structured questionnaire to make a comprehensive study of staff development on the concept of student engagement, how to engage students in the classroom and how to set examination questions that promote student engagement. The current study used a quantitative approach; therefore a study on qualitative approach is recommended to provide students with an opportunity to freely share

their thoughts in an open response format. There has been little effort to study how the four forms of engagement – behavioural, emotional, academic and cognitive – interrelate, and which if any could have the primary role in producing learning. The findings of this study indicated a lower number of students using information and technology, it is therefore recommended that the college provides technological support to enrich educational experiences of the students.The teachers were not involved in this study, but it would be appropriate to investigate their experiences regarding their perceptions on student engagement and efforts to engage the students.

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Appendix 1: Student Engagement Questionnaire

STUDY TOPIC

A Descriptive-Analysis of Student Engagement in A Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in one KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing Campus in the eThekwini District.

SECTION A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION: Please fill in the correct information by making an (X) on your answers.

Child Nursing Science	
Critical Care Nursing Science	
Midwifery and Neonatal Nursing Science	
Orthopaedic Nursing Science	
Operating Theatre Nursing Science	

1. Course: ----------
2. Age:
3. Gender

M	F

4. For how long have you been in the programme? ----------
5. In which group do you belong?

March Intake		September Intake	

6. For how long have you been in the nursing service? ----------
7. When last were you involved in formal education? ----------
8. Is English the main language used in your home?

No	Yes

SECTION B

INSTRUCTION: Please make a cross (X) on your answers.

Scale: Strongly Agree (S/A) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (S/D) Disagree (D)

	S/A	A	S/D	D
1. What was your reason for coming to take this course?				
1.1 Because I wanted a post-basic qualification				
1.2 Because of my peers and friends				
1.3 Because it was my turn in the department to come for the course				
1.4 Because I wanted to get skills to use in my workplace				
1.5 Because I enjoy being in school and furthering my studies				
1.6 Because of the monetary incentive				
1.7 Because I wanted to be away from my workplace				
1.8 Because of social reasons				

EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Scale: Strongly Agree (S/A) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (S/D) Disagree (D)

	S/A	A	S/D	D

2. 1 If I could be given a chance to choose a nursing college to do my post-basic course, I will choose this one again				
2.2 I care about my nursing college				
2.3 I am committed to my nursing college				
2.4 I feel an important part of my nursing college				
Have been bored in class, because: [you can tick more than one item]				
2.5 Material for learning is not interesting				
2.6 Material for learning is not relevant				
2.7 Work is not challenging enough				
2.8 No interaction with the teacher, the teacher is dominating the class				
2.9 We only take notes				
2.10 Work is too difficult to understand and cope with				
2.11 The teacher occasionally comes to class, we work on our own most of the time				

BEHAVIOURAL ENGAGEMENT

Scale: Strongly Agree (S/A) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (S/D) Disagree (D)

	S/A	**A**	**S/D**	**D**
3.1 Participated in community-based project as part of thecourse				

3.2 Used an internet to discuss or complete assignment				
3.3 Used an e-mail to communicate with the teacher				
3.4 Discussed marks or assignment with teacher				
3.5 Received prompt feedback from the teacher on your academic performance or clinical assessments				
3.6 Accessed teacher for assistance and consultation as needed outside of class				
3.7 Teacher knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject				
3.8 Teacher responsive to students' questions				
3.9 Worked harder than you thought you could to meet the standards or expectations				
3.10 Worked with teacher on activities other than course work e.g. committees, student life activities, social activity				
3.11In a typical week, you spend more than 3 hours preparing for class, studying, doing homework				
3.12 Reviewed notes weekly				
3.13 Participated in a study partnership with your classmate to prepare for a test or examination				
3.14 Evaluated the value of information, arguments or methods				
3.15 Applied theories and concepts to practical problems or solutions				
3.16 Learned actively on your own so you can identify research and complete a given task				
3.17Asked librarian for resources for academic work				

COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT

Scale: Strongly Agree (S/A) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (S/D) Disagree (D)

	S/A	**A**	**S/D**	**D**
4. Your programme has emphasised the following:				

4.1 Learning coursework				
4.2 Analysing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory				
4.3 Synthesising and organising ideas, information, arguments or experience into more complex interpretations and relationships				
4.4 Making judgements about the issue of information, agreementor methods				
4.5 Examining how others gathered and interpreted data				
4.6 Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in solutions				
4.7 Examining the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue				
4.8 Learning from discussing questions that have no clear answers				
4.9 Completing a task that required a lot of thinking and mental effort				
4.10 Participating in small group activities, discussions and role plays				
4.11 Participating in teacher- led discussions				
4.12 Partaking in hands-on practice				

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Scale: Strongly Agree (S/A) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (S/D) Disagree (D)

	S/A	**A**	**S/D**	**D**
5.1 Asked questions during class				

5.2 Contributed to a discussion that occurred in your class				
5.3 Made a class presentation				
5.4 Prepared two or more drafts of an assignment before submitting it				
5.5 Received prompt feedback from teachers on assignments or class work				
5.6 Worked on an assignment or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources				
5.7 Worked with other students on projects during class				
5.8 Worked with other students outside of class to prepare class assignment				
5.9 Came to class without completing reading or assigned task				

OTHER EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

These were other educational practices that promoted student engagement

Scale: Strongly Agree (S/A) Agree (A) Strongly Disagree (S/D) Disagree (D)

	S/A	A	S/D	D
6.1 Attended the counselling or help session to enhance the understanding of the course content				
Your experience at this campus contributed to your growth in the following areas:				
6.2 Learning work related skills				
6.3 Writing effectively				
6.4 Speaking effectively				
6.5Thinking deeply and critically				
6.6 Using computing and technology skills				
6.7 Learning on your own				
6.8 Solving real world problems				
6.9 Making your community a better place				
6.10 Understanding yourself				
6.11 Developing personal values				
6.12 Recognizing academic excellence				
6.13 Working harmoniously with others				

Appendix 2: Concepts from Conceptual Framework

Objective	Question	Concepts fromconceptual framework	Item
To describe the different types of student engagement in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus	What are the types of student engagement employed in the post-basic course/ programmes in a selected campus?	Academic engagement Cognitive engagement Behavioural engagement Affective/Emotional engagement	3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.7; 3.8; 5.1 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6; 5.7; 5.8; 5.13 4.1; 4.6; 4.9; 4.11;4.12; 4.16 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.42.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.8; 2.9; 2.10; 2.11
To describe how student engagement is promoted in a post-basic course/ programme in a selected campus	How is student engagement promoted in a post-basic course/ programme?	Active and collaborative learning Student–staff interaction Enriching educational experiences Level of academic challenge Supportive campus environment	3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.7; 3.8; 4.13; 5.1; 6.14 2.11; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.8; 4.10 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.17 3.2; 3.4; 3.6; 3.9; 4.9; 4.11; 4.12; 5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 5.7; 5.8 2.4; 4.13; 5.11; 6.1; 6.2; 6.13
To describe barriers that hinder student engagement in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus	What are the barriers that hinder student engagement in a post-basic course/programme in a selected campus?	Lecture Teacher-led discussion	5.9 5.10

Appendix 3: Information Sheet

Date : 10 February 2010
Name of Research Student :Nelisiwe E. Ngema
Address of Student : New Germany - Pinetown
Student Number : 208529286
Contact Number : 0826612169

Name of Supervisor : Professor NG Mtshali
Contact Number : 031- 2602498
Name of Department : School of Nursing
Name of Institution : University of KwaZulu-Natal (Howard College Campus)

Dear Participant
I am completing a research project as part of the requirements for Masters Degree (Nursing Education)

Title of the Research: A Descriptive Analysis of Student Engagement in A Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in A Campus in the EThekwini District.

Purpose of the Research: To analyze and describe student engagement in a post-basic course in a selected nursing campus in the EThekwini District.

Description of the Procedure:
Your participation is requested as you represent the population under study. As part of the research process, you are required to fill in a questionnaire. It will take you about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Ethical Aspects
Please note that your identity and information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.
Please feel free to ask any questions you may have so that you are clear about what is expected of you.

Advantages to you as a respondent:

Please note that:

- You are free to not participate
- You are free to withdraw at any stage without repercussion
- Your name will not be used nor will you be identified with any comment made when the data is published
- There will be no risks attached to your participation

The findings of the study will be made available on completion.
Thank you.
nngema
Researcher: N.E. Ngema

Appendix 4: Informed Consent Form

Title **:** A Descriptive Analysis of Student Engagement in A Post-basic Nursing Education Programme in a Campus in the EThekwini District

Researcher **:** NelisiweNgema

Student Number **:** 208529286

Contact Number **:**0826612169

E-mail **:** 208529286@ukzn.ac.za

Name of Supervisor **:** Professor N.G. Mtshali

Contact Number **:**031- 2602498

DECLARATION

I ----------(Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of participant: ----------

Appendix 5: Request for Permission to Conduct Research

44 Louis Walter Road
New Germany
3610
15. 02. 2010

The Principal

King Edward VIII Campus
Private Bag X02
Dalbridge

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TITLE: A Descriptive Analysis of Student Engagement in a Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in one of KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing Selected Campus in the Ethekwini District.

Reference is made with regards to the above-mentioned subject matter. I am currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Nursing Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in partial fulfillment of the aforementioned degree. The study attempts to analyse and describe student engagement in post-basic programmes from the students' perspective. The proposed study setting is King Edward VIII Campus and the focus is on post-basic students.

The approval for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and research proposal are attached.

Thanking you in advance.
Yours sincerely
nngema

Nelisiwe E. Ngema.

Appendix 6: Application for Permission to Conduct Research

44 Louis Walter Road
New Germany
3610
15. 02. 2010

he Principal
KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing
Private Bag X9089
Pietermaritzburg
3200

Dear Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TITLE: A Descriptive Analysis of Student Engagement in a Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in one of KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing Selected Campus in the Ethekwini District.

Reference is made with regards to the above-mentioned subject matter. I am currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Nursing Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in partial fulfillment of the aforementioned degree. The study attempts to analyse and describe student engagement in post-basic programmes from the students' perspective. This study aims to improve the methods of teaching and learning whereby students will have more enthusiasm to actively participate in own learning thus enhancing their learning skills and outcomes and consequently engage in life-long learning so that they deliver quality, contemporary and comprehensive health care to the communities. The proposed study setting is King Edward VIII Campus and the focus is on post-basic students.

The approval for ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and research proposal are attached.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

nngema

Nelisiwe E. Ngema.

Appendix 7: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Research Office
Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
University Road
Chiltern Hills
Westville
3629
South Africa
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587
Fax No: +27 31 260 2384
E-mail :naidoos4@ukzn.ac.za

12 December 2009

Ms N E Ngema
44 Louis Walter Road
NEW GERMANY
3610

Dear Ms Ngema

PROTOCOL: A Descriptive Analysis of Student Engagement in A Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in one of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing Selected Campus in the Ethekwini District
ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0986/2009: Faculty of Health Sciences

In response to your application dated 20 November 2009, Student Number: **208529286** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL.**

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Prof. N G Mtshali
cc: Mr S Reddy

Appendix 8: Approval of Research Proposal

HEALTH
KwaZulu-Natal

Health Research & Knowledge Management sub-component
10 – 103 Natalia Building, 330 Langalibalele Street
Private Bag x9051
Pietermaritzburg
3200
Tel.: 033 – 3953189
Fax.: 033 – 394 3782
Email.: hrkm@kznhealth.gov.za
www.kznhealth.gov.za

Reference : HRKM26/10
Enquiries : Mrs G Khumalo
Telephone : 033 – 3953189

09 March 2010

Dear Ms N Ngema

Subject: Approval of a Research Proposal

1. The research proposal titled **'A descriptive analysis of student engagement in a Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in one of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing selected campus in the eThekwini district'** was reviewed by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health.
   The proposal is hereby **approved** for research to be undertaken at **King Edward VIII Hospital College of Nursing.**

2. You are requested to take note of the following:
   a. Make the necessary arrangement with the identified facility before commencing with your research project.
   b. Provide an interim progress report and final report (electronic and hard copies) when your research is complete.

3. Your final report must be posted to **HEALTH RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, 10-102, PRIVATE BAG X9051, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200** and e-mail an electronic copy to hrkm@kznhealth.gov.za

For any additional information please contact Mrs G Khumalo on 033-3953189.

Yours Sincerely

Dr S.S.S. Buthelezi
Date: 16.03.2010
Chairperson, Health Research Committee
KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health

Appendix 9: Permission to Conduct Research

HEALTH
KwaZulu-Natal

KWAZULU- NATAL COLLEGE OF NURSING
P/Bag X9069, Pietermaritzburg, 3200
Tel : (033) 264 7800, Fax : (033) 394 7238
e-mail: lulama.mthembu@kznhealth.gov.za
www.kznhealth.gov.za

Enquiries: Mrs. S. Maharaj
Telephone: 033 – 264 7806
Date: 05 March 2010

Principal Investigator:
Ms. NE Ngema (208529286)
School of Nursing
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT KING EDWARD VIII CAMPUS

Title: A descriptive analysis of student's engagement in a Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme.

I have pleasure in informing you that permission has been granted to you by the Principal of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing to conduct research on the "Title of the research study".

Please note the following:

1) Please ensure that you adhere to all policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines of the Department of Health with regards to this research.
2) This Research will only commence once this office has received confirmation from the Provincial Health Research Committee in the KZN Department of Health.
3) Please ensure this office is informed before you commence your research.
4) The KwaZulu-Natal College (King Edward VIII Campus) will not provide any resources for this research.
5) You will be expected to provide feedback on your findings to the Principal of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing.

Thanking You.
Sincerely

.....
Dr. LL. Nkonzo-Mtembu
Principal:KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing

uMnyango Wezempilo. Departement van Gesondheid
Fighting Diseases, Fighting Poverty, Giving Hope.

Appendix 10: Letter from Editor

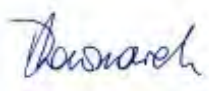
David	Newmarch
E d i t i n g	

30 January 2012

This is to confirm that I have provided editorial assistance to Ms Nelisiwe E. Ngema in the preparation of her thesis entitled "A Descriptive Analysis of Student Engagement in a Post-Basic Nursing Education Programme in One Kwazulu-Natal College of Nursing Selected Campus in theEthekwini District".

The editorial assistance covered proofreading, formatting, and corrections to errors of language and style.

I will be happy to provide further details if requested.



David Newmarch