



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

An Investigation of Factors that Lead to Student Retention at Siyazama Community Learning Centre

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
Master's in Education (Adult Education)**

Declaration

I, Glenrose Lindiwe Nala, declare that:

- a) The report of the thesis is originally mine, except where specified by citations.
- b) To the best of my information, the work presented herein has not been published nor submitted for any academic reason or any degree or examination at any institution.
- c) The thesis contains my own work that I dedicated time to research and report on, except where quoted.
- d) Other people's work has been cited appropriately.



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24. 03. 2020

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Date

Acknowledgements

I wish to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the following people:

- My family, especially my two daughters, Zamokuhle and Siphokazi, for their endless support.
- My grandsons Minenhle and Mawande for being patient with me when I could not play my role as a grandmother.
- My friends, mentors Mxolisi KaMancinza Zondi-Mthembu and Ntombenhle Ndlela, who assisted and supported me while I was working on this. I am deeply indebted.
- The respondents i.e. learners, the centre manager and the facilitators for their time to accommodate me within their busy schedule.
- My supervisor Dr. Zamo Hlela for his professional support and guidance.
- Finally, to The Almighty who gave me strength, wisdom and perseverance to carry on even when I was on the verge of giving up. His love and mercy have sustained me along this journey.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents: Wellington Zakhele and Orienda Nomfanelo Nala. Although I disappointed them by falling pregnant while still at school, they did not give up on me. May their souls rest in peace.

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Abbreviations

ABE	:	Adult Basic Education
ABET	:	Adult Basic Education and Training
AET	:	Adult Education and Training
CLC	:	Community Learning Centre
CETC	:	Community Education and Training Colleges
DHET	:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	:	Department of Education
IDP	:	Integrated Development Plan
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
FET	:	Further Education and Training
KRG	:	Kha Ri Gude
KZN	:	KwaZulu-Natal
PALC	:	Public Adult Learning Centre
PMB	:	Pietermaritzburg
SETA	:	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SIM	:	Student Integrated Model
TVET	:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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Abstract

The study explores factors that lead to the retention of students at Siyazama Community Learning Centre (CLC) in UMgungundlovu District in Pietermaritzburg. The study focused on retention at this centre because it is one of the centres that have a high rate of retention in the district. This study is guided by a qualitative case study approach located within the interpretive paradigm. The purpose is to explore factors that motivate adult students to register at Siyazama CLC, what drives them to continue to participate and to find out what factors lead to their retention at this centre.

Qualitative data collection allowed the study to gather a wide range of data through observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews. In-depth data collection methods were deemed appropriate as the study sought to unravel a phenomenon in its real-life context. Purposive sampling assisted in ensuring that relevant and appropriate participants participated.

Inductive and deductive approaches were used to analyse data. The notes and transcripts from interviews, observations and focus group discussions were simplified and organised so as to identify patterns and themes.

The study was guided by Tinto's (1993) Model of Student Integration which argues that if an adult student is comfortable and able to integrate socially and academically, this will reinforce his or her goals and commitments which will, in turn, strengthen his or her desire to stay and complete the programme.

The main findings revealed that pre-entry characteristics namely family background, skills and abilities as well as prior schooling that the student possesses when coming to register played a vital role in making him or her persist and complete the programme. Inside the CLC, the support they received from the peers, as well as the educators, promoted resilience. Furthermore, the curriculum offered at the CLC, and the balance between the academic and social environment contributed to their decision to stay. The availability of resources, e.g. administrative resources, human resources, as well as learning materials, played an important role in motivating participation in adult education. Financial support was also mentioned as having an influence in increasing the rate of retention as most of the students were unemployed and sometimes absent from classes due to the shortage of taxi fares.

The recommendation generated from the study is that the centre should be creative and introduce skills which will be incorporated into AET curriculum. It was also observed that adult learners are no different from other learners and should be financially supported in the same way as other students

from other institutions of learning. Another recommendation is that other CLCs that are not doing well in terms of retention should learn from Siyazama study.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction and background of the study

The study explores the factors that lead to student retention. The first section of the chapter gives a brief description of the context of the study. This is done in order to give the reader a picture or a background of the area where the centre under study is located. The second section presents a brief history of adult education and statistics of illiteracy in South Africa after the country gained a democratic government. The reason for highlighting this historical background is to give some insight of where South Africa is now, in terms of eradicating illiteracy. The researcher has included the report presented by the Department of Education (1997) and also from Aitchison and Harley (2006). The third section highlights some intervention programmes that were initiated by the Government in order to promote literacy in South Africa. The rationale for conducting the study, the purpose and focus are outlined. The problem statement, as well as the research questions, are also presented in this chapter. The chapter ends with the outline of the structure of the dissertation.

1.2. The context of the research

Woodlands is a former coloured area. It is now a multi-racial community consisting of Coloureds, Indians and Africans, but with a high concentration of Coloureds. This is a community that is dynamic and diverse in aspects of class, religion, age, gender and language. The population is 6 853 with 1 636 households. There are 5 073 Coloured people, 1 611 black African people, 54 White people, 100 Indians and 15 people listed as 'other' (PMB IDP, 2016.) This area is about 3km away from Pietermaritzburg. Poverty and unemployment are rife in this area. Issues that mostly affect the youth in this area are drugs, alcohol, crime and teenage pregnancy. Most of the youth have no tertiary education and therefore spend most of their time roaming the streets, standing on street corners and in shops (PMB IDP, 2016). Woodlands is surrounded by squatter camps. The rate of dropouts from public schools is very high. The youth in this area is unemployable because of their level of education. Thus only 36% of the population is qualified to be employed in the labour force, while 17% is unemployed and 47% is doing piece jobs (PMB IDB, 2016). Because of the low rate of literacy in this area, language is a barrier. Most parents do not attend parent's meetings because they are conducted in English. Africans living in this area also felt discriminated, as they could not even understand the politicians that were moving from house to house canvassing for votes. Because of poor attendance at the parent's meetings, one of the parents who was also an educator came with an idea of opening a centre at a secondary school in the area. It was the founder's vision that in order to fight poverty and unemployment in this area, an adult centre had to be established and be integrated into various

community development interventions as a means to liberate the poor. The centre was therefore established in 2012 (anonymous source and because of ethical reasons the researcher could not give more).

The centre under study operates within the premises of one of the secondary schools in Pietermaritzburg. This is a former model C school which is rich in resources and has most of the necessary facilities including boarding facilities. It is also one of the best schools in the province and produces good results. The Siyazama Centre started operating with only six facilitators. It started with two AET Level 1 classes and one AET Level 2 classes. There were Coloured people who were doing isiZulu as they wanted to communicate freely with Africans. This centre now goes up to AET Level 4.

1.3. Focus and purpose of the study

The study focussed on student retention. The participants were three AET Level 4 students and two AET Level 4 facilitators and the centre manager. The researcher chose to work with these learners because they had been at the centre for more than three years i.e. from AET Level 1 to AET Level 4. They stayed against all odds, while some of their classmates left without completing the programmes they registered for. The researcher wanted to know what made them stay at this CLC and complete the programme.

The purpose of the study was to understand the factors that lead to student retention at Siyazama CLC. The district now consists of 17 Community Learning Centres that have been reduced from 56 because of the high rate of dropouts (District statistics 2017). Therefore, the study aimed to find out the systems and strategies that are used by the CLC to maintain student attendance. The Department of Education, facilitators, and students can benefit from the findings.

1.4. The rationale of the study

The researcher is employed as an official at the uMgungundlovu District. She works at the Examination and Assessment sub-directorate. Her job is to develop, support and monitor all activities related to learner examinations and assessment in all schools and CLCs in the district. Her duty also includes visiting schools and CLCs during the writing of examinations to monitor whether exams are conducted according to prescripts laid down by law.

It was therefore in her interest to conduct this study due to her regular monitoring of examinations visits at CLCs. In most of the centres that she visited, she found that most of the adult students do not turn up to write exams. Batches of question papers would be returned to the district office still sealed. This

caught her attention and she was concerned. Hence the return of examination batches translates into student dropouts, loss of taxpayers' money and direct wasteful expenditure. However, in as much as those batches get returned unused, there were also those that would sit for their examinations. Focus was therefore not only on those who dropped out but also on those who endured the journey and finally sat for their examinations.

The study explores adult retention from a different angle to most of the studies conducted which focussed more on reasons for dropouts or participation. Despite the high rate of absenteeism during exams in most of the CLCs visited, this centre had a full house turning up to write exams. The question was therefore what this centre does to retain its students.

A study was needed to see what motivates students to stay and to complete their courses. Level 4 AET participants were chosen because they had been to this centre for quite some time. It was apparent that there was something that the centre does to retain students to stay until they finish the program. Therefore, the study could assist with its strategies to demonstrate how best to retain students. Thus the study aims to reduce or avoid the wasteful expenditure that mostly occurs when students do not show up to write examinations. Given the stated background, the study provides an understanding of what it means to retain students. The study is hoped to benefit students, lecturers and centre managers. The study is also hoped to go a long way in improving the functionality of CLCs in the region.

What was intriguing with Siyazama CLC was that the centre is so diverse. It accommodates students from different backgrounds. They speak different languages and practice different cultures. The centre is multi-racial in nature and this applies both to students and staff (facilitators). These are some of the reasons that attracted the researcher to Siyazama CLC.

Most previously disadvantaged communities around Msunduzi Municipality have CLCs or a satellite that is within reach. This means that the centres are within proximal distance. In so doing, the government is trying to make the AET a central place to develop the socio-economic background of citizens from every society. However, it is a concern that some people are still not utilising this opportunity. This begs the question: what are the deterrents that hinder them from participating in adult education?

1.5. Background of the study

This section argues that the previous apartheid government failed to provide adult education for blacks in the country. It further presents an argument that even though the current government has tried its

best through legislations, policies, different campaigns and interventions, the issue of retaining students at CLC remains a major challenge.

Adult education under the apartheid government

The previous South African government put in place policies that limited access to education for black people and paid little attention to literacy (DoE, 1997). This resulted in some 9, 4 million adults with less than nine years of schooling, who still have a need, desire and ability to re-enter the education and the training system. The current socio-economic status for existing adult learners in the system shows extreme inequalities in the level of income, high unemployment and overwhelming poverty. The lowest 20% of income earners get 1.5% of the national income (as compared to the wealthiest 10% of households which receive 50%), (DoE 1997). According to the policy, South Africans who fall below the poverty line are between 36% and 53% of the population. The policy further reports that about 65% of Africans are poverty-stricken, as compared to 33% of coloured people, 2.5% of Asians and 0, 7% of white people. However, McKay (2007) cites that South Africa is high in production and infrastructure, high in gross domestic product and gross national product and all these exist alongside high levels of poverty.

Aitchison and Harley (2006) cite that according to the 2001 census results, about 18% of the people aged 20 years or older had no education at all. A further 16% had finished primary school education which ranges from Grade 1 to 6. This means that over 4, 5 million (4 567 497) had no schooling and just over 4 million (4 083 742) had some education. This means that about 8, 6 million South African adults aged 20 years or older could be declared to be functionally illiterate.

The above statistics are a clear indication that adult education was neglected by the former government. However, when the present government came into power in 1994, it brought some changes. Adult education became one of the priority area targeted by the government in order to bring change for economic development. New policies have been formulated in order to redress the imbalances of the past and also to focus on the areas that were neglected.

In addition to the above statistics, McKay (2007) cites that approximately 25% of people in urban areas and 67% in rural areas live in poverty in South Africa. The population of about 33% was living in poverty in 1999 (Presidency 2003), job opportunities were reduced, and the rate of unemployment became very high. Job creation was a problem. In the context of poverty, education needs to be used as a tool to assist people to acquire skills in order to generate income and sustain their livelihood. In the 6.8 million of people in South Africa, 16.6% receive social grants. Although the number of people

receiving grants because of poverty is increasing, McKay (2007) says that it is still difficult for illiterate people to access information about the grants and to deal with the filling in of forms in banks in order to access these grants. Moreover, according to a General Household Survey conducted by Statistics South Africa, 92.9% of South Africans can read and write (Pretorius, 2012). This is informed by 4.163 million adults who have a qualification higher than grade 12, 18,958 adults with the highest qualification of between Grade 7 and 11 (Pretorius, 2012).

Adult Education provision under the current government

In this section, the researcher presents some of the initiatives by the current government to support adult education in South Africa. The Government has an obligation to give support to all citizens of the country who were previously disadvantaged and did not get an opportunity to go to school. Participation of these citizens in education is important for the economic development of the country. Thus, in an attempt to respond to this challenge, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education introduced the Masifundisane Campaign in 2006 and the Kha Ri Gude Campaign in 2008. This was another intervention strategy that was implemented alongside AET to fight illiteracy (DoE, 2014).

1.5.1. Masifundisane Campaign

The Masifundisane Campaign aimed to reach every adult learner within the deep rural areas of the KwaZulu Natal Province. The aim of the campaign was to make the KZN province literate by the year 2009. It was an initiative from the Premier's office. The curriculum was designed to be equivalent to Adult Education and Training Level 1, which allows adult learners to progress to Level 2 of AET. This curriculum was also in line with the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). The Masifundisane Campaign received a positive reaction from the communities of KwaZulu-Natal, and as a result, some individuals' lives were changed. Participants became functionally literate in their mother tongue. Skills acquired improved their standard of living. About 477 534 adult learners became literate. This number also includes 186 blind adult learners who are now able to read and write using Braille (DoE, 2014).

In 2011, Masifundisane and AET were merged and all aspects of these programmes were integrated. The Masifundisane officials were all absorbed into AET. This was done because of the impact that this programme had on both the parents and their children. Adults attending the programme could read and write and most parents were able to assist their children with homework (DoE, 2014).

Table 1.1: Masifundisane Adult Literacy Campaign

Year	No of Learners
2007/2008	167 361
2008/2009	182 817
2009/2010	103 065
Total reached	477 534

The above statistics reflect the numbers of the students that enrolled, successfully sat for exams and obtained certificates (DoE, 2014). They show the effectiveness of the campaign. The number of students that registered with the programme was increasing annually; although, in 2010 there was a decrease in the number of students that registered.

1.5.2. Kha Ri Gude Literacy Campaign

The Kha Ri Gude (KRG) Literacy Campaign was another intervention programme that was introduced by the current government in 2008 to further reduce illiteracy nationally. The Kha Ri Gude Literacy campaign (KRG) just like Masifundisane was equivalent to AET Level 1 (DoE, 2014) and continued to 2013. The curriculum focused on two basic learning areas, namely mother tongue and English and was similar to AET curriculum.

Table 1.2 below shows the number of adult learners reached by Kha Ri Gude Campaign from 2009-2013 (DoE, 2014).

Table 1.2: Kha Ri Gude Campaign

Year	No of Learners Reached	No of Volunteers
2009	132 395	8 826
2010	130 076	8 938
2011	146 220	9 001
2012	143 304	8 956
2013	148 165	9 294
Total reached	700 160	45 015

Given the above statistics, in both Table 1.1 and Table 1.2, it can be argued that the government is striving to give adult education priority by raising adult learner consciousness towards making education a societal issue. However, student attendance is still a big challenge.

Despite government attempts, there is evidence that adult education initiatives still face challenges in retaining the desired number of students in the system. As a result, the Higher Education Department has reduced the number of centres by clustering them (DHET, 2015). This clustering has reduced the employment rate because of the number of adult educators and centre managers that were employed at AET centres. UMgungundlovu District had 56 centres that have since been reduced to 17. A centre is

now made of satellites campuses which must have an enrolment of between 75 and a maximum of 199 adult learners (DHET, 2015). Each centre has a centre manager who manages three to four satellites.

Table 1.3 below is an example of some of the centres that have been clustered:

Table 1.3: Clustered CLC District statistics (2017)

Centre (campus)	Satellites	Total number
Zamafuphi		25
	Amathuli	43
	Buhlebuyeza	46
	Nomyele	43
Total		157
Manaye		207 (full-time centre)
	NC Ndlela	47
	Phumelela	182
	Zizamele	47
Total		403

Most of the centres in the district have been clustered into two or three satellites, and as a result, some educators that were centre managers have lost their jobs because the number of students in their centres has decreased. While the number of students in other centres is decreasing, the centre under study still has high numbers in enrolment.

The need to retain adult learners is important for social economic development in the country. The dropout rates are very high in AET centres (Table 1.3) (DHET, 2015). When factors that promote retention are identified, this would assist the government, the centre and lecturers to address the issues that chase the adult students away (DHET, 2015).

1.6. Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify factors that contribute to adult learner motivation to enrol and stay in Siyazama CLC.
2. Identify factors that promote adult learners' participation at Siyazama CLC.
3. Identify factors that maintain/promote learner retention at Siyazama CLC.

1.7. The problem statement

The problem is that there seems to be so much that has been studied regarding dropouts (Chapter 2 related studies). This study on retention will provide empirical knowledge about retaining adult students in the system. The fact that there is not much that is done to understand retention motivated this study which focussed on finding concrete strategies to deal with the retention problem. Most Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are affected by a high number of dropouts and do not know how to retain adult students. If the stated problem is not addressed, the reality of people continuing to enrol and not complete their courses will persist. That will result in taxpayers' money being wasted and government failing in its endeavour to address illiteracy. Furthermore, the country will continue to sit with the problem of having citizens that depend on its social grants and hand-outs, which are expensive and not sustainable.

1.8. Research questions

The study was guided by specific research questions. These questions emanated from the research problem. They were answered as the research unfolded, more especially in the findings and recommendations of the study. The study was therefore conducted to respond to the following questions:

1. What motivates an adult learner to enrol and stay in Adult Education and Training (AET)?
2. What factors encourage adult learners to continue to participate?
3. What can be done to maintain/promote retention in AET centres?

1.9. Structure of the dissertation

Below is a brief outline of how the dissertation is structured chapter by chapter:

Chapter 1 - Introduction and background of the study

This chapter has introduced the research by presenting the problem that has to be explored. It outlines the background and context of the study, the focus, the problem statement, and the rationale. The research questions that guide the study are also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 2 - Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter provides a review of the literature that is related to the study and the theoretical framework. Different scholarly debates on the factors that lead to retention are explored. These scholars present their arguments and findings on how they view student retention and what the factors are which

promote student retention at a community centre. Key terms are highlighted and defined in this chapter. Tinto's Student Integration Model (SMT) (1993) is employed as the theoretic framework that guides the study.

Chapter 3 - Research methodology

The chapter begins by presenting the issue of reflexivity and positionality. This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed. It provides the paradigm used and the reasons, the use of the case study and reasons thereof are also stated. The researcher further presents the methods of data collection and the reasons for using these methods and ethical issues. The last part of this chapter highlights the data analysis procedures followed.

Chapter 4 - Data presentation and analysis

The chapter presents data collected from participants of Siyazama CLC. The data are categorised into themes and each of them is discussed in order to establish factors that lead to student retention at Siyazama Centre.

Chapter 5 - Interpretation and discussion of findings

The researcher in this chapter discusses the findings using relevant literature as a reference. Findings in this chapter are also discussed in light of the research questions and theoretical framework.

Chapter 6 - Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

This chapter gives a summary of how the research unfolded, including the limitations and provided recommendations arising from the findings.

1.10. Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the topic, the purpose and focus of the study. At the beginning of the chapter, the context of the study was presented. The chapter further presented the rationale for the research study. Some statistics were highlighted in terms of where South Africa is with regards to adult education. The chapter further outlined intervention programmes initiated by the present government as a response to the call to eradicate illiteracy. The rationale has also been outlined. The research questions that will be the guiding principles throughout this work were highlighted. The chapter ended by presenting the structure of the whole dissertation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on retention of adult students. It is divided into sections. The first section highlights the state of the problem and the provision of adult education within the country and province. The second section presents the legal framework of adult education provision in South Africa. The third section outlines and defines the key terms that are relevant and frequently used in this study, such as, adult education, adult learner, adult education and training, persistence resilience student retention and motivation. The fourth section draws on Rogers (2004) and other scholars' ideas on different motivational strategies that drive learning in adult education. The fifth section gives some insights into the similarities in the study conducted by different researchers from different contexts on factors contributing to retention. The last part of this chapter discusses the theoretical framework that shaped and guided the study and outlines the criticism of the theory by other authors as well as its suitability.

2.2. The South African and KwaZulu-Natal context of ABET

Adult Education and Training (AET) previously known as ABET is a formal programme for adult learners. Tuition takes place in the Public Adult Learning Centres (PALC) now known as Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Adult Education and Training (AET) was introduced for all adults and out of school youth who could not access formal education and the youth from the age of 16 and upwards who did not finish school (DHET, 2015). This programme is different from ABET because it includes formal, non-formal and informal learning activities to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to promote the standard of living. According to the Adult Basic Education and Training Act No 52 (2000), AET culminates in the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC). AET gives entry to Further Education and Training (FET) band for adults to further their studies. It also prepares learners to register at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges on completion of the programme. AET learners are drawn from all spheres of society with the aim of assisting them to keep up with the economic, social, political and cultural and other aspects of life. As AET is skills-based, it prepares adult learners to be marketable to society and reduces the unemployment rate. Literacy allows an adult to participate in all the democratic processes (DHET, 2015).

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act No 52 (2000) was created to establish a nationally coordinated adult basic education and training system to promote cooperative governance and provide programme-based adult education. The policy provides a framework to restructure and transform

programmes so that they respond to the social and economic needs of society throughout the country. This legislation further provides the framework for the Community Learning Centres (CLC) to operate from the existing public schools (DoE, 2014). These CLCs are within reach of every community member. In 2014, KwaZulu-Natal had a total of 1 107 CLCs with 59 833 learners, amongst these CLCs only three of them are operating on a full time basis. They are at Umlazi, UMgungundlovu and Zululand districts and are funded by the KZN Department of Education (DoE 2000). There were 7 191 adult educators employed on a contractual basis.

In April 2015, AET function was transferred to higher education and PALCs were merged to community colleges as a new type of post-schooling institution (DHET, 2015). These community colleges focus on developing communities i.e. the youth and adults who have or have not been to school. According to DHET (2015), community colleges are now classified as small, medium and large depending on the number of learners that have registered.

In my view, even though major strides have been made, retention remains the major challenge. To support my argument, the Continuity Education and Training Act 16 of 2006 also identified some challenges with regard to AET provision (see Table 1.3). According to this Act, AET qualification is another type of post-school education that does not have an impact in terms of skills development and poverty and unemployment eradication.

Although the White Paper for Post-Schooling Education points out that the education system needs to find strategies to cater for all the poor South Africans that were previously disadvantaged, little has been done to address the challenges. As a result, the rate of students dropping out at these CLCs is still high and this is evidenced by the report presented on the 30th October 2015 to the Ministry of Higher Education. This report clearly indicated that AET has bigger challenges, especially in KwaZulu- Natal. According to the task team, more than 50% of educators in adult centres are unqualified and only possess a Grade 12 certificate. This is a critical factor because, in order for a teacher to stand in front of learners, he or she should have undergone some training. Having unqualified educators to teach adult students affects the provision of Adult Education and Training in CLCs.

In most centres, centre managers are 'double parkers'. They are full-time educators during the day in full-service public schools and become centre managers at night. It means that such centre managers work more than eight hours a day. When they reach the second job, they are already tired and monitoring performance of educators and students may be affected. This suggests that adult centres need to have their educators and centre managers on a full-time basis.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the total number of facilitators is 3 256 and 22% of the number are double parkers while 78% are dedicated educators. This again suggests that the Department of Education has to revisit the provision of resources including human resources, for teaching and learning to be effective

Most of these learning centres operate from public schools and to have access to the institution depends on the appointment of the educator in this school as the centre manager. This can affect the practice and provision of AET because it means that even if that manager is not performing up to expectations he will not be removed.

Would the above findings have an effect on retention of students? South Africa has a strong legislative framework that promotes adult education and training. Adult Basic and Training Act (2000) stipulates regulations for AET and provides for the establishment, governance and funding of public adult learning centres. The Continuing Education and Training Act 2006 aims to create Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs) and CLCs as other kinds of institutions to provide post-schooling and training. The South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995) provides for a qualification framework that includes AET and the Skills Development Act (1998) promotes skills acquired in the workplace.

2.3. Legal provisions for ABET in South Africa

McKay (2012) states that in the 1990s the academics and some institutions came out with proposals that recommended change in adult education. Below are some of the policies that played a major role in ABET: Interim Guidelines for ABET (1995), South African Qualification Act (1995), National Education Policy Act (1996), South African Constitution Act (1996), Skills Development Act (1998), Audits Amendments Act (No 37 of 2008), Skills Development Levy (1999), Adult Education and Training Act 52 of 2000 and New Institutional Landscape National plan for FET colleges (2008).

McKay (2007) argues that when dealing with AET, the consideration of the legislative framework is crucial for understanding the gap that exists between implementation and legislation. Although legislation exists, there are still challenges posed by inadequate resources.

The first policy that was established in 1995 for AET in South Africa was the Interim Guidelines. These guidelines state that although there were night schools to assist adults that could not go to school prior to 1994, there was still a high rate of attrition and a high number of adults who have never been to school. Millions of South Africans are still illiterate (McKay, 2007). The Interim Guidelines recommended the development of the ABET system, that led to the establishment of ABET sub-

directorates in all nine provinces of South Africa. ABET is linked to the development of human resources for national development.

In 1995, the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) was formed. The main function of SAQA was to develop and implement the National Qualification Framework NQF. The key function of NQF is to credit unit standards that promote access and transfer knowledge and skills (Mutula, 2016). Another key function of NQF was to address the past inequalities in adult education and create employment opportunities to develop each adult learner personally and socially.

The National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996) was established to protect the rights of adults to basic education and access to educational institutions, (McKay, 2007). This right to education implies that all learning which consists of resources and institutional support was a need to each adult learner. This policy targeted mostly the out of school youth.

Furthermore, the Constitution of South Africa (1996) provides a framework for the delivery of the right to basic education, it also states in Section 29 of the Bill of Rights that the State must make the right to education including AET and further education available to all citizens. Although the constitution defines AET as a right to education, it is observed that there is no balance between policy and practice as there is a decline in learners enrolled in educational programmes and also a decline or no resources in institutions.

In addition, the Multi-Year Implementation Plan (Department of Education 1997), further puts an emphasis on the need to focus on out-of-school youth, disabled learners, women and inmates. It lays out a framework and norms to deliver AET (Aitchison et al., 2000). The main aim of this multi-plan policy was to serve 2.5 million learners by the year 2001. However, the plan failed and not even a third of the number was reached (Aitchison et al., 2000). Aitchison et al. (2000) further point out that although AET has plans and policies to guide implementations, this sector is increasingly becoming marginalised. Funds allocated are only 0.87%, which makes it difficult in terms of delivery. Additionally, adult educators are not recognised and their status is very poor.

The National Skills Development Act (1998) was established to develop skills for all the citizens of South Africa. Through this regulation, the government committed itself to overall human resource development (McKay, 2012). The Act states that in order to develop the economic and social aspects of the country, the citizens must have basic skills like reading and writing, communicating skills and the ability to solve problems in their homes, communities as well as workplaces.

The National Skills Development Act and the Skills Development Levy Act were established by the South African government in 1998 and 1999, respectively. These Acts were government initiatives to promote an active labour market. They provided institutions programming and funding policies for skills development. The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were established to be responsible for the training of citizens in their respective sectors (McKay 2012). According to McKay (2012), SETA is a number of sectorial educative and training authorities and was established to educate and train custodians in their sectors.

Another policy that regulated Adult Education and Training (AET) was the Adult Basic Education and Training Act of 2000. It provided a framework in AET centres and schools. Governing bodies were established at schools and centres to assist in monitoring the functioning of the centres (Aitchison 2006). AET centres have been controlled by the Department of Basic Education until the function shift in 2015 to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2015).

2.4. Definition of key terms

This section describes and defines terms that will feature prominently in this study. The section is particularly relevant because, with adult education in South Africa, change is associated with name changes. Furthermore, these terms are the foundation of the study as they are the language that will inform discussions of findings in Chapter 5. These terms include Adult Basic and Training (ABET), Adult Basic Education (ABE), adult learner, curriculum, persistence, resilience, student retention, student drop out, and motivation.

2.4.1. Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and Adult Basic Education (ABE)

In defining terminology that will be frequently used in this study, it is important to explain the difference between two terminologies previously used in adult education, namely, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and Adult Basic Education (ABE). Drawing from McKay (2007), ABE refers to the educational base that adults need to improve their life chances. Adult basic education and training refers to the foundational income-generating or occupational skills that adults need in order to improve their standard of living. When these two concepts are put together, the new term is ABET which means the basic knowledge, skills, understanding and abilities that the students need to acquire in order to improve their livelihood. This means that the programmes designed for adults bring education and training together (McKay, 2007). The name ABET has also changed to Adult Education and Training (AET) which is now a formal programme that is designed for all adults who did not have an opportunity to get formal education. AET includes formal education as well as skills training. The

reason for including skills was to prepare students to be marketable to society in order to reduce unemployment (DoE Act No 52 of 2000).

2.4.2. An adult learner

An adult learner is a person who is 16 years of age and above (DoE Act 52 of 2000). However, Knowles (1984) cites that an adult learner is different from the ordinary traditional learner in that he or she is self-directive, has a lot of life experiences, is ready to learn and is also motivated to learn. Knowles (1984) bases his definition of an adult learner on certain assumptions.

As a person becomes older his or her self-identity shifts from that of being a dependent individual to being a self-directed person. He further states that an adult learner comes with a huge amount of experience which can be a resource for learning. Adults are mostly driven by intrinsic motivation rather than need to know why they should learn something. They come to class with that sense of being ready to learn.

Although these assumptions have been critiqued by authors such as St Clair (2002) and Kerka (2002) that they do not hold true for all, and although they are Eurocentric, they serve as a good starting point in understanding an adult learner. These assumptions are still used today in the field of adult education (Chao, 2009). From an Afrocentric point of view, an adult is somebody who by virtue of having lived for a certain number of years, has gained some life experience and the maturity to teach youngsters in the community how to carry out their tasks and to teach them a way of life. An adult, therefore, must be a parent, a worker, an uncle, aunt, a brother. In the African setting, age alone is not enough to be used as a criterion to determine adulthood (Fasokun et al., 2005). The tasks given to adults differ from country to country. In African countries, even if an individual reaches a certain age that does not mean he or she is an adult. To be an adult in these countries you need to go through some traditional ceremonies.

2.4.3. Curriculum

According to Prideaux (2003), curriculum is the manifestation of educational ideas that should be put into practice, and it requires all the intended learning experiences of the school. He further states that a curriculum is the result of human agency as it is supported by ethics and principles regarding the knowledge and skills that learners should demonstrate. When defining the curriculum, it should not be divorced from the context in which it is used. In addition, Howell (2014), states that the curriculum is the combination of the content and the material that the student learns and completes during the academic year. To support these statements in the policy document, the South African context defines

the curriculum as what is to be taught, i.e. the content, how is it to be taught i.e. the teaching methods, and lastly what is to be assessed and how (DHET, 2006).

2.4.4. Persistence

This is defined as an adult staying in the programme for as long as he or she can, engaging in self-directed study until he or she completes (Pascarella, 1999). Similarly, Hagedorn (2005) defines retention an institutional measure and persistence as a student measure. If the student feels satisfied with the institution, he or she will persist and continue with his or her studies. The feeling of belonging and the attachment the student has to the institution will drive their persistence. The objective of every student is to get a certificate or to graduate (Crissman Isher and Updraft, 2005). There are pre-college characteristics that the institution should attend to when enrolling the students. These characteristics are prior academic achievements, socioeconomic status, gender, age, financial aid, race, parent and other family support and student commitment to the programme. These features are important to the institution and students to assist them to better understand how to promote persistence (Crissman Isher and Updraft, 2005). They further argue that enrolment stage, ability and motivation of students have to be taken into consideration when promoting persistence.

2.4.5. Resilience

Resilience is the process of adapting well against all odds. This happens when an adult student is able to adapt to difficult circumstances like trauma, tragedy, threats or sources of stress. Resilience means returning from difficult experience and bouncing back after being stretched or constrained or recovering strength or spirit (Cicchetti, 2000).

There are many studies that had been conducted on resilience, but there is little agreement on the definition of resilience among scholars. Scholars define the construct of resilience in different ways. Richardson (2002) defines resilience as the method of coping with disturbing stressful life or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that result from the event. Similarly, Higgins (1994) points out that resilience is the route to self-righting or evolution while Wollins and Wollins (1993) defines resilience as the ability to spring up back, or withstand hardship and repair yourself.

2.4.6. Student retention

Student retention is how well the institution keeps students progressing from year to year until they complete the programme (Tinto, 1975). Similarly, Crawford (1999) defines retention as upkeep of continued enrolment in classes throughout a semester. In special programmes and community

education, retention is defined in terms of student objectives (Walleri, 1981). This scholar further cites that community centre retention cannot be measured by the graduation of students, because graduation is not the goal for every student in the community college. Some students enrol at these learning centres in order to obtain certain skills and thereafter leave. Therefore, in community colleges, retention can be defined in terms of programme completion.

Some students register at community learning centres with different objectives. In my experience as an educator, some of the adult students would say they wanted to be able to read the Bible, and others would say they wanted to learn to write their names. Walleri (1981, p5) continues to say, “for students in special programmes and community education, retention can be defined in terms of student’s objectives”. Terenzini (1987) also adds that the student who leaves the college before obtaining a certificate but achieving his or her goal is an “attainer”. On the other hand, a drop out is when students who are enrolled in a programme for a particular year, discontinue their studies in that particular field without finishing the programme (Sondlo, 2013). Furthermore, throughput is far different from the two terms because it refers to the students who enrolled in a programme, became actively involved in all the activities of teaching and learning and completed the programme within the specified time (Sondlo, 2013).

2.4.7. Student drop-out

Student drop-out is defined as any student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a programme of studies without transferring to another institution (Dhlamini and Heeralal, 2014). These scholars argue that adult students participate in learning as a result of their own volition because learning is voluntary, especially with adults. However, they must realise the benefit of their participation or they will drop out of learning. The purpose of facilitating adult learning is the notion that it is not enough for adult education programmes to satisfy the identified learning needs of the individuals. Rather, they should seek to help adult learners to transform their way of thinking about themselves and their needs. If this is not achieved, some of them will drop out.

2.4.8. Motivation

Motivation is not observable. It is the internal state that causes people to behave in a particular way to accomplish a particular goal and purpose (Denhardt et al., 2008). Motivation is important for a student to participate in a learning programme.

There are two types of motivation, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Deci (1999) states that intrinsic motivation is the behaviour that is seen where there is no reward except the activity itself. It is

generated from within the person, Beck (2004). This means that the drive to want to learn must come from within the adult student. When the student wishes to change his or her standard of living he or she looks for learning opportunities. This means that that particular student has something inside that drives him or her. Malone and Lepper (1987) cite that this type of motivation is what a person does without external inducement.

Extrinsic motivation is when a person is driven by external forces. According to Gilley and Maycunich (2000), students are responsive to external motivation such as promotions, recognition in the form of praise, rewards and certificates. Similarly, Gouws et al. (2008) in Dhlamini (2012) point out that extrinsic motivation comes from somewhere outside the person. A student who is extrinsically motivated believes that he or she will succeed but heavily depends on the facilitators.

It is an indisputable fact that to try to determine why an adult learner decides to go to school after the period of about 20 to 30 years of non- schooling, to learn to read and write, is important to the policymakers, programme designers and adult facilitators.

Therefore, Rogers (2004) points out that adult learning programmes should be designed according to the needs of the learners for them to be effective. He further says that in order to retain them, it is important to identify their potential and what their intentions are. It goes without saying that if the system has to help these students, it needs to listen to them so as to assist them in achieving their goals. Failing this, they stop participation in the programmes (Rogers, 2004).

Vella (2002) argues that while adult learners may register for the same programme, they all come with different expectations. She further says that no two adults perceive the world in the same way. The adult learner has to understand that he or she has the power to decide what happens to him or her in the learning process. Adults are individuals who need to see the immediate change caused by new learning. Vella's (2002) argument is supported by Rogers (2004) when he points out that adult learners come for a second chance to learning with different intrinsic motivations. These motivations drive learning and are important in determining the way adult education programmes should be planned in order to meet the learner's needs. I also argue that these motivations are relevant to this study because the facilitators need to understand the key things that drive adult students to enrol at the centre. According to Rogers, they come to school with different needs and learning should start from that platform. These motivating factors for attending AET are, according to Rogers (2000), outlined in no significant order as symbolic reasons, instrumental reasons, opportunities provided by the programme and to join formal and non-formal education.

2.4.9.1. Symbolic reasons

Some students go back to school, not because they want to be educated and better their standard of living, but because they want to join the group of literate people. This reason relates to social status. These students have an inferiority complex. They regard themselves as ignorant and powerless. This is what drives or motivates them to enrol at AET. Their reasons are to be transferred from one class to another in order to gain power. They claim that people scorn them because they cannot be engaged in textual communications. These students regard being literate as having a symbolic value. Literacy for them is a tool to belong to a certain group in society. These adults have not set goals or milestones to be achieved. They only wish to belong (Rogers, 2004).

2.4.9.2. Instrumental reasons

There are adult learners who register at an adult centre for instrumental reasons. They want to gain literacy skills because they want to perform some literacy tasks. Several adult learners go back to school so as to be able to read the Bible and use hymn books. Adult educators should understand that this activity involves the form of numbers (page numbers) and reading the text set in a particular order. Another reason for joining the programmes is to be able to write letters to friends and relatives, writing postcards and filling in of forms at the bank without being assisted. They also want to be able to perform literacy tasks like filling in post office money orders (Rogers, 2004). It is observed that these learners with instrumental reasons have clearly set goals that motivate them. They learn fast and participate actively when they see that the literacy programme is helping them with their day-to-day literacy uses. If they see that this literacy class is contributing to their purpose, they will stay and complete the programme.

2.4.9.3. Opportunities provided by the programme

Some adult learners join the literacy classes not to learn literacy skills for use in their everyday situation, but for the opportunities the programme provides. These learners come to class because the programme will open doors for them on completion. In these classes, some join so that they can learn to read and write in order to get a driver's licence. In some contexts, learners will join these classes to get a certificate and be promoted at work. Literacy classes provide opportunities for some learners to be Community Health Volunteers in their communities which earns them a stipend (Rogers, 2004).

2.4.9.4. Joining formal and non-formal education

According to Rogers (2004), the fourth and the main motivation for adult learners to come to literacy classes is to be able to join formal and non-formal educational programmes. Adult education gives

access to further learning. The adult learning programmes are the stepping stones to further education so as to enter Higher Education. Rogers (2004) goes on to say these motivations presented are the basis for curriculum developers. Every stakeholder responsible for adult education should have clear knowledge of who the learners are and what motivates them to learn. Therefore, curriculum designers need to look closely at the context within which adult education programmes are being offered so as to meet all these expectations. When their expectations are met, it is possible to retain them. This argument is supported by Knowles (1980) when he points out that adults are independent and have the power to make their decisions.

2.5. Related studies on student retention

2.5.1 Motivation strategies that increase retention

In this part of my literature review, I will present the studies conducted internationally and within South Africa. The first part highlights the studies and findings that were conducted by different scholars on the factors that lead to retention.

This literature review is drawn from the study conducted by Gall (2013) on the strategies that can be employed to increase the retention rate in Pennsylvania. Gall's (2013) findings agree with Rogers (1980) when he points out that adult learners are different and are motivated by different factors. Gall (2013) continues to say intrinsic motivation plays an important role in increasing the desire to learn and continue learning. This is also supported by Knowles (1989) who argues that internal motivation has more effect than external motivation because this type of motivation comes from within. Motivation is therefore the key element in retaining learners. Adult motivation is different from that of a child because the adult has had good or bad experiences that can act as a driving force. In order to promote intrinsic motivation, facilitators of adults need to use methods that are meaningful. Kosstelecky and Hoskinson (2005) in Gall (2013) argue that motivational interventions seek performance change by creating an environment that will have a predictable and positive influence on people's motivation to learn, motivation to work and motivation in general, which are major influences on performance. Gall (2013) cited these motivational strategies to increase retention rate as, flexibility and goal, the role of peers, relating academics to real life and individualised instruction and support.

Adults need to be motivated and see the need to return to school and stay. Gall (2013) argues that adults need to be assisted to create their goals, this is because some adult learners decide to return to school but they do not have any idea what they will do or which project to register for. Gall (2013) points out that when working with adults you need to first identify and discuss with them the barriers that hinder

them from attending classes to promote retention. Another strategy is to make alternative study arrangements for students to limit dropping out. Gall (2013) strongly supports the fact that motivation is the basis of all processes in adult education. In his study that he conducted at Quinsigamond Community College, he found that in order to address the low retention rate and persistence, the College introduced a 'Learner Persistence Project' to their adult education class. The project works like this: students who have had difficulty in attending classes because of various reasons were allowed to "stopout" or leave the programme before finishing (Keffalinou 2009). These students were allowed to complete their studies at home. Support was given weekly by the counsellor. This counsellor met with students as well as their teachers to discuss their progress and to address any barrier that is noticed. There was flexibility on the date they would return to the programme. While at home, they were given assignments and there was flexibility on the date to return the assignment. This approach, according to Gall (2013), increased the desire to learn and to see their progress. Benchmarks were set (Keffalinou, 2009) in (Gall 2013) and this is a good strategy to improve retention nevertheless this strategy needs students that are hardworking and committed to their education. Some learners find it difficult to work on their own. Nevertheless, the results of this project were tremendous. Motivation for learning increased dramatically, for example, the retention rate increased from 13% in 2007 to 44% in 2008 (Gall, 2013).

Adding to this debate, are Broussard and Garrison (2004) who confirm that goals are the driving force for an individual student to learn. These scholars differentiate goals into two, namely; mastery goals, which are related to intrinsic values and performance goals, which can be compared to extrinsic motivation. A student is motivated to learn because there is a goal that he or she needs to achieve. The stronger the goal and commitment, the greater the opportunity to complete the programme.

According to Gall (2013), it is believed that peers play a very important role in encouraging their friends to go back to school. In support of this argument, Goto et al. (2009) state that Bellingham Technical College and Skagit Valley in Whatcom County Washington implemented an outreach programme targeting local communities. The reason for establishing this programme was that most of the students at this college reported that their friends and other people are the ones who motivated them to make a decision to enrol at adult education in order to improve their education. According to Goto (2009), in this programme, students were trained to be spokespeople in their communities. Current and former students were used. They went around their communities, visiting churches, day-care centres, malls, etc. to advocate for adult education. To assist these students, the college printed T-shirts and placards to carry during advocacy. Pictures and brief biographies of selected students were used at these campaigns. The selected students had to give their testimonies on their success in recorded videos.

During these campaigns, students who were not attending classes were motivated when they saw their peers and the progress that they had made in life. These advertisement techniques were a success. Consequently, more students registered for the programmes and were committed to complete in order to proceed to vocational programmes. Data collected showed that the retention rate had increased, for example, the technology programme had 80% retention rate (Goto et al., 2009).

Similarly, Guthrie (2000) and Hidi and Harachiewicz (2000) agree that when students learn cooperatively in groups, sharing ideas, they become motivated and eager to learn more. Bossert (1988) adds that learning in groups results in greater achievements. According to Bossert (1988), peer encouragement improves self-esteem and engagement in tasks. When students work with others collaboratively, it triggers personal and individual interest (Hidi and Harackewicz, 2000).

Gall (2013) further argues that to relate to real life is another strategy that can be used to retain adult learners. In order to make learning more meaningful, the adult facilitators need to thoroughly understand what motivates an adult learner to learn, what creates barriers and how these barriers are created. These learners have their own personal biographies. They view the world in their own way. They also view success in their own way (Yap, 2009). In addition, Knowles (1998) points out that these views are formed by a reservoir of experience that the adult learner comes to class with. This argument is also supported by Siegel (2007) who asserts that, when designing the learning programme, facilitators need to start from abstract to concrete i.e. start from what the learners know to the unknown. Focus should be on current events and how they can be related to the students' immediate environment. Kostelcky and Hoskinson (2005), in the study they conducted at the University of Northern Iowa, found that when teaching a novel, an example can be related to their everyday life. This promotes concentration and interest because the example comes from their immediate context. Novels according to Kostelescky and Hoskinson (2005) raise curiosity to students because they want to know what will happen next. Making them analyse it, present and relate the situation to their life experiences promotes the interest to learn. Some students have newspapers and magazines in their houses. They can be asked to bring them and these magazines help in promoting summarising and interpreting skills. When the learning material is linked to the adult learner's experience, it makes learning interesting and they become interested in the course.

I agree with these scholars because an adult learner comes to school with vast experience. Therefore, the educators when designing the activities should start from what the student knows i.e., to relate to what they know in order to make the lesson easier.

Some students who drop out of school do not want to talk about their school education because of the bad experiences they had at school. Some of those experiences are the reasons for them to discontinue schooling. Gall (2003) points out that it is shocking to know that some students still hold onto the bad emotions they experienced at school and that became a barrier for them to further their studies. Gall (2013) further states that every adult learner he interviewed mentioned a negative experience from school educators, curriculum practices and organisational barriers. These students mentioned that there is a vast difference between school and college. This means that adult learners are motivated to learn when they get support from the institution. Gall (2013) further emphasises that facilitators need to be accessible. He continues to highlight that individual needs should be catered for. A learner's decisions should be respected (Golden el 2005). Some learners have many family issues at home and teachers do not support them which leads to dropouts. What Gall (2013) is highlighting in his study is the support and the respect adult learners felt at a college setting while they were engaged in programmes, and how being treated with respect and dignity encouraged them to stay and continue with their studies.

Swail (2002) agrees with Gall (2013) in that providing academic support to students improves student retention. Effective academic advising is of vital importance to lay out an appropriate course map for students. In supporting them, students should also receive counselling and guidance that relates to their needs. It is also important to use the faculty as student advisers. The academic guidance may also include role modelling and mentoring, as these form another support network to motivate them (Forrest 1999).

2.5. 2 Community of practice as a factor that promotes student retention

This section of the study presents the community of practice as another factor that can promote retention.

A community of practice is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact on a regular basis (Wenger, 2014). A community of practice plays an important role in developing the knowledge and skills of individuals. This argument is drawn from Johnsons et al. (2015) in the study they conducted in the Puerto Rican community. Their findings state that knowledge can be acquired and transmitted among adults through communities of practice. Similarly, Gauthier (2016) in the study he conducted in the North American context found that retention can be improved by incorporating Wenger's (1998) communities of practice into the classroom during the teaching and learning process. Gauthier (1998) further encourages adult facilitators to consider conceptualising the holistic framework for course design by designing for classroom communities of practice.

Wenger (1998) states that there are three characteristics of a community of practice, namely, a domain which is the common interest that joins and holds together a community. People that belong to a domain have a certain commitment. The ability that differentiates them from others is shared. The second characteristic is the community that is bound by shared actions that they engage themselves in, for example, meetings or discussions. The last characteristic is the practice where members of the practice are called practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources, experiences, stories, tools and ways of addressing problems.

Drawing from Wenger (1998), a community of practice when employed in a classroom setting can promote the retention of learners. Adult learners are diverse. They come to the programme with different backgrounds. They have vast life experiences and life stories. As diverse as they are, they have one common interest (domain), namely, they want to be educated so as to improve their standard of living. This argument is also supported by Gauthier (2015) when he points out that communities of practice are created by people who engage in a process of collective learning. These people share a concern and passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they engage timeously. In a classroom setting, adult learners are in the process of acquiring knowledge and skills. This knowledge is constructed by working collaboratively in groups. Learning is active and learner-centred. The content is relevant to their lives. Guidelines are clarified and every learner participates actively because what is learned is interesting. They share ideas in groups. In order to motivate and improve participation, newcomers are welcome and they learn more about each other.

An individual goal in the community of practice is to move from the periphery to full participation. Likewise, in the classroom situation when learners are working in groups, they gradually gain confidence and improve their academic and social skills. These learners become more and more comfortable and involved in learning activities (Gauthier, 2016). In addition, Gauthier (2016) further cites that when employing communities of practice in the classroom, some students start to take leadership roles and become mentors to their fellow classmates. There is an increase in student's collaboration even outside the classroom where they can meet and have group discussions.

There are three elements of learning in a community of practice that improve participation (Wenger, 1998). These relationships that are created in the community of practice bind the members together. As adult learners engage in activities, they begin to value ways of doing things together. Wenger (1998) observes that the benefit of working together is that learners form a common bond. Peer relationships and mentors are defined as important elements in promoting retention. Another advantage of communities of practice is that students develop a sense of ownership of their learning and a sense of

belonging and commitment to the group. This sense of mutual engagement is a context for creating knowledge. In this context, the student is comfortable to explore and share ideas without being afraid of any intimidation. This, according to Gauthier (1998), promotes participation.

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Members in the community of practice form a shared understanding (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, these members in the community share their life experiences and personal situations. They began to respect each other because they share ideas and have an equal understanding of what it is like to be in a situation of being illiterate. They also share ideas as to how to improve their personal and academic situation (Gauthier, 2016).

In my opinion, the community of practice promotes group work in that when students work together during teaching and learning they become motivated. They own the lesson. They become interested in the lesson as they share ideas, knowledge and abilities.

Galbraith (1999) in Florida agrees with Vella (2002) and Rogers (1994) that the classroom atmosphere should not be a threat to adult learners. A learning environment which is threatening intimidates an adult learner and may result in non-participation. Galbraith (1999) further states that a positive atmosphere is created by motivating learners to plan their own learning. They must be involved in the planning of methods that will be used and in identifying resources and developing of methods for using these resources. Learners should be encouraged and assisted when carrying out their learning plans. Assessment should be conducted in a positive way. It should not be a threat that can result in them leaving the programme. Different kinds of assessment that are used to evaluate their work should be communicated to them.

Apart from creating a safe environment with a positive and friendly atmosphere, Cross (2004), from the Australian context, suggests that adult educators should adjust the level of tension from learners even if the material they are working with is difficult and is of high importance. It is emphasised preferably that the educator should create a low to moderate level of stress to challenge them to think critically. The degree of difficulty should not be so high that the adult learner gets frustrated and thinks of leaving.

In addition, when adults are given work to do, feedback must be specific. The educator should not generalise when giving feedback. Adults should be interested in the subject matter and they must see a reward in their learning. Interest is related to reward. These learners have to see a benefit in learning so that they are motivated to learn and this motivation will make them stay and complete the programme (Cross, 2004).

2.6 Student retention in the South African context

In this section, the researcher will present the related studies on retention conducted in South Africa.

Mokubung (2002) and Dlamini (2002), in the studies they conducted, came out with similar findings for retaining adult students. They both agreed that curriculum, academic support, teaching methods, and consulting learners when making decisions are the most important factors that contribute to student retention. In support of Mokubung and Dlamini (2002), Rule (2014) moves that the relevant curriculum is vital in making the centre work. Some of the students come to register at an institution having no idea which subjects to choose. Such students should be advised correctly. Rule (2014) further supports Dlamini (2002) in that the educators play a key role in motivating students to stay. These educators should be committed and knowledgeable and they should have love and passion to teach adults.

Adding to this debate, Zwane (2016) agrees that the lecturers play a role in retention. She points out that when educators are committed and work as a team during teaching and learning, students become motivated to work hard even if they find some subjects challenging. She further points out that her study revealed that educators were scaffolding students, explaining word by word until they understood. Giving the guidance they need motivates them to persist and complete the programme. Zwane (2016) further argues that family and peer support are crucial in enhancing learning in students. There is a great possibility for students to stay in the programme when there is a strong family tie.

Andrews (2007), in the study she conducted in the Department of City Power in Johannesburg agrees with Zwane (2016) in that family support contributes a lot in promoting participation in adult programmes. According to Andrew (2007), students in the adult programmes are in the lowest income brackets, therefore financial benefits in the form of incentives can motivate these students to participate and complete their programmes. She further points out that those encouraging students by phoning them when they are absent motivate them to stay. This finds support in Wlodkowski (2010) when he mentions the importance of tracking inactive students.

Strengthening the point on the importance of educator support, Galbrath (2000) urges that adult educators should “bridge the gap”. They can only do that by maintaining a climate that is conducive to

learning and by looking at themselves as participating in a dialogue with learners. He further says that in order to implement these principles, the adult educator has to be technically proficient in content and programme planning areas as well as highly competent in interpersonal and human relation skills.

Adding to the argument is Mutula (2016) who highlights the importance of the healthy relationships that should prevail between the centre, the community, the School Governing Body of the AET, the educators and the learners. She calls this relationship a social capital. She further cites that this relationship should be based on trust. The trust that is built among all these stakeholders is a good foundation for teaching and learning. This trust will encourage the community to be drawn to the centre and be motivated to participate until they complete their programmes (John, 2013).

While there are studies that have been conducted on the factors that promote student participation and retention by different scholars, very few are focussing on adults in their own place. Therefore, this study is conducted in a multiracial centre where there are only adult students whereby the medium of instruction is English. The centre is situated near an informal settlement and municipal houses. Unemployment and poverty are high in the area.

2.7. Theoretical framework

Many studies have been conducted on retention but most of them focused on retention at higher education institutions i.e., universities. It has been found that Community Learning Centres (CLCs) just like other educational institutions are also affected by students leaving the programme before completion. As a result, this study explores factors affecting retention at an Adult Education and Training centre. The theoretical framework is drawn from Tinto's Theory on Integration (Tinto, 1993).

According to DHET (2006), the Adult Education and Training (AET) function has been shifted to the Higher Education and Training sector, hence the reason for employing Tinto's theory. This theory discusses colleges, therefore adult students. This is an old theory but relevant to the study.

Tinto (1975, 1993) developed a model of student attrition which explained student retention and success behaviour with regard to the university or college context. Tinto suggested that student persistence is determined by the student academic and social life of the institution and also by his or her amount of the commitment to his or her studies and goals of the institution.

2.8. The context of Tinto's Theory

In this section, the researcher starts by explaining who Tinto is, where he is located and what context he wrote under. Tinto is a distinguished university professor at Syracuse University in New York

(Moja, 2014). He has done extensive research and has written numerous articles on higher education, particularly on student success, attrition and retention in community colleges. In his recent book *Completing College*, he lays out a framework that can be employed by institutions for students. He is a formative theorist in the field of student affairs and has produced the most liked theory of student persistence. His well-known and most cited work is the 1975 research article, 'Drop Out from Higher Education'. All of his work focussed on student retention in Higher Education i.e., college or university. In recent years, he toured South African universities where he lectured on student retention (Moja, 2014).

In explaining his theory, Tinto (1993) organised his aspects into five categories namely pre-entry attributes goals and commitments, institutional experience, integration, goals and commitments and outcomes.

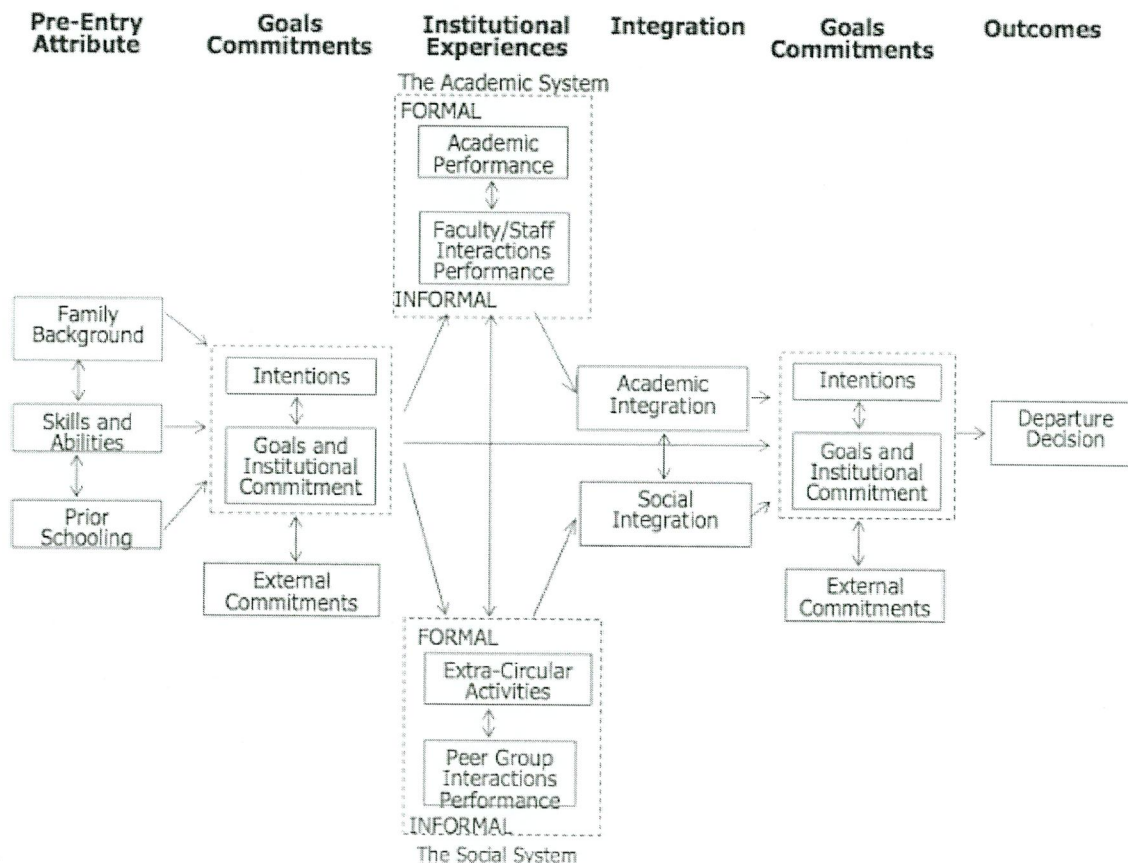


Figure 1.1: Model of Student Integration (Tinto, 1993)

2.8.1. Pre-entry attributes

As shown in Fig 1.1, this is the first attribute that the student possesses when he or she enters college. It includes elements that relate to family background, skills, abilities and prior schooling.

Family background

The support that the student gets from the family is a contributing factor in encouraging retention. Tinto (1993) suggests that a student comes to an institution with some family background traits e.g., race, family educational and financial context. Sometimes the level of education of the parent or family members has an influence on the student's achievement of commitments. The student that has strong family support emotionally or financially e.g., assistance in taxi fare, usually performs well.

Prior schooling and skills and abilities

These are also the characteristics that the student possesses when entering the institution. The skills and abilities that the adult might have gained from previous informal or formal learning promote his or her self-esteem and assist him in his journey of meeting his or her educational demands. All these factors need to be taken into consideration by the institution as they are the starting point of the adult students' learning. The experience that the student has accumulated from these attributes provides some insight into understanding how he or she will respond to his or her educational environment and persist (Tinto, 1993). All the above traits, namely, family background, prior schooling and skills and abilities, increase the academic aptitude and lead to the achievement of commitments.

Terenzini et al. (1994) agree with Tinto (1993) when they point out that the student's social life, family background, education background and personality are the elements that give an indication in terms of whether the student will persist. They further say that the process is highly interconnected web-like series of family, interpersonal, academic and organisational pulls and pushes that shape students' learning and persistence. Similarly, Bean's (1980) model of integration is also in line with Tinto's model as he established that the background i.e., what the student comes to school with, contributes to his or her decision to leave or stay. The student with the entering attributes also has the entering dispositions labelled as goals and commitments.

In the researcher's opinion, the above attributes also apply in the South African context and are relevant in adult education and training. Every student's ability to persist depends highly on what he possesses when he enters an institution. This possession is the foundation that leads to initial commitments.

2.8.2. Goals and commitments

In the second part of his model, Tinto (1993) theorises personal goals and commitments as attributes that play a role in retention. The goals and commitments that the students come with to the college drive them to stay and complete the course. The intentions and external commitments have an important

role in the overall goal and institutional commitment. These two segments of the model possess the characteristics the student has at the time when he or she enters the college and the student's disposition in terms of intentions and motivational factors. These characteristics and factors also prepare the students academically for the experiences they face at the institution. According to Tinto (1993), the external commitments outside of the institution such as family, friends and/or work obligations have an on-going effect on the decision to persist. These external elements may be supportive or may pose threats to the student's goals and commitments.

Bean (1980) model correlates with Tinto's model as he points out that the student cooperates with the institution, perceiving objective measures, such as grade point average or belonging to campus organisation, as well as subjective measures, such as practical value of the education and the quality of the institution, and that these attributes are in turn expected to influence the degree to which the student is satisfied with the institution.

The level of satisfaction is expected to increase the level of commitment. Bean (1980) further emphasises that the amount and the degree of the commitment the student has serve as the determinant of the amount of learning conducted by the student him or herself (Ethington and Polizzi, 1996). Similarly, Pace (1979) agrees that the effort brought by the student combined with the influence he or she obtains from the school lead to his or her development and staying to finish the programme. A student's goals and commitments together with pre-entry attributes result in institutional setting. These aspects interact with Tinto's next category of variables called institutional experience (Fig 1.1).

2.8.3. Institutional experience

The ability of the institution to provide appropriate support to students during their years in the institution both socially and academically is called the institutional experience (Tinto, 1993). This category consists of the academic and social system (Fig 1.1). Tinto (1993) states that the college or institution has an influence on student retention. The institutional experience such as environment, academic and non-academic staff is seen as having the ability to influence retention. An institution is a social system with its own patterns and social structure and it has an impact on determining the amount of student involvement and thus the gains and retention. Lack of support, friendship and a relaxed climate may result in students deciding to leave. Therefore, the institution has both a direct and indirect effect on the student's tendency to become involved in both academic and non-academic activities. Lack of integration into the social system of the centre may result in the student having low self-esteem and low commitment to participate. In order to avoid this feeling of being lost, an institution has to ensure that all students are adapting to the new environment. Early warning signs should be monitored.

Tinto (1993) says that peer relations, mentoring and role models are important factors that promote satisfaction both academically and socially. Bean (1992), Tinto (1997) and Clagget (1992) agree that the quality of the institution and the opportunity for students are the two most important attributes that influence commitment to finish the programme.

In summary, within the academic system, the performance of the student (formal) and interaction with staff (informal) lead to either positive experiences that assist to integrate the student into the institution environment or negative experiences that result in dissatisfaction and the decision to leave. Similarly, within the social system, the student's participation in formal extracurricular activities and peer group interactions also lead to positive experiences that result in integration or negative experiences that may lead to a departure decision (Fig1.1).

Braxton et al. (1995) support Tinto's theory that the institution's feature and culture have both direct and indirect effects on the student's decision to become involved in academic and social activities. The institution as a whole has an influence in determining the amount of student involvement and thus the improvement on retention (Clagget, 1992). The findings from the empirical test of Bean's (1982) model showed that the institutional quality and opportunity for students were the two most important factors that influence commitment. These findings by Bean confirm and correlate with Tinto's model that the institution can make or break an adult student, hence playing an important role in retention. McLaughlin et al. (1998) draw from the work of Kubler-Ross (1993), and also affirm that the experience that the student receives from the institution has a direct effect in changing the attitudes in student retention. They further maintain that although change comes with fear, institutions need to change the way they have been doing things in order to improve retention.

2.8.4. Integration

As shown in Fig 1.1, the academic and social integration that takes place is Tinto's fourth category and it is called integration. The academic is about learning and the social refers to the groups inside or outside the learning sphere which the student cares about. According to Tinto (1993), if students simply go to class and then go home after tuition without being involved in campus activities, they are unlikely to be retained. The student has to be involved in the social environment and the academic environment of the institution in order to promote success. In his model, Tinto (1993) theorises that retention depends on how well the student is integrated into the institution. Integration of academic and social elements assist the student to gain positive institutional experience and this experience increases the internal and external intentions and commitments. If the student is satisfied due to the positive campus environment,

it is easy to integrate both social and academic aspects of the institution. A relationship between social and academic integration increases performance and promotes persistence and retention (Tinto, 1997).

Pascarella (1985) agrees that residential facilities together with peer groups influence academic achievement, but there is less evidence that the perception that the informal student-staff interaction outside the classroom has an effect on academic achievement. Similarly, Bean's (1980) revised model came with conclusions which also affirm Tinto's theory. Bean asserts that students' peers are the most important agents of socialisation in the institution rather than informal student-staff contacts.

Integration is also relevant in adult education because adult students also come to the institution with intentions and external commitments that will result in the achievement of goals. As students, they all have their own expectations. The friendly environment, with supporting facilitators is one of the reasons that will motivate them to stay. They usually develop academic self-esteem when they see that they are performing well, and the programme is also developing their personal being. Socially, the friends they meet or make in the institution contribute a lot in them staying or leaving. The personal contact in the form of interaction during teaching and learning will make them enjoy staying and it results in integration in the social system.

2.8.5. Goals and commitments

Tinto labels this category as outcomes (Fig 1.1). The positive social and academic systems of the institution promote satisfaction and increase the goals the student has. These goals and commitments will therefore strengthen the student's intentions, resulting in him or her deciding to continue to participate and finish the programme. Similarly, if this student is not satisfied with what is happening in the institution, he or she will feel lost and unmotivated and his or her goals and commitments will be weakened. Such a student will unlikely continue in the academic system. This decision to stay or leave is the final category in Tinto's model (Fig 1.1).

According to Kember (1995), Tinto's model is highly respected as it provides a heuristic and theoretical framework to understand behaviour. According to this theory, the decision to continue attending school emerges from integration and combination of a variety of attributes. The student's characteristics and the extent of their academic environment and social aspects within the institution are the determining factors of whether to stay or leave (Tinto 1982, 1993).

Similar to other categories, goals and commitments are also applicable and relevant to adult education in South Africa. The positive academic climate and friendly social system are appropriate to the

achievement of intentions and commitments of the adult student. This results in the achievement of goals.

2.9. Criticism of Tinto's Model of Integration

2.9.1. The student integration model unlikely to occur at adult centres

Although Tinto's (1993) model remains one of the most influential models for dropout, it has received some criticism. According to Karp et al. (2008), Tinto's model has been used in many studies of student retention in post-secondary education. Karp et al (2008) further urge that its relevance to adult education and community colleges has been questioned. To support this critique, Kember (1989) adds that this model contains some features that may cause adult education facilitators to question its role in promoting integration in adult education programmes. There are assumptions that there are fewer opportunities for social integration provided at these institutions. Contrarily, Tinto (1993) himself questioned whether the mechanisms that encourage social integration are relevant to community centres. This concern requires further exploration by scholars. However, Bailey and Alfonso (2005) state that one distinctive institutional response to Tinto's work has been to implement structured support services meant to encourage integration.

2.9.2. The Student Integration Model (SIM) is only applicable to full-time students

Critics argue that social and academic integration cannot be used as a reliable indicator for persistence, especially among part-time students. According to Mannan (2007), the SIM is only applicable to students that reside inside the campus. It does not go beyond that, i.e., it does not cater for off-campus students who come to attend classes and leave afterwards and also for distance learning students. This model, according to critics, does not explain attrition in students who are above the age of 24 and who do not live on campus. He further cites that this model is silent about the students who do not wish to be involved in the social aspect of the institution and for whose concern is what the institution can offer them. The 'linchpin' of the framework of social integration is assumed to be impossible to attain. The off-campus students attend class but live elsewhere. Because of this attendance pattern, these students lack time to participate in social activities at the school.

2.10. Suitability of Tinto's Theory in this study

This study is concerned with the understanding of factors that promote student retention. This theory was chosen because it fits as a relevant theory from which Community Learning Centres (CLCs) can learn to retain their learners. The theory is suitable for my study because it attempted to explore the

factors that lead to student retention. Most theorists are in favour of this theory as the most relevant theory that should be used by institutions in student retention. Moreover, the theory was considered relevant to the study as the aspects that Tinto's model states as having an impact on retention are revealed by respondents. Furthermore, the categories that Tinto (1993) mentions as having an influence on retention are applicable and relevant to this study. The findings also revealed that CLC students do become integrated into the centre's environment. Therefore, this framework is in similar to the research findings. However, as mentioned by other scholars, CLC students do not fully gain social integration as there are no extracurricular activities at the centre.

The theory will not only be useful and suitable to centres, but also to education officials and those concerned and interested in studying student retention, especially in adult education. Those that can find relevance in the theory include adult educators, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) offering adult education programmes, academia, policymakers, researchers and planners. The theory is a useful tool which facilitators can use to reflect on their own understanding of factors that promote student retention. If Tinto's theory is well understood and applied properly, it can be used as a tool to continuously learn to promote learner retention and reduce or minimise the high rate of drop-out in CLCs.

Therefore, findings of my study contradict with the claim by Mannan (2007) which says that SIM is only applicable to students that reside on campus. The participants in this study are AET Level 4 students who are part-time students. They have been integrated into the institution by the strong institutional experience the institution possesses.

2.11. Conclusion

In the introductory section of this chapter, the key concepts were defined. The literature on the factors that contribute to retention was reviewed. The legislative framework as having guidelines on ABET implementation was presented. Motivation and different kinds of motivational strategies that promote retention were discussed. The researcher further explored similarities found by different researchers on the studies they conducted from different contexts. The chapter further presented the theoretic framework that shaped and guided this study and the relevance of the theory in the South African adult education context. The chapter ended by critiquing Tinto's theory. The reasons why the theory is suitable for the study were also cited.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that informed this study. The study was located in the interpretive paradigm, which was conducted under the qualitative approach using the case study research design. Reasons for using a case study are outlined. The chapter further presents the sample used in the study and the reasons thereof. Methods of data collection and ethical issues are discussed in this chapter. Practical procedures that were employed to increase trustworthiness in data analysis are highlighted.

3.2. Reflexivity and positionality

Positionality is defined as the stance of the researcher with regard to the context of the study. It describes how position and identity can influence and bias the research outcomes (Cohen, et al., 2011). Reflexivity is when the researcher is aware of his or her thoughts and actions in different contexts of the research. It includes checking and acknowledging the assumptions the researcher brings into the entire study (Cohen, et al., 2011). Therefore, it was very important for the researcher to pay attention to both positionality and reflexivity in the study in order to undertake ethical commitments. The researcher disclosed her position and she was aware of the influence she had on the process and that was avoided.

In order to deal with this issue of positionality, the researcher was as reflexive as possible. The process was treated with care and dignity by drawing a line between the researcher and the staff so that data findings and analysis were not influenced by biases. The researcher kept a journal where thoughts, feelings, assumptions and beliefs that emerged during the research process were reflected on.

Furthermore, Creswell (1998) cites that researchers in quantitative and qualitative research have personal bias that can influence their interpretation of data. In order to avoid being biased in research, the researcher should put forward his or her perceived beliefs by disclosing his or her biases, assumptions and aspects of his or her background that could influence the interpretation they make.

This section will therefore briefly present who the researcher is, and the relationship with the research site. The researcher is an official at the Department of Education, employed at the Examinations and Assessment Sub-Directorate in the uMgungundlovu District which runs AET examinations and assessments. The researcher's job is to assist centres with the registration of their learners as well as to support and monitor all examinations in the district. This includes the CLC under this study.

3.3. Research design

A research design is defined as the planning of research from the first to last step (Bertram and Christiansen, 2014). It is a guide a researcher uses to collect, analyse and interpret data. Nieuwenhuis in Maree, (2007) defines research design as a strategy that specifies how and from where the participants will be selected, the data collection instrument that will be used and how the data collection will be done. In addition, Green and Thorogood (2009) argue that a researcher tries to indicate the what, how and why of data production.

3.4. Population

Polit and Hungler (1999, p. 37) define population as “an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specification”. This definition is supported by Marlow (1998, p.134) when he points out that population is all the possible cases the researcher is interested in studying.

Therefore, the population of the study was everyone at Siyazama Centre. Due to the large size of the population which were sixty AET level 4 students, five AET Level 4 facilitators and a centre manager, every individual in the population could not participate in the study. This was the reason the researcher relied on the purposive sample.

3.5. Sampling

Sampling is defined as the process of choosing a portion from the population to represent the entire population (LoBondo-Wood & Hober 1998, p 250: Polit & Hunger, 1999, p 95). In this study, the eligibility criterion was used whereby all the participants selected had the specifications required. Initially, the researcher intended to have five AET Level 4 students participating in the study, however, two males dropped out and three female students remained. Therefore, purposive sampling, also known as non-probability sampling, was employed in this study. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) cite that purposive sampling happens when a researcher chooses participants for sampling for a specific purpose as listed below.

The following individuals in the sample were targeted for a particular purpose:

The centre manager was chosen because he was the head of the institution and he had been at the centre for ten years. As the head of the centre, he also represented the institutional experience. He had information on students' academic results and staff performances.

Two AET Level 4 facilitators were also selected as participants. The reason for their selection was that they also had been at the centre for a long time. George has been teaching at the host school for more than ten years and he has been at the centre for seven years while Rashida has spent six years teaching at this centre. They represented the academic and social system of the CLC. They both had the experience of teaching at this CLC. George was an educator at the host school during the day and as a resident in this area, he knew the internal as well as the external factors that had an effect on students' decisions to leave. Both facilitators were in a position to give some information on the factors that promote participation. They were therefore very beneficial to the study.

The students that were selected were doing AET Level 4. They were two African females and one Indian female. They were relevant and appropriate because they were the senior students and have been at the centre for four years. They know all the dynamics of the centre as they started from AET Level 1. For this reason, they could be able to give in-depth information on their natural environment.

Initially, males were also included in order to balance gender but there were only four males in the classroom and they were working night shifts which made it difficult to secure an appointment with them. Therefore, only females were interviewed in the end.

3.6. Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the most important factor that the researcher should take into consideration when planning a research design. Trochim (2006) defines the unit of analysis as the main entity that the researcher has to analyse in his or her study. Trochim (2006) further points out that the who and the what that is being analysed is the unit of analysis. The study explored the factors relating to student retention. The unit of analysis in this study comprised issues related to adult student retention at Siyazama.

3.7. Research paradigm

This study falls under the interpretive paradigm. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), the interpretive paradigm is where the researcher interprets and understands how people make sense of their world. The understanding of this paradigm is that there is no single truth or one reality, but "a set of realities" or truths which come from people's backgrounds and life experiences (Bertram and Christiansen, 2014, p.26). These scholars further argue that events and situations are interpreted in different ways depending on the context.

Participants' responses were listened to and thereafter meaning was constructed to get an understanding of the participants' behaviour and world view. As an interpretivist, the researcher conducted her inquiry in an objective manner (Guba and Lincoln in Bertram and Christiansen, 2014). The researcher attempted to make sense of what they were saying. They responded to questions according to their own world view and life experiences. The researcher stepped into their realities by collecting and interpreting data in order to get a deeper understanding of the issues of retention.

The researcher studied things in their natural settings and attempted to make sense of the responses that were given by participants. The participants responded to questions according to their own world view and life experiences. The researcher was able to interpret and analyse data in order to get a deep understanding of the issues of student retention.

3.8. Research approach

The research was conducted under a qualitative approach. Qualitative research and its design is defined as the approach that is different from quantitative research in that the data collected consists of words in the form of verbal descriptions rather than numbers (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). Data collected sought to interpret meaning which helps to understand the life experiences of the participants. In addition, Sperziale and Carpenter (2007, p2) cite that qualitative researchers emphasise some important characteristics in their research:

Qualitative researchers battle in multiple truths. They urge that there are multiple realities or opinions which should be considered when trying to understand a phenomenon. These scholars further state that qualitative inquiries should employ more than one technique of data collection so as to fully understand the phenomenon under exploration. These researchers are interested in participant's viewpoints and how they view the reality that surrounds them. In this inquiry it is acknowledged that the researcher in the research process is the primary instrument of data collection. The researcher conducts his or her inquiry in a natural context and findings are reported in a literacy style rich in participants' narratives.

The researcher used a qualitative research approach because this study was conducted in a natural context; she went to the site of the participants. The researcher got a chance to 'unpack' the issues explored and described how the respondents understood them. She did not rely on a single data source but employed multiple techniques, e.g., conversations were conducted as well as semi-structured interviews, and also discussions in focus groups (Creswell, 2003).

The researcher used the qualitative approach in order to attach meaning to the way the participants saw reality. A qualitative method is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret the world they live in. The researcher wanted to find out what the issues under exploration meant to participants. As an interpretivist, the researcher also wanted to explore behaviour perspectives and experiences of the participants that lead to retention at their centre. This is in line with the argument by Creswell (2003) who cites that qualitative research is interpretive. It is a form of interpretive enquiry in which the researcher interprets every single situation seen and heard.

Furthermore, Creswell (2003) continues to say that in qualitative research, data analysis is an inductive and deductive process. In this study, the researcher used the both deductive and inductive approach where patterns, themes and categories were built from the bottom up by organising data into abstract units of information.

3.9. Research style

3.9.1. Case study

The case study with qualitative methods of collecting data was used, which are semi-structured interviews, semi-structured observations and focus group discussions. Yin (2003) in Niwagaba, (2007) defines a case study as a confirmable study which explores a contemporary phenomenon in its natural state. Likewise, Menlila and Schemacher (1993) define a case study as a method that is employed in qualitative research where data analysis targets one phenomenon within a specified context that the researcher needs to get an in-depth understanding of.

The reason that the case study with the qualitative methods of collecting data was chosen is that the purpose was to study student retention in-depth and in its real context. Each participant in this study was unique and was treated as a case, as each one of them had his or her own background and also his or her own way of interpreting reality.

Strength and weaknesses of a case study

A case study allows a researcher to look at one instance or one phenomenon in-depth rather than a wide range of instances. In a case study, a sample consists of few participants and data is easy to gather (Rule and John, 2011). In the case of Siyazama, the researcher wanted to explore and investigate student retention. This phenomenon was studied in the participants' own context.

Rule and John (2011) further state that case studies are very flexible in terms of what they intend to study. They observe that a case study uses a variety of data collection and data analysis methods

depending on what is relevant to the case. Likewise, in this case, the participants were able to express their views and describe their own experiences and this enabled the researcher to understand how the participants view their world.

The case study was also manageable as its focal point was on one phenomenon and it used fewer numbers of participants within a specific time. This study is in line with Rule and John (2011) argument as only five informants were used.

The main criticism of a case study is that it depends on one case, which can lead to bias in data collection and results may be influenced more than in other designs (Cohen et al., 2011). To avoid this bias, the researcher used different data collection tools. As the case study focuses on a single case, data collected cannot produce generalised results. In this study, the findings cannot be generalised to the wider population but when these findings are transferred to a similar context they could assist other CLCs to understand student retention and the strategies that can be employed to promote them.

3.10. Methods of data collection

In this section, the researcher presents different methods that were used to collect data. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that for reliable data to be collected, the researcher has to use multiple data collection methods. Therefore, the methods that were used in this study were semi-structured observations, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

3.10.1. Observations

The researcher started the process of collecting data by doing observations. This method was used as an ice breaker in order to set the tone and become familiar with the participants as well as the environment. The researcher was a stranger in this environment. Starting with observations assisted in making the participants not to be intimidated by the researcher and also to clarify the procedure so that they would understand the whole process. As a result, it became easier to proceed with engagements in interviews and group discussions.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define observation as when the researcher goes to the site and observes the situation. There are two types of observations, namely, structured observation and semi-structured observation. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) further state that a structured observation is very formal and that is where the observer goes to the site with a prepared schedule that clearly indicates what is to be observed. The schedule is prepared in advance and data that is collected is categorised. On the other hand, a semi-structured observation is an observation where there is no schedule or checklist to rate or

record activities that occur. In this type of observation, the researcher does not have a clear notion of what to look for but he or she observes whatever is happening. The use of this kind of observation allowed the research to even observe the things that were outside the scope but had an effect on retention. Issues that emerge from this method are also considered to be relevant.

The observation was done in a classroom setting and also on the premises in the centre. The researcher did not have a checklist to tick certain activities off but wrote down all that was observed during teaching or learning. The researcher was part of the teaching and learning but did not interfere with the process. The researcher wrote down the descriptions of what was observed, e.g., the level of participation during teaching and learning, availability of resources. Inside the classroom, the researcher observed the physical environment of the classroom, i.e., the comfortability of the desks, bearing in mind that those were the adult students whose needs should be catered for. The arrangement of furniture and the cleanliness of the classroom were also noted.

The researcher sat at the back of the classroom and while teaching and learning took place, the interaction between the facilitator and the student was observed as objectively as possible. The observer looked at how the subject matter was delivered, what questions were asked and the responses given. As the observation process was unfolding, specific patterns were seen in responding to the issues that related to learner retention and the researcher wrote a report on them. The observation took place in two sessions and in a relaxed atmosphere so that participants were not intimidated by the researcher's presence. Each AET lesson takes one hour. Therefore, the observation lasted for thirty minutes so as to allow the facilitator to continue with her work within the second thirty minutes. This assisted the researcher to get first-hand data that directly promote retention. Unforeseen data came to surface during observation (Leedey and Ormond, 1998), e.g., it was noted that there was a shortage of furniture in this classroom and comprehensive notes were recorded throughout the period. Descriptions of events that occurred during the process were also recorded with permission granted beforehand. Open questions were asked to the facilitator at the end of the process in order to confirm that the observations were true.

The limitation was that when the researcher entered the class on day one, the learners felt uneasy and uncomfortable at seeing the stranger. The researcher as an experienced former educator was able to deal with the situation. They were greeted, introduced to the researcher and told the reason for her visit. The process was conducted in a very relaxed and yet formal manner and the ground rules were set in order to avoid being biased.

Adult learners need to feel that they are welcome on the campus (Tinto, 1995). During the observation, the researcher also observed whether there were signs within the centre that give directions to different places, e.g., the classrooms, centre manager's office, toilets, etc. The researcher observed signposting that gives directions to visitors and also to new students at the centre.

Merriam (1998) argues that observation is one of the most important data collection techniques used by a qualitative researcher. Observation takes place in a very natural context and can be used in conjunction with other research techniques as has been done in this study. During the process, things were observed first hand and recorded, i.e., behaviour can be recorded as it occurs naturally, MacMillan and Schumacher (2014).

The advantage of observations is that the researcher observed and recorded what was actually happening in the classroom during teaching and learning. The researcher did not rely on what was told by respondents as is the case with interviews. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) argue that this is a powerful method of collecting data as the researcher gains insight into situations.

In every situation, there are strengths and weaknesses. Likewise, even though observation was employed as one of the data collection methods, the researcher experienced some hiccups in that she had to be selective in the data that was being collected. The researcher could not record all that was happening and was said because she felt that it was irrelevant to her focal area. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state this as a weakness of this type of data collection. What the researcher chooses to write down and interpret depends on his or her worldview. This type of method called for the researcher to pay attention and make a relevant selection of data based on the aims and objectives of the study which are to identify factors that contribute to adult student motivation to enrol and stay at Siyazama CLC, to identify factors that promote adult student's participation at the centre and to identify factors that promote retention at Siyazama CLC.

3.10.2. Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews were conducted after observations because observations were used as an ice breaker of the whole process. The researcher was no longer seen as a stranger who was coming to invade their territory.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define an interview as when a researcher and respondent are engaged in a conversation. The researcher comes with a set of questions. In this study, unstructured interviews were conducted as another method of data collection. The participants who were interviewed were the centre manager, two Level 4 facilitators and three AET Level 4 adult learners. The issues of gender,

race, age, and different settlement area representation were observed before conducting the interviews. The centre manager was asked to respond on the enrolment and recruitment strategies (Appendix E). In my experience as an educator, the method used by an institution to attract students to register plays an important role in increasing the enrolment. Retention is the result of enrolment and the entire positive atmosphere within the institution. The facilitators were asked to respond to questions relating to facilitators' participation in curriculum delivery (Appendix F), because the teaching methods that facilitators use during teaching and learning are important in making learners stay and complete the course (Tinto, 1993). Students were asked whether the centre addresses some of their personal needs (Appendix G). Adult students come to the institution with needs, e.g., to be educated and get better jobs. When these students realise that the centre addresses their needs they persist and complete the programme.

This method was chosen because one of the strengths of semi-structured interviews is that the questions are open-ended (Leedy and Ormond, 1998). The researcher came to the interview with no prescribed rules or guidelines in order to ease tension from both parties. The relaxed atmosphere allowed the conversation to flow and the researcher drove the process in the preferred direction which was to get reasons that made them stay. Three sets of questions were used to interview participants. One set was formulated for the centre manager, the second set for the facilitators and the third set for the AET Level 4 students. Nomusa and Siza were also interviewed in the language of their preference. They were interviewed individually, and the responses were written down. The researcher also used an audio recorder to record responses. All participants were aware that they were being recorded as permission was sought beforehand. Probing and clarifying questions were asked when answers given were not clear and in order to allow them to further elaborate. The interviews lasted for 45 minutes each. The process was very slow; as a result, the researcher could not finish one interview in 45 minutes. The interview could proceed the following day. Therefore, each interviewee was interviewed for two days. Throughout the data collection period, the researcher was the listener, observer and the interviewer.

The semi-structured interview was selected for the following reasons (Leedy and Ormrod, 1998):

An interview is a one-on-one conversation and the researcher is with the respondent all the time to give clarity where needed, unlike for example with a questionnaire where the respondent tackles questions alone without any guidance. Likewise, in this study, the researcher was in one of the classrooms with one participant at a time. Sometimes the participant could not understand the question and the researcher had to simplify in isiZulu until the participant understood it.

In an interview, the researcher can ask more questions to get more information if he or she feels that the respondent is not opening enough, which is what happened in this case. The researcher had to diverge and ask more leading questions driving participants in the required direction.

In the interviews with the respondents, it was easy to get answers to questions because respondents were talking freely. They did not have to write down a long answer, which is also an advantage of conducting an interview rather than a questionnaire (Bertram and Christiansen, 2014). They even mentioned the things that were not asked, but which were relevant to the study, e.g., they raised the fact that they were treated like stepdaughters by the Department of Education. They went further and revealed that some of the students in other institutions get financial aids and they do not.

The disadvantage of a semi-structured interview is that it is time-consuming. This is because it allows flexibility and should take place in a relaxed atmosphere. It took two days to conduct an interview on one participant because the researcher was also very careful with not to interfere with their tuition schedule.

3.10.3 Focus group discussions

The focus group discussions were conducted last because the researcher wanted to check whether the answers could be the same. The researcher also wanted to find out whether the participants would stand their ground and repeat their responses in the presence of their facilitators. This was also an opportunity to engage with all of them together, students expressing themselves freely. It took an hour to conduct the focus group discussions. Fortunately, the researcher got enough time to conduct them as the students were writing examinations and they were not writing on that day.

MacMillan and Schumacher (2014) define a focus group as a small group of participants selected to be interviewed to assess a problem, concern or idea. Focus group discussions were conducted with AET Level 4 students to get in-depth insights on the factors leading to retention. This focus group was carefully recruited (Kruger, 2002). The sample for the focus group consisted of two facilitators and three AET Level 4 learners who participated in interviews.

Questions were asked in an interactive setting and the researcher recorded the participant's responses. Questions were posed to a group and the participants indicated by a show of hand, that she/he wanted to respond. Open and free discussions took place in a relaxed atmosphere. The discussions were based on what motivated participants to stay. Listening to other group members' responses encouraged participants to air out their feelings and opinions.

There was a wealth of information generated from the participants' responses. The moderator, who was the researcher recorded verbal as well as non-verbal responses from participants.

Kitzinger (1995) in Andrews (2007) states the following as the strength of focus group discussions.

A focus group method allows participants to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one-on-one interview. This group discussion is appropriate when the interview has a series of open-ended questions and encourages research participants to elaborate and explore the issues they think are important to them in their own understanding and vocabulary. This kind of discussion can provide a huge amount of information to analyse and interpret.

However, focus group discussions do have some weaknesses in that some of the participants may dominate the group while some shy away from the group hiding behind those that are active participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). To avoid other participants dominating, everyone was motivated to respond and say whatever they thought about the questions.

3.11. Ethical issues

Before the research is conducted on-site, there are ethical issues that need to be observed by the researcher. According to Mecomaches and Schumacher (1993), these ethical issues are a priority and need to be discussed with the participants prior to conducting research; these are autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence.

3.11.1. Autonomy

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) emphasise that the researcher should respect all the participants taking part in research by seeking their consent beforehand. In this study, the participants were given adequate information about the study before data were collected in the form of a participation information sheet (Appendix C). In this information sheet, the aims and objectives of the study were outlined and the procedures that would be followed were laid down. The researcher also specified that there would be audio-recordings.

All participants were issued with an informed-consent (Appendix A) form where they declared their participation in the study. This enabled respondents to make informed choices that they would participate voluntarily in the study and had the freedom to withdraw at any time. The gatekeeper's approval was obtained from the centre manager where permission to conduct the study was sought.

Approval was also obtained from the Ethical Committee before data were collected. In order to protect the identity of participants, pseudo names were used by the researcher.

3.11.2. Non-maleficence

Non-maleficence means to do no harm (Bertram and Christiansen, 2011). No emotional, physical or social harm was inflicted on participants. All information that was given by participants during data collection was regarded as confidential as possible. This confidentiality issue was not at any point compromised as pseudo names were used in data collection. In order to further observe the confidentiality issues, the centre name was changed. Participants were made aware that all the data collected in this study would be recorded. The data that were collected during semi-structured interviews were private and not divulged to anyone, as the participants' right to confidentiality was respected. It was the researcher and the supervisor who had access to that data. Participants were also assured that all data and transcripts would be kept in the supervisor's office.

3.11.3. Beneficence

Any research should be directly or indirectly beneficial to the research participants or to the society at large (Bertram and Christiansen, 2014). The wish is for this study to bring a positive change to all CLCs at uMgungundlovu District as they are highly affected by a high rate of dropouts. As a result of dropouts, some facilitators lost their jobs, and this resulted in poverty and an increased rate of unemployment. This study will be beneficial to the researcher, and to all the centre managers in uMgungundlovu District. As a district official, who sits in official meetings, the researcher will get a platform to report on her findings. The researcher argues that the entire population will benefit from this research because findings will give directives in terms of how to maintain retention at these kinds of centres.

3.12. Data analysis

In this section, the researcher will present the methods that were employed to analyse collected data and the steps that were followed.

The researcher used inductive and deductive data analysis. Inductive reasoning is defined as an analysis where the researcher identifies categories and patterns that emerge from data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) whereas deductive approach works from the general to the specific, it is also called

top-down approach. The purpose of employing both inductive and deductive approach was to be able to summarise and interpret the collected data by identifying common terms and phrases.

In addition, Miles and Huberman (2000) cite that data analysis involves three steps, namely, data reduction data display and conclusion drawing and verifications.

A qualitative study has a huge amount of data that has to be analysed, summarised and interpreted. Likewise, in this study, there were many pages of notes that emerged from the observations, interviews transcripts and focus group discussions. In this study, the research questions were used as categories and themes that emerged as subtopics for each category.

Firstly, in order to reduce all the data collected, the researcher read all the pages containing data so that it was easier to interpret and make meaning of it. This was done by organising and sorting it into codes or categories and looking for patterns or similarities between these categories (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

According to Miles and Huberman (2000), the second step in data analysis is data displaying. This happens after data has been reduced into themes and patterns. In this process, data is organised and compressed into chunks of information that would allow the researcher to draw conclusions.

Likewise, as mentioned earlier in this section, the researcher used the inductive approach to identify categories and themes from transcripts. Immediately after the observations, interviews and focus group discussions, notes and audio recordings were transcribed. Raw data were mounted into pages. The researcher read all the transcripts repeatedly in order to get the gist and understanding of data so as to attach meaning to it.

Furthermore, all the responses were listed, and colour coded into themes, e.g., promotion of continued participation (category) and the responses that were received were, amongst others, student-teacher relationships, tolerance, lift clubs, WhatsApp groups, and respect from educators, teaching and learning. All these responses were seen as having similarities and they were coded with the same colour. The theme that emerged, for example, was educator and peer support, which Tinto (1993) cites as institutional support. The researcher, therefore, continued to highlight all patterns or relationships with the same colour. All the similarities became themes, e.g., curriculum, family background, family support.

According to Miles and Huberman (2000), the third step in data analysis is the drawing of conclusions and verification. In addition, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) point out that the researcher in qualitative data analysis begins to draw conclusions when she or he starts to collect data. During the process, the researcher noted the patterns and attached possible explanations in order to come out with conclusions. These conclusions were all the themes that were presented and discussed as findings in Chapter 4, which was the end of the process.

3.12.1. Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers use different techniques to increase the trustworthiness of the research they conduct, that is, what qualifies the research to be worthwhile, authentic, and relevant and something that we can learn and benefit from. How can it be trusted that the enquirer followed all the procedures and that he/she did everything to ensure that data collected, analysed and reported was appropriate and ethical? It is the responsibility of the researcher to give evidence that his/her entire research process is worthy (Carlson, 2010). Some of the procedures that are used to increase trustworthiness in qualitative research are audit trails, reflexivity, triangulation and member checking (Cresswell and Miller, 2000).

3.12.2. Audit trails

Qualitative researchers, while in the field conducting an inquiry, see everything in front of them that is important and potential, and they take notes (Carlson, 2010). During the observations, interviews and group discussions, notes were taken of all the participants' responses. The researcher recorded everything observed prior, during and after the teaching and learning process.

All the responses were audio-recorded as Carlson (2010) emphasised that audiotapes, videotapes and photographs are parts of creating an audit trail. In addition, Bartram and Christiansen (2014) argue that the recording of data and using an audio-recording device is another way of increasing credibility in an interpretive enquiry. The researcher can assure that the study is credible because there were records and transcripts that were sent back to the participants to listen to. Therefore, data collection and analysis processes were made transparent as advised by Bertram and Christiansen (2014).

3.12.3. Triangulation

Triangulation is another strategy that can be used to ensure trustworthiness in a study. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define this strategy as a procedure used to collect data from different sources. In this research, the researcher used three data collection techniques in order to increase validity and

trustworthiness. These tools were observations, interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher used multiple sources, namely, the centre manager, facilitators and students to get in-depth information about the centre. Participants were observed in a classroom setting. From the same AET Level 4 classroom, five participants were selected and interviewed individually. The third stage was the focus group discussion where the participants were asked questions in a group setting and discussions took place (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

3.12.4. Member checking

Participants were given an opportunity to check the interview transcripts as to whether it was a good reflection of what they said or not. According to Doyle (2007) in Carlson (2010), member checking is an opportunity for respondents to validate some aspects of the interpretation of data they provided. After data collection and analysis, the researcher made an appointment with the centre manager to visit the site. An appointment was also made with each participant without disturbing their teaching and learning schedule. The participants were given their transcripts and the narratives they contributed during interviews to validate whether they were accurate. Participants had to confirm whether they recognised their voices on the tape recorder and whether data analysis was congruent with their experiences. The three interview documents were discussed with the participants to check accuracy and whether it was what they had said. They were asked questions like, “Is this what you said?”, “Did I interpret it correctly?” and “Am I on the right track?” This strategy promoted conformity of the findings. By asking these questions the researcher wanted to confirm that what she wrote or recorded was the true reflection of what transpired during the conversations. The participants agreed and were satisfied with the recordings. No new information was provided by participants.

3.13. Summary of the chapter

It is important to highlight that this study was conducted under the qualitative approach. In this chapter, the researcher has presented the difference between the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach. The characteristics of the qualitative approach, as well as the reasons why the researcher chose this approach to conduct the study, were presented. The chapter provided information regarding the selection of suitable informants and the reasons for their selection. The researcher also outlined the methods selected for data collection and the reasons for the selection of those methods. The procedures followed to analyse data were outlined. Ethical and trustworthy issues were also discussed in this

chapter. Chapter 4 will focus on data presentation analysis which will give a clear understanding of the factors that contribute to retention at the centre under study.

Chapter 4: Data presentation

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed the research design and methodology employed in this study. This chapter presents the results guided by research questions. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What motivates an adult student to enrol and stay in Adult Education and Training (AET)?
2. What factors promote students to continue to participate in AET?
3. What can be done to maintain/ promote retention in an AET centre?

The chapter further presents the research site, biographical information of the research participants and curriculum-related matters at the centre.

This chapter present the data collected from participants of the Community Learning Centres (CLC) in the uMgungundlovu District. It answers the research questions presented in Chapter 1. A detailed description of categories that emerge during data analysis is presented. The first section of this chapter outlines the research questions that this study tries to address. The second section of the chapter is where the participants are introduced by giving their background information, e.g., names, gender, employment status, etc. Pseudonyms were used to respect the participants' rights. The third section is where the data is presented as per participant's responses.

4.2. The research site

The study was conducted at Siyazama CLC in the Woodlands area in Pietermaritzburg. Woodlands is a former Coloured area which is now a mixed-race area and consists of Coloured people, Indian people and African people. This is an area which is dynamic and diverse in the aspects of class, religion, gender and language, meaning that the community in this area has different, racial backgrounds, skin colours, languages, ages and with diverse cultures. They also possess different political and religious beliefs. Their socio-economic background also differs. As a result, some community members live in big houses, others in four-roomed municipality houses and some live in nearby squatter camps. The squatter camp is in very poor conditions with most of the houses built using mud. Illegal connections can be observed while driving from the streets.

When driving around the area it was observed that it is affected by poverty and unemployment. Most of the youth did not finish school and as a result, they hang out at the corners of the streets and in shops

until the early hours of the evening. Driving in some parts of the area during the day and even late in the evening is not secure, as it reported as a high-risk area because of issues of drugs, alcohol and crime.

During the engagements with participants, it was found that this CLC was founded by a woman who was a member of the School Governing Body (SGB) of the host school. The school had a challenge of absenteeism of parents at SGB meetings. As a result, this challenge made her wish to know more about the kind of parents they were dealing with, and the reasons for non-attendance at parents' meetings. As the resident of the area herself, she knew the dynamics of the area and as a result, it was easy for her to approach the parents on the matter. Upon her engagement with them, she found out that they were not attending meetings because most of them were illiterate. Meetings were run in English as this was a multi-racial school. There was no CLC in the area, she then saw a need to establish one. This was the beginning of Siyazama CLC.

The CLC is hosted by a public school. The school is a former Coloured school with boarding facilities. This is a self-reliant school, meaning that it has sufficient resources, namely, a laboratory, computer laboratory, enough desks and machinery like photocopiers. The administration block and toilet facilities are in a good condition. The Siyazama CLC in question is given some classrooms to occupy in order to conduct tuition to adult students. The medium of instruction at this CLC is English and the premises are very clean. There is a security guard at the gate. When approaching the gate there is a big board with the name of the school. Unfortunately, there is no sign indicating that there is a CLC. Adult classes begin at 18h00 and end at 20h00 from Monday to Thursday.

The centre goes from AET Level 1 to AET Level 4. The subjects that the participants were doing at AET Level 4 were Computer Technology, Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Health Care.

4.3. Research Participants

The researcher found it necessary to introduce her participants by giving their brief background. The researcher used pseudonyms to protect their rights to confidentiality. In this introduction, their age, gender, race and employment status are highlighted. This sample consists of three AET Level 4 students, two AET Level 4 facilitators and a centre manager. These students are seniors at this centre as they started in 2013 doing AET Level 1. They are all women, and this poses a limitation to the study. The research should have had a balance of gender and included some information from male participants. The classroom where the research was conducted had an enrolment of 55 students, i.e., 3 women and 2 men. The researcher could not secure an appointment with either of the men because they were shift workers.

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of participants at Siyazama Centre

Name	Age	Gender	Race	Employment status	Level of education	Marital status
Natasha	45-50	Female	Indian	Unemployed, on the verge of opening a crèche/day-care centre. She has applied to Msunduzi Municipality for a licence to run this business in her premises. A health inspector has visited the house for inspection.	AET Level 4	Single mother of two
Nomusa	29-30	Female	African	Sleep-in domestic worker	AET Level 4	Single mother of two
Siza	32-35	Female	African	Sleep-out domestic worker	AET Level 4	Single mother
George	35-42	Male	Coloured	AET Level 4 facilitator and an educator at this host school	STD,FDE, B.Ed.	Single
Rashida	59-62	Female	Indian	AET Level 4 facilitator and an educator at a High school	PTD,FDE	Married with 4 dependents
Mtembu	55-60	Male	African	Centre Manager for AET campus of which this centre in question is one of his satellites	PTD, Diploma in ABET	Married with 3 dependents

The table above gives a clear picture of who the sample consists of. The data that were collected emanated from the above participants. These participants were selected because they have been at this Community Learning Centre for four years. As mentioned before, they started from AET Level 1. At AET Level 1 to AET Level 3, they did Numeracy and Literacy. At AET Level 4, these students did Early Childhood Development, Ancillary Health Care and Computer Literacy. As they have been at the Centre for quite some time, they know all the dynamics of the institution. The two facilitators have also been teaching at this centre for more than five years now. George is one of the co-founders of the centre. All these participants were in a position to give in-depth information on the factors that promote student retention.

Natasha is a middle-aged Indian. She started at AET Level 1 from this centre. She is doing Information and Computer Technology, Ancillary Health Care, and Early Childhood Development. She is unemployed and a mother of two boys. She was working at a shoe factory and got retrenched. She used her Provident Fund to buy a house. She registered at this centre because she wanted to obtain an AET Level 4 certificate so as to open a child care centre.

Nomusa is a sleep-in domestic worker. She started from AET Level 1 and is now doing AET Level 4. She is a mother of two. She is a primary school dropout. She can read and write. She can also speak a bit of English that she has learned while working as a domestic worker. Her family is very poor. Her father passed on while she was young. Her mother is very old and is diabetic. She left home to look for work in the urban area. The only job she could do was to be a domestic worker. That is the reason that drove her to register at the centre. Her dream is to further her studies and find a better job to lift her family's standard of living. She is doing Ancillary Health Care, Early Childhood Development and Information and Computer Technology.

Siza became pregnant at a young age and consequently dropped out of school. Her father refused to send her back to school. She decided to migrate to the urban area to look for a job. Siza is working as a domestic worker. Her parents lived on the government grant. She is renting a shack in a nearly squatter camp where she lives with her two children. She heard about the centre and decided to register to be educated. She is doing Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Health Care. She also started from AET Level 1 and is now in AET Level 4.

George is a single Coloured male. He is an AET facilitator. He is a qualified educator who teaches Computer Applications at the host school while teaching Information and Computer Technology in AET Level 4.

Rashida is also an AET Level 4 facilitator at Siyazama Centre. She is Indian. She is a qualified educator who teaches Consumer Studies in one of the high schools. She has been at the centre for more than six years.

Mthembu, the centre manager has been to the centre for ten years. He is a qualified educator. He is working at this centre on a full time basis.

I did not ask the respondents their actual ages because some people, especially women, do not feel comfortable to reveal their age and culturally we do not ask the age of a person as it is a sensitive issue. Nevertheless, during an ice breaker, the researcher asked them to categorise their age. Some of the

information that appears in Table 4.1, i.e., the type of work they do, came out automatically as they were responding to questions, e.g., when Nomusa was asked what motivated her to register at this CLC, she responded by saying that she wanted to further her studies and get a better job than being a domestic worker. That is how the researcher found out about their occupations.

The above information about the participants gives a clear picture of their socio-economic background. Looking at the table, it can be argued that these participants persist and do not drop out because they want to better their standard of living. They want to see a change happening in their lives.

4.4 The curriculum offered at Siyazama Centre

In this section, the curriculum offered at the centre from AET Level 1 to AET Level 4 is presented. The section highlights the connections evident in the learning areas offered from AET Level 1 to AET Level 4.

Levels 1-3 learning areas

Table 4.2: Learning areas offered in AET Levels 1-3 (DHET 2014)

Subject category	Subject
Fundamentals	Language Literacy and Communication IsiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, English & Afrikaans, Numeracy in IsiZulu, isiXhosa and English
Skills Programme	Skills for survival not leading to a qualification (centre to choose any)

The participants started from AET Level 1 at this centre. As presented in Table 4.2, the subjects they did were Numeracy and Literacy. In AET Level 4, they did the fundamentals which were English, Mathematics and Life Orientation, and the electives which were Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Health Care (Table 4.3). AET Level 4 consists of 120 credits. These credits come from the five subjects. They had to split these subjects into two years in order to ease the load.

According to participants, they started from AET Level 1 and progressed to AET Level 4, this on its own means that these students knew what they wanted (Page 58 and Appendix G). They had goals and commitments. They wanted to see themselves achieving those goals.

AET Level 4 learning areas

Table 4.3: The learning areas offered in Level 4, (DHET 2014)

Subject category	Subject
Fundamentals	Language; Literacy and Communication(LLAC) - anyone, Language and Mathematics(MLSC) or Mathematics and Mathematics Sciences (MMSC)
Core	Life Orientation (LFO)
Academic	Human and Social Sciences (HSSC), Economic and Management Sciences (EMSC), Arts and Culture(ARTC), Natural Science (NATS) Technology (TECH), Additional Language
Vocational	Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (AAAT), Ancillary Health Care (ANHC) , Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME), Travel and Tourism (TRVT) , Information and Computer Technology (INCT) , Early Childhood Development (ECD) Wholesale & Retail (WHRT).
Occupational	ANHC, NATS, TRVT, WHRT

The above Table and Table 4.2 shows the subjects offered at AET Levels 1 to AET Level 4. The subjects that are in bold are the subjects that are offered at this CLC. They were selected by the participants according to their needs (Appendix G), for example, Nomusa's choice was influenced by that she wanted to start her own child care centre. Siza believed that with these subjects she would go further and be a teacher. Natasha could not wait to complete the programme as she had already started with applications to open a crèche.

Location of the centre

The centre is next to the main road, thus accessible to public transport. Some students used their own transport especially Coloured and Indian students, while African students used public transport. To some students, the centre is within walking distance. Taxis are available until 18h00. The area poses a challenge to students using public transport as the school finishes at 20h00. The area is not safe to walk alone at night. As a result, facilitators who are also participants in this study have encouraged lift clubs

whereby students with cars offered lifts to those without cars. These Level 4 facilitators also assisted in terms of offering lifts to students that live further away.

During the visits at this CLC, it was observed that those lift clubs have promoted friendship and unity amongst students. Students who do not live far from the centre walked home in groups of threes or fours as they believed that was safer than walking alone in the dark. The researcher also noticed that there were family members who were waiting at the gate to meet their relatives who were students.

4.5. Motivation to register and stay in AET

This section will focus on the discussion held with the participants on the factors that influenced them to register at the centre. The researcher has used the three research questions as headings. There are themes that have emerged and those themes are goals and intentions which are career advancement, social transformation, self-development and personal growth.

4.5.1 Education and career advancement

Participants registered at this CLC because they were driven by their needs, goals and intentions to better their standard of living. They were intrinsically driven by what they wanted to become when they finish the programme. They were improving their education in order to get better jobs that will increase their salaries so as to live a better and more modern life.

They stated different reasons that motivated them to register. Nomusa said:

“I did not finish school. I wish to finish my Grade 12. I have registered at this centre because it is next to where I live. The curriculum, i.e., subjects offered at this centre have attracted me. These subjects are Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Health Care. They will help me towards opening my own business which is a crèche, in order to better my standard of living. I also want to further my studies and become an educator”.

It is the researcher's opinion that Nomusa wanted to be a businesswoman. While she was running her crèche or child care facility she would register for Grade 12 after which she would be furthering her studies to become a teacher through the University of South Africa.

Siza responded:

“I became pregnant at a very young age while still at school and my father said I should leave school because of the pregnancy. I stayed at home for 10 years, unemployed. I

decided to better my standard of living by going back to school. I wish to further my studies and become a teacher. I like the subjects I am doing which are ECD and Computer Literacy. ECD has taught me a lot in terms of taking care of my children”.

Siza wanted to be a teacher. She also pointed out that the subjects she was doing would assist her to get a job at old age homes and also she could be employed as a health care worker.

Natasha said:

“I registered at this centre because I want to be an entrepreneur. I want to help the community around here by opening a crèche and that is the reason I chose to do ECD”.

Natasha in the researcher’s opinion was like Nomusa in that she wanted to be an entrepreneur. She would contribute to the economy of the country.

These responses by students showed that they are not happy with their current status. They wanted to be economically balanced in order to upgrade their existing skills and employability. During the conversation, it was also revealed that education would give them a chance to look back and assist their families to live a better life.

Some AET Level 4 educators were also requested to offer reasons that they thought motivated students to register at that centre. Rashida pointed out that most students that come to register are domestic workers who work in the houses that are near the school. These women are isiZulu speakers. They wanted to improve their English and their career prospects. She further cited that some students were encouraged by their employers to come and register at the centre so that they further their education and look for greener pastures rather than being domestic workers for the rest of their lives.

4.5.2 Social transformation

The participants revealed that the establishment of this centre near their place of work was a return of hope. These participants were not happy with their current standard of living. Natasha was an unemployed mother of two. She was in the process of opening her own child care centre in her home. She pointed out that she was planning to employ two or three workers that would assist in running the business. That, to her, was a return of hope and dignity. As a businesswoman, she would attend business meetings and interact with some prominent figures in the society. She would also interact with parents of the children she would be looking after. That, to her, was a great stride towards transforming herself socially.

“If you are unemployed, the community sometimes looks down upon you, especially in my area. I cannot believe that this is happening to me. The child care centre is going to assist the parents in my neighbourhood as they used to send their kids to the crèches that are far from their homes. I will give back to society by creating job opportunities” (Natasha).

Similarly, Siza concurred with Natasha:

“When I got pregnant at a very young age, my dream was shattered. I was worried that I will end up a useless girl who has no future. I was afraid that I will end up doing silly things maybe drinking alcohol like other girls who were in the same situation like me in my neighbourhood. Since I registered at this centre my life has changed. I now attend parent’s meetings at my children’s schools”.

She continued to say that she would not forget her friend who suggested that they should leave the miserable village life and go to look for a job in town. They were uneducated as she only had Grade 7. She was a breadwinner and her parents were poor. The only source of income was the Government grant received by her parents. She had to change the situation at home.

“The only work available for me with my broken English was to be a domestic worker. This is where I am now and I have hopes that my dream of becoming educated and change the situation at home will come true” (Siza).

She further pointed out that even her father, the one who told her to leave school after becoming pregnant, was no longer angry that she was an embarrassment to the family. He, himself was excited that she was then in Level 4. He hoped that she would become something one day.

Nomusa too was hoping for a better future. She was also a domestic worker. She was from a rural area. She came to town to look for work so as to feed her family. Her father passed on while she was young. She was forced to drop out of school. There was no one who was working at home. She believed that she would complete the programme and register as a part-time student in Grade 12. After Grade 12, she opted to register with the University of South Africa as a part-time student. During the conversation, she revealed that registering at the CLC meant so much to her because she would be a better person.

The participants’ social status was gradually improving for the better. They could participate in the structures of the society, e.g., attending meetings called by ward councillors. Nomusa and Siza could

attend parents' meetings and also contribute as they were able to express themselves in English. Initially, they could not attend those meetings.

4.5.3 Self-development and personal growth

Participants argued that attending adult classes had changed their lives. They could see a sense of growth as well as development in their personal lives. Siza lamented the opportunity she lost by dropping out of school.

"I did not finish Grade 7. We live in a remote rural area. When I arrived here in town looking for a job, it was a nightmare as I could not express myself in English. When I heard about this centre I could not waste time but to register. With the assistance I get from educators, I have improved. I can communicate with my employer. I can write a letter or message on my cell phone in English".

She further pointed out that they were very lucky because their centre is a multi-racial centre and the medium of instruction is English. Therefore, communicating in English every day with classmates had assisted her to improve.

Natasha shared the same views. She saw herself growing to a better person.

"I live in a suburban area. In this area if you are not working, some neighbours look down upon you, they don't even greet. I am about to open my own child care centre with the assistance of my two sons. This is an achievement on my side".

She revealed that she had succeeded in going through the process of applying for a permit. It was not an easy road as she was referred from one municipality office to another. During this journey, she could see herself growing and coming out of her cocoon.

Facilitators were also requested to cite their views on what they think motivated students to register and persist at the centre. From our discussion, it came out that they did notice a change in behaviour and growth from individual students.

"This is a multi-racial centre. I can notice that the isiZulu speaking students are improving. When they first came here, they were very shy and afraid to answer questions in class, thinking that they will embarrass themselves and be laughed at. Through interaction with other races inside and outside the class, their language has improved. I think this is also what motivates them to register here" (Rashida).

Themes that were identified in this section are: education and career advancement, and social transformation.

In the above section, I have presented the factors that motivated the students to register and stay at the centre. These factors came as themes from the collected data.

4.6. Factors that promote continued participation

In this section, the researcher discusses the themes that are related to the factors that motivated the students to continue to participate at Siyazama Centre. They were identified as follows: support from educators, support from peers, family and curriculum.

4.6.1 Support from educators

Facilitators were asked to express their view on what they think motivates students to continue attending and not drop out of the CLC. Rashida shared that the support and love that they gave the students were the reasons they did not drop out:

“We are a diverse community at this institution. We have Africans, Indians and Coloured students. We treat them equally. Nobody is better than the other here. We promote the principle of Ubuntu. Some African students are struggling with English. I do code-switching so that everybody understands. We motivate them. We promote the culture of respect, tolerate and race relations” (Rashida).

To concur with teacher Rashida, George, said:

“We treat them equally, irrespective of race, colour and gender. As a teacher, you create an environment which promotes a sense of belonging so that everybody feels at home. We do not accept judgemental views. It is the culture of this centre that we treat them as individuals so as to retain a sense of dignity and pride”.

According to the students, since they registered at the centre in AET Level 1, the support that they receive from the educators and institution was tremendous and encouraged them to continue to participate even though sometimes they had challenges. One student added that during teaching and learning, the facilitator could see if there were students who did not understand. They would attend to them individually to further explain the subject matter. This was also noticed when the researcher was observing. During the lesson, the facilitator could pause and allow students to ask questions.

George also revealed that, as educators, they tried by all means to build a strong sense of family. They have thus built a strong student-educator relationship. This facilitator further stated that when the student was absent he became concerned and wanted to know the reason for absenteeism. Therefore, he visited them in their homes to check on why they did not come to school. He had also created a WhatsApp group where he communicated with the students. When the student was alone at home studying and came across a section that was challenging to him or her, he or she could communicate with the educator and other classmates, asking questions through the WhatsApp group. This was supported and welcomed by the students because when the subject of the WhatsApp group was raised, they seemed very happy to be communicating with their educators through this medium.

It also came up through the discussion with the educators that they had started lift clubs to assist the students that live far from the centre. The classes finished at 8 pm and there were no taxis at that time. The students that have cars gave lifts to those without cars. The facilitators also offered lifts to students who reside further away.

4.6.2 Support from family and peers

It emerged from the data that the support that participants got from families and friends had made them very strong and it had given them the will to push hard and not drop out.

“I am a stay-at-home mom and the support system that I get from my sons has made me to be strong and not to give up. I have two loving sons who are both working. During my exams they know that I need some time to study, therefore they assist with housework. They clean and cook while I am studying. They also assist me in downloading past exam papers” (Natasha).

Concurring with what was said by Natasha, Siza said that the love and care she received from her children and boyfriend had motivated her to continue participating. She was the one who got pregnant while at school and was forced by her father to drop out. Her child was in Grade 9 and she said that she (the child) was very supportive.

“When she is doing her homework, I sit with her at the table and would be busy with mine too. She assists me with spelling and some definitions. She even taught me how to use a dictionary” (Siza).

In addition, Nomusa is a sleep-in domestic worker and she was excited to reveal that she had an employer who was very supportive. She attended classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18h00 to

20h00 and on those days her employer released her early so that she could get ready for class, and during exams, her employer gave her some time off to prepare for the writing of examinations.

Although the participants had alluded to the support they got from family and friends, they also pointed out that sometimes they were mocked by some of their friends who usually say that they were just wasting time by going back to school because there were no jobs. This mockery had made them strong and they wanted to continue to participate until they finished the programme.

During the discussion, it also emerged that this centre had produced many Level 4 students. The participants had peers who had finished AET Level 4, who are assisting them with their studies.

4.6.3 Curriculum

The subjects that are offered in AET Level 4 are presented in Table 4.. These subjects were selected according to the students' needs. Before the end of each year, the centre manager, facilitators and students meet to discuss the subject choices. The students interviewed were doing Computer Technology, Early Childhood Development and Ancillary Health Care. During our discussion, they revealed that the subjects offered at the centre had an influence on their decision to register and stay because they had opportunities. They stated that when a person is in possession of an AET Level 4 Certificate with the subjects stated above, which are Early Childhood Development, Ancillary Health Care that person has opportunities.

Siza said:

“One of my friends completed her AET Level 4 in 2012 and she is employed at the Old Age Home. The subjects that she did were Ancillary Health Care, Life Orientation and Early Childhood Development. She is working well and her salary is much better than what I get”.

She added that she was also motivated by that friend to choose these subjects and ensure that she completed the programme.

Similarly, Nomusa seemed to agree that the curriculum offered at this CLC was one of the motivations to register.

“Even if I do not have the means to open my own Child Care Centre but having ECD and Ancillary Health Care subjects in my Level 4 certificate will allow me to get a job at the crèches” (Nomusa).

The centre manager also confirmed that subjects like Ancillary Health Care and Early Childhood Development are popular to students. They all work hard from AET Levels 1 to 3 because one of their goals is to exit the system with these subjects. He further said that there are institutions in town that offer short courses for Caregivers. Their minimum requirement is for students to have Level 4.

While still discussing the curriculum the participants mentioned that besides the subjects offered another reason that motivated them to stay against all odds was the way the curriculum was delivered. Teaching and learning were made simpler for them to understand. They, as students are involved in teaching and learning.

In my opinion, the students can register in numbers at an institution because of the curriculum or subjects that are offered, but if curriculum delivery and teaching methods are not effective, it demotivates the student to stay. Likewise, the facilitators were asked about the curriculum and curriculum delivery. This is what Rashida said:

“To ensure that they are motivated to attend classes every day, I make my lessons exciting. As an educator, I must be a role model. I come to class well-prepared in order to meet all their needs. During teaching and learning, I acknowledge their strength and work on their weaknesses. IsiZulu speakers sometimes have a challenge of understanding English so I use code-switching to accommodate them. Lessons are learner-centred”.

4.6.4 Teaching methods

Siza pointed out that when she first came to attend classes, she was very shy and would sit at the back. English was the medium of instruction. She could not express herself in English. This took place for the first two months. Most of the isiZulu speakers were like her.

“Ma’am could notice that we were quiet and she divided the class into groups of 4, i.e., 2 isiZulu speaking students, one Indian and one Coloured. In a group, she would give us a task to do where we would report after 20 minutes or so. The other races were very nice. We started to learn to talk. If we isiZulu speaking learners pronounced a word wrong, they would correct us in a very polite manner. The teacher could intervene in all the groups checking that everybody participates and the other races are not dominating. We have to demonstrate and role play. Today as I am talking to you, I can stand in front of the class and present (Siza)”.

As she was reciting this story, I could see the excitement in her eyes. This conversation was affirmed by the centre manager, Mr Mthembu:

“For quality teaching and learning we ensure that we encompass skills of livelihood. We do this by employing teaching methods that are learner-centred. If they are satisfied, they register and stay” (Mthembu).

What is cited by students as well as the facilitators was witnessed by the researcher during the observation lesson.

4.6.5 The sitting arrangement

The purpose of this section is to give the picture of the sitting arrangement in the class during observation. What was noted was that, although the students were seated in a traditional way where everybody faces the chalkboard, races were mixed in each desk. This sitting arrangement on its own confirmed that there was a healthy human relationship in this class. The students, just like in Figure 4.1 (example of a sitting arrangement), were sitting attentively listening and paying attention to the lesson.



Figure 4.1: Traditional sitting method

4.6.6 Observation lesson

Students were actively involved in the lesson. The topic was: the first-aid procedure to care for an open wound. It was a role play where students had to demonstrate how to give first aid to an injured person. There was a student who acted as the one who is injured and the second student was a nurse. The rest of the class had to give the procedure to be followed. Each student was given a chance to come and demonstrate in the front. The researcher noticed cooperation, collaboration and active participation from every student in that class. All the students participated actively. Those students according to the researcher's observation were motivated and goal-driven. They were proactive. They took control of their learning. They provided their own learning materials, e.g., first aid kit and charts. There was a lot of practical learning and simulations. This interaction amongst students during learning is what Tinto (1993) called social integration, which promotes participation and retention.

During this lesson, the role played by the facilitator was to set the atmosphere that was conducive to teaching and learning. The facilitator was guiding the learning process. She was the resource person, providing learning materials like chalk and duster. It was observed that the interaction between the facilitator and the students was positive. Although the students were in charge of their learning, the facilitator was still in control. She had the ability to exercise control but without violating the student's rights.

Themes that promoted continued participation that were identified from this section were: support from educators, support from family and peers, curriculum and teaching methods.

In the above section, the researcher presented the factors that the students revealed as the driving force towards their continued participation. The researcher did this using the themes that came out from data collected. She will then discuss the factors that promote student retention at Siyazama Centre.

4.7 Factors that promote student retention at Siyazama Centre

In this section, the researcher discusses the themes that emerged from data which are related to the factors that lead to retention at Siyazama CLC.

Having discussed the factors that promote students' on-going participation at this CLC, the researcher wanted to hear from the participants what they think promotes retention at the centre. These participants, as mentioned before, started from AET Level 1 and they are now in AET Level 4. At the beginning of the chapter, they were requested to state what motivated them to register at this centre.

Furthermore, they stated the factors that led to their on-going participation. In this section, the themes which promote student retention are discussed. They are identified as:

4.7.1 Social and academic integration

Social integration is when the student is happy and comfortable at the centre he or she has enrolled. The interaction that prevailed between the students with peers and staff members promoted their social being. The type of communication that took place and the support they received from peers also contributed to their social and academic environment. A student is integrated into the academic system of the centre when that particular student has reasons that attracted or motivated him to register. She or he is also integrated when they enjoy what they are studying and when they have the reasons for selecting the subjects they selected.

At the beginning of the discussion, students were requested to state what motivated them to register at this CLC. Equally, they revealed that returning to school after a few decades was not an easy decision to take. They are old and they did not know what to expect.

“At my age, I was afraid of failure. I thought that maybe I would not perform as expected and drop out. But the friendly environment, the love, support and the respect that the educators and the centre manager give us made me stay. Even when you do not know the answer to a question the educator will not shout at me, as they used to do in normal school” (Nomusa).

Both Siza and Rashida agreed with this statement that the environment at the centre is welcoming and conducive to teaching and learning.

The social and academic relationship between the institution and the students was also observed during the observation lesson. The observation was done in AET Level 4 class. The subject that was observed was Ancillary Health Care. The topic was: the first-aid procedure to care for an open wound. The class consisted of African, Indian and Coloured students. The students had to perform a role-play and demonstrate how to give first-aid to an injured person. There was a student who acted as the patient and another student as the one assisting the patient. The class had to tell the nurse the procedures to be followed. Active participation was observed. Each student was given a chance to come to the front and demonstrate. The interaction between the educator and students and among the students themselves confirmed the social and academic integration pointed out by participants.

Mostly social integration is seen during extra-curricular activities, but this centre did not offer them. However, there were study groups that were created by facilitators to assist the students that were struggling. During my interaction with students, it came out that these study groups took place on Saturday. They have a leader who keeps the key to the classroom they use.

“We start at 9:00 on Saturdays. We revise the previous question papers as a group. When there is a question that gives us a challenge we pack it for Monday to raise it with our facilitator” (Siza).

These study groups assisted them to get to know each other better in an informal environment where no educator is available. They were involved in the discussion, sharing ideas and assisting each other. They would be socialising while in the learning process. This would improve their performance.

4.7.2 Goals and commitments

The quality of the student effort together with the efforts by the academic staff increase persistence and retention. Persistence is therefore a function of integration into the academic and social aspects of the college system, mediated by goal commitments (Tinto, 1993).

During the interaction with the participants, they mentioned that they have stayed at the centre and did not drop out because they made a commitment to their children and families that they will pass this programme and be what they wish to be. They revealed that their social, as well as academic involvement to the centre, have made them grow. They came to the centre with goals and commitments to achieve those goals. The support they received from the staff and peers has made them stay. Their commitment to achieving the goals was confirmed by Siza when she said:

“Although it is difficult to balance work and attending school, I will not give up. That can be a disappointment even to my kids”.

This statement on its own was also an indication that participants were committed to this centre until they achieved the outcomes.

Recognition of AET certificate

Table 4.4: AET NQF structure

NQF level	Qualification	Equivalent grades	AET level
NQF 1	General Education and Training	Grade 8- Grade 9 Grade 6- Grade 7 Grade 4-Grade 5 Grade R- Grade 3	AET 4 AET 3 AET 2 AET 1

The table above shows the position of AET in the NQF structure and the equivalence of AET to ordinary school grades.

The students interviewed were in Level 4, which according to the above structure is equivalent to Grade 9. When they finish Grade 9, according to the policy, they can register for Grade 12.

Rashida, the facilitator, revealed that there is still a huge gap between AET and Grade 12.

“After completing AET Level 4 our students are required to register for Grade 12 and they do not cope. This policy needs to be revisited because AET Level 4 is equivalent to Grade 9 and it means that the student has to skip two grades and this becomes too difficult for most of our students” (Rashida).

Although the participants appreciated the education and the support they got from the centre, they thought that there was a lot that needed to be done to attract more students to participate and persist. Nomusa pointed out that some were reluctant to register because they felt that the AET Certificate does not receive full recognition. When jobs are advertised in newspapers she has not seen an advertisement that requires a person with AET Certificate.

In addition, Natasha 3 said:

“I think a lot can be done by the Department of Education to show to the public that the AET certificate is important. Our names can be published in the newspaper just like Grade 12. Graduation can be held at a City Hall.”

In my opinion, the things mentioned above meant a lot to students. They can motivate more students to finish the programme so as to be seen walking up on stage to receive the certificate.

In addition, the centre manager points out that even when AET results come out nobody cares.

“I usually watch Grade 12 results announced and analysed on national television and that has never happened with AET results” (Mthembu).

Similarly, the facilitators revealed that the AET Certificate has little or no impact.

“We have a number of learners that have passed Level 4, who got the AET certificate but are sitting at home unemployed. This certificate alone does not have much impact” (Rashida).

4.7.3 Curriculum

As cited previously, the participants were happy with the curriculum offered at the centre. This was revealed when they were requested to discuss what motivated them to register at the centre. This theme emerged again when they were asked about the factors that they think can further retain students.

It was exciting to listen to the participants coming out with different views on the curriculum. Some students say that they are old and do not need to learn subjects like Life Orientation, Natural Sciences etc.

“What are we going to do with these subjects? We wish that skills development would be incorporated into our curriculum. Skills will assist us to make a living” (Natasha).

Some students wish to acquire sewing and beadwork skills so as to sell and make a living. To echo what was said, Nomusa revealed that in their classroom, there are more women than men. This was because men wanted to learn skills most of the time. Men like practical skills.

However, in as much as the students acknowledged the curriculum offered, they wished that this matter could be revisited by the centre and the Department of Education so that more students could register and be retained. It also emanated from the discussion that they wish that the curriculum could not be prescribed or if it was prescribed that it could involve skills that could assist in changing their lives.

4.7.4 Resources

As mentioned earlier on, the centre operates at the premises of another school. The researcher wanted to find out whether the centre does have its own resources or whether it is depended on the host school. The centre manager revealed that resources contribute to the promotion of student retention at the centre. He acknowledged the fact that the centre does have basic resources like desks though there are shortages because of large numbers of students, classrooms, and computers for those students that do Computer Literacy Studies. The school is also provided with study guides. Nevertheless, what is

supplied by the Department of Education, e.g., photocopying paper, is not enough to last them for a longer period of time.

“The Department of Education needs to support us and focus more on providing funding for resources like teaching materials. We have insufficient resources and they are supplied once in a while. Sometimes we depend on fundraising to survive. We do not even have enough exercise books” (Mthembu).

Concurring with the centre manager, teacher Rashida also mentioned the issue of resources as a matter that needs to be addressed by the Department in order to make teaching and learning more effective.

“I am teaching Home Economics in Grade 12 at a nearby school. At the beginning of the year the principal gives each and every educator stationary he or she will use for each term. I usually finish mine before time because I take my photocopying papers to make copies for my Level 4 class. Sometimes I bring the chalk from my supplies” (Rashida).

Rashida was also not happy with that the system seems to neglect AET. They are treated differently. She pointed out that the Department of Education goes to the extent of providing pens, pencils, erasers, study guides that are user-friendly, and textbooks, but AET is not supplied with any of the above. This lamentation also came out during focus group discussions where participants mentioned that the public schools are supplied with a pack of exercise books for each learner at the beginning of the year, whereas adult students get nothing.

During the conversation about the resources, it was noted that all participants were not happy. They felt that they were treated like stepchildren.

The shortage of resources was also noticed by the researcher during observation. There was not enough furniture in the classroom. It was a class of 35 students. The students that came late did not have desks to write on. As a result, they had to write on their laps.

4.7.5 Excellence awards

Siza raised incentives or rewards as a factor that promotes and maintains retention.

“We also have students that perform well in AET but nobody recognises them. When AET results came out, I am not sure whether the MEC for Education is interested. I have never heard him talking on TV about us, AET” (Siza).

Siza pointed out that she wished that those among them that excelled in their performances could be treated just like the Grade 12s were treated.

“Everybody is focusing on Grade 12. Nobody is interested to know about AET performance” (Siza).

She added that if stakeholders paid more attention to how AET progresses, it would promote retention because even those that mock them, by saying that they waste time by returning to school, would see them being appreciated.

However, at a centre level, the centre manager revealed that as the centre they do organise excellence award ceremonies for Level 4 students each semester to recognise those that performed well. Those awards recognised students that excelled in various areas namely good attendance, submitting work in time, neatness and well-kept files.

Themes identified were: recognition of the AET certificate, curriculum, social and academic integration, goals and commitments, resources, and excellence awards, goals and commitments.

In this section, the researcher discussed the factors that lead to retention at Siyazama Centre. She highlighted all the themes that came from data.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has offered the biographic information of all participants used in the study. It has also concentrated on the presentation and analysis of data collected from participants at Siyazama CLC.

Chapter 5: Interpretation and discussion of findings

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the data collected from participants which provided the basis for interpretive analysis. Drawing from that, the researcher will now discuss the findings that emanated from data generated from participants to examine the factors that lead to retention at Siyazama CLC. The research questions have been used as key headings.

This discussion will be in the light of Tinto's (1993) Student Integration Model. It will be argued that the factors Tinto (1993) identifies as promoting retention are in line with participants' responses. There is something about Siyazama CLC that makes the participants want to stay.

Data will be presented in the form of the categories that emerged and these categories are classified as follows:

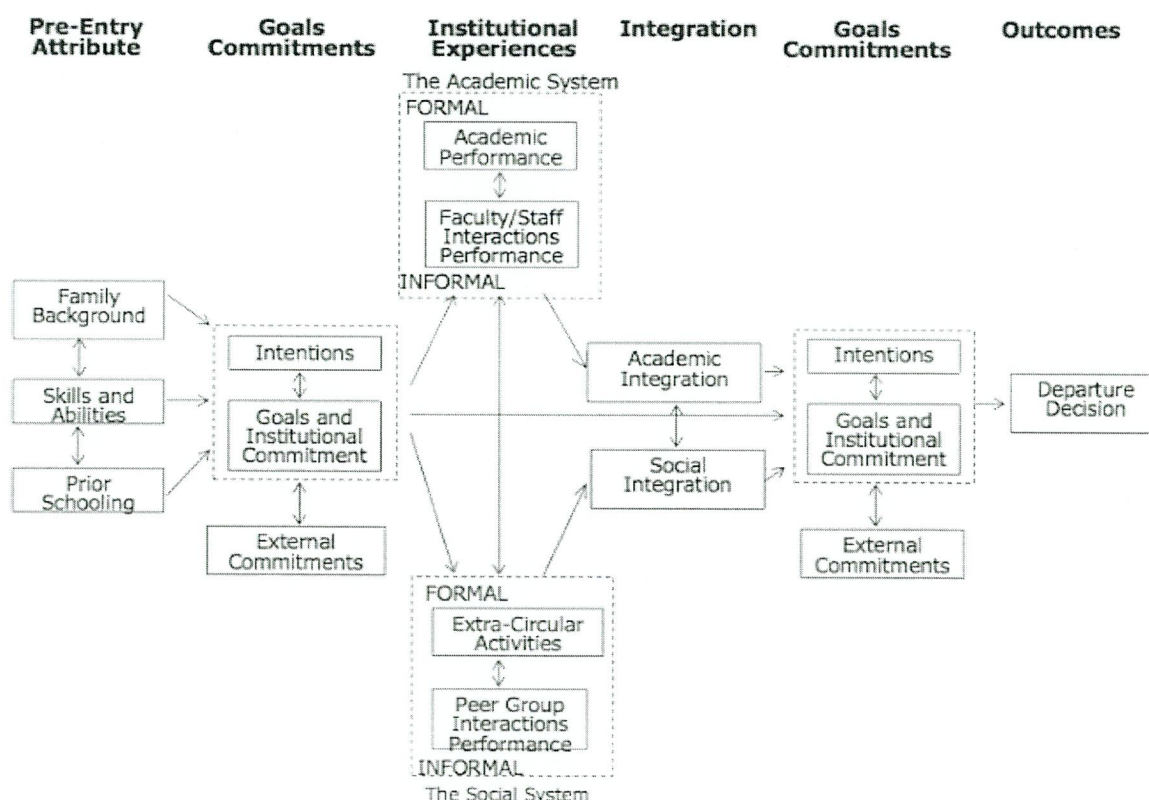


Figure 5.1: Model of Student Integration (Tinto, 1993)

In Tinto's view, what was raised by students as the motivating factors to register is classified as pre-entry attributes (Tinto, 1993).

5.2 Pre-entry attributes

Pre-entry attributes are the elements that the student possesses when he or she enters the institution as mentioned. These elements are family background, skills and abilities and prior schooling. Such elements should be taken into consideration and are a basis for learning.

5.2.1 Family background

In Tinto's view (Chapter 2), the family background is the most motivating factor that drives the student to register in adult education. Where the student comes from has a huge impact in promoting adult student participation in a programme. Likewise, the quality of student commitment and the background have a direct influence on the decision to stay or leave (Tinto, 1993).

From the interviews with students, it was found that both Siza and Nomusa come from poor family backgrounds. Both students dropped out of school and went to urban areas to look for greener pastures. In one instance, Nomusa revealed that she was forced to drop out of school and go to look for a job as she was a breadwinner. Her siblings are in secondary school. Her father passed on while they were young, and her mother was working as a domestic worker but had to leave her job as she became sick with diabetes.

Siza's parents were old and lived on the government grant. Likewise, the situation in her house forced her to leave the rural area and look for a job in the urban area. Both students had to send money home at the end of each month. The same thing applied with Natasha. She was unemployed. She had to put food on the table and pay her bills. Although her two sons were working, she was a mother and had to contribute towards their daily sustenance.

The above situations are relevant to understanding that participants were not satisfied with their way of life and family backgrounds. They had to make decisions to leave their homes, look for work to support their families and then went back to school in order to improve their standard of living. This is in line with Tinto's (1993) pre-entry attributes, i.e., family background. The participants came from very bad family backgrounds but those backgrounds motivated them to work hard in order to uplift their families.

5.2.2 Skills and abilities

The participants came to the centre having obtained some skills and abilities from their previous learning. Both Siza and Nomusa are drop-outs from primary school. They can read and write in their mother tongue. They were domestic workers and their employers are Coloured, which means they were able to communicate in English. Natasha came to the centre with the skills she obtained from working in a shoe factory. This is in line with Tinto's (1993) skills and abilities. The participants all possessed skills and abilities that made them persist.

5.2.3 Prior learning

Tinto (1993) states that adult students bring to the institution their previous knowledge. When this prior learning is combined with other pre-entry characteristics, it leads to a set of commitment to persist. This persistence as Tinto (1993) argues, results in retention.

The skills and abilities these participants possessed are a result of prior learning they obtained from their previous schooling. They registered at this centre after realising that their poor previous schooling was not taking them anywhere. They wished to develop their career path so that their standard of living would be uplifted. Tinto (1993) emphasised that it is these pre-entry attributes which provide an insight into understanding how students would respond to their educational environment and persist. Therefore, what the participants revealed about their prior learning is in line with Tinto (1993).

5.3 Goals and commitments

Tinto (1997) in his Student Interaction Model (Chapter 2) points out that when a student enters an institution, he or she possesses certain characteristics, namely, goals and commitments. These characteristics are motivational factors that prepare him or her to face all the experiences he or she will encounter at the campus. These are driven by the student's intentions and external commitments. As a student enters an institution, these intentions and external commitments have an important bearing on the overall goal and institutional commitment (Tinto, 1993).

The above argument is supported by the participants interviewed in this study. When asked to mention the reasons which motivated them to register at the Siyazama Centre, they were quick to point out that their different goals, intentions and external commitments pushed them to register. According to Tinto (1993), the first two segments of the model, namely, pre-entry attributes and goals and commitments, represent characteristics the student has when he or she registers at the institution. They are motivational factors. In this study, the students were motivated by various role changes and future

goals namely: to be educated and advance their career, social transformation, and the return of lost dignity.

5.3.1 Education and career advancement

All three students that were interviewed revealed that they registered at that centre because they were needs-driven. Their goals and intentions were to be educated so as to get better job opportunities. Two of those students were domestic workers and who in the researcher's opinion, did not earn a good salary. The third student was unemployed. After completing AET Level 4, Nomusa wished to register for Grade 12 and when she finishes Grade 12 she hopes to register for a teaching profession through University of South Africa. Similarly, Siza dropped out in Grade 7 and wanted to study further and become a teacher. Natasha also had goals that would better her standard of living. She wanted to start a business.

In the researcher's opinion, these students were not happy with their present situations. They wanted to change their lives. Taking cues from what they revealed, it was clear that they strongly believe that education is key to a better future.

In support of what the participants mentioned about the motivation to learn, Tinto (1993) argues that students enter the institution with intentions and external commitments which have a strong bearing on the goals they wish to achieve. On the other hand, Rogers (2004) also maintains that some students join adult classes because of the opportunities these classes will bring. He further points out that these adults decide to go back to school in order to finish the programme to obtain better-paid employment.

Likewise, Nomusa and Siza had to go back to school in order to be able to take care of their families in rural areas. Completing the programme would put them in a better position to look for better jobs with better salaries.

5.3.2 Social transformation and modern life

During our conversation with the participants, it was noted that they strongly believe that education would transform their social life. The medium of instruction at Siyazama Centre is English. Siza and Nomusa are domestic workers and did not speak good English. Being at the centre would improve their communication skills and they would not be shy to interact and engage with other students.

These two women also revealed that they are now able to interact socially with other races namely coloureds and Indian students, as their English has improved. Siza further mentioned that she now attends parent meetings at her children's schools. Initially, she could not do that because she did not

understand English and meetings were run in English. Siza added that she can now attend community meetings in the squatter camp where she lived. She was involved in community projects.

Most students at Siyazama Centre are isiZulu speakers. They register because they also want to improve their English so as to be able to communicate well..

5.3.2 The return of lost dignity

Rogers (2004) in Zwane (2016) argues that the reasons that drive students to register for adult classes can be intrinsic, stemming from within, or driven by external aspirations that are attached to people who are educated.

Natasha was working at a shoe factory and was retrenched in 2000 and she could not find a job thereafter. She then became a stay-at-home mother. She felt that her dignity was tarnished after losing her job as she lived in an up-market area where everybody was well-employed. Her main goal was to get educated so that she could become an entrepreneur. She thought that by registering at the adult centre her dignity would be restored because after losing her job she could not afford to keep her car. She sold it and went back to travelling with taxis.

Similarly, Siza and Nomusa mentioned that if you were a woman of her age working as a domestic worker you become a laughing stock in the neighbourhood because that job was classified as being low and should be done by older women. As a result, most of the people back home did not know that Siza was a domestic worker. They thought she worked at Shoprite.

It was an embarrassment that after I was employed I could not communicate with my madam. They are Coloureds but fortunately, they could speak a few words in isiZulu.

I was ashamed of myself (Siza).

Reflecting on the participants' responses on what drove them to register, learning at the centre would restore their dignity as they mentioned, and it would also return the hope that was lost. When Siza got pregnant her dreams were shattered. She now feels that she can claim back her life. These characteristics that the students possess at the time of entry are the bases that determine whether the student would stay or leave (Tinto, 1997). On the other hand, the students will not be able to achieve these goals and intentions if the institution is not committed to assist and support them.

In addition to what is stated by participants, Rogers (2004) confirms that students are motivated to return to school because they want to join the formal and non-formal schooling programme. Their intentions are to further their studies so that they enter the doors of higher learning.

In support of what the participants said, Tinto (1993) states that students are aware of what they want to achieve prior to their environment. Therefore, what the students cited about their goals and commitments is in line with Tinto's (1993) goals and commitments.

5.4. Institutional experiences

The above attributes are what Tinto's (1997) Model of Student Integration (Chapter 2) classifies as institutional experiences. Tinto maintains that institutions must not only provide the students with an opportunity to register, but must also give academic support. He therefore refers to this support as the institutional experience a student gains from the institution. These experiences involve the academic performance, interaction and support from staff and peers.

Tinto's (1997) argument was supported by most participants. They agreed that what motivated them to participate at this centre were: the support they received from the educators, the support from peers and the curriculum.

The above aspects are called, according to Tinto's model, institutional experiences that assist in motivating the student to persist. The formal and informal learning that the students receive from the school plays a vital role in building up their self-esteem (Tinto, 1993). This argument was supported by the students when they revealed that they learned a lot from the study groups they attend on Saturdays. They had even taught each other how to write a CV. It was also revealed that that informal gathering had also assisted them in teaching each other how to save money in stokvel clubs.

5.4.1 Support from educators

During the discussion with AET Level 4 facilitators, it was mentioned that the respect and the love that the facilitators give to students is one of the reasons they continue to participate and do not drop out. These students came from different backgrounds. As facilitators, they acknowledged diversity and treated them equally irrespective of colour, race, gender and age. The principle of *Ubuntu* is promoted at this centre. There is a strong educator-learner relationship observed in that class. As previously mentioned, there are lift-clubs and WhatsApp group chats that were created by educators. Group chats were used to check on the students who were absent or the students could also use that site to report absenteeism or communicate with educators on matters pertaining to subjects. This support from facilitators is in line with Tinto (2014), as he states that the high classroom support that the students receive can lead to the achievement of goals and programme completion. He further argues that although the student is responsible for working hard, the centrality of the matter depends on whether effective teaching and learning happen in the classroom.

One of the students mentioned that if teacher Rashida could see that one of them did not understand the lesson, she would sit with him or her at the back of the class. While other students were busy writing the notes from the board, she would explain the subject matter step by step. She would also give them more activities to try at home. This academic support is also in line with what Gall (2013) highlights. Gall mentions that facilitators should be accessible, and students' needs should be catered for, and that the individual support students get at an institution encourages them to persist until they finish the course. Swail (2002) agrees with Gall (2013) and Tinto (1997) in that providing support to student improves participation which results in retention.

The above argument is supported by facilitator George when he mentioned that his students were his second family. There are 42 students in his computer class and when one of them was absent he quickly noticed it and he would call him or her. Some students disappeared because of family challenges. He visited those students at their homes to find out the reasons for them being absent.

5.4.2 Support from family and peers

Through her interaction with students to further understand what makes them continue to participate at this centre, the researcher discovered that the centre manager, facilitators and students had created study groups that took place on Saturdays from 8:30 am to 12 pm. The students studied on their own without supervision from educators. There were no facilitators. They used previous years question papers. The researcher found that the adult learners elected one student who was a leader. They were divided into groups of four. They sat in groups and discussed the questions. Siza and Nomusa pointed out that they had gained a lot from group discussions and their English had also improved.

This argument ties in well with Tinto's model of integration, where he maintains that an institution is a social structure which has an impact on participation and retention. He further cites that peer relations, mentoring and role models are important factors that promote satisfaction. This idea is further supported by Guthrie (2000) when he points out that students learn best in groups.

Participants also pointed out that they could not forget the support they got from their families. This support had motivated them to push harder to achieve their goals. Although Siza did not get much support from her father who took her out of school because she was pregnant, she was excited that her children supported her. They were happy that she went back to school. They sat together at the table while doing homework. They were very proud to assist her with homework especially when looking for the meaning of the words in a dictionary.

Nomusa, unlike Siza, only went home at the end of the month. She stayed in the servant's quarters at her employer's home. She pointed out that she was lucky to get an employer like the one she had, who showed concerns and allowed her to register in adult education.

"My employer is quite aware of the days when I have to attend classes. I finish work at 16h00 so as to prepare for classes" (Nomusa).

Nomusa finished work at 7 pm after serving dinner and washing the dishes.

Natasha, on the other hand, had two sons who were both working. They showed interest in what she was learning because they usually asked her how the lessons were. Although they were not familiar with the subjects, they downloaded information for her. They also downloaded the previous question papers for her. When she was writing exams, the boys knew that they should come from work and cook.

The facilitators revealed that they encouraged students to work in groups so that they would learn to work together, sharing ideas and supporting each other during teaching and learning. The reason for promoting group work was because the isiZulu speaking students were very shy and could not participate in the lesson. They doubted themselves because they were not fluent in English.

"I wanted them to work together in groups as teams. I knew that when I mix races in a group and give each student a role in a lesson, everybody will talk" (Rashida).

The above comments showed that the students continued to participate in order to reach their goals because they were also motivated by the support system they had.

These views are in line with Tinto's (1997) argument about peer group interaction within the academic system as the push factor to finish the programme. He further cites that students have to travel through the curriculum together as a group. Although all the participants showed appreciation for the support they got from families and friends, they could not hide their disappointment with the treatment they received from some of their friends. Those were friends that did not attend school. They mocked them and said that they are wasting time going back to school. Those comments had made them strong and also motivated them to persist and finish the programme so as to prove a point.

The academic support as well as the social support that the participants received from Siyazama Centre is in line with Tinto (1993) institutional experiences. All the support they had formed their resilience.

5.4.3 Curriculum

The curriculum offered at the Siyazama Centre (Table 4.3) was mentioned by both facilitators and students as one of the motivators to participate until the programme is completed. As mentioned previously in the chapter, the centre offered formal school subjects that are prescribed by the Department of Education. Those subjects were relevant and met the needs and expectations of the students in the Level 4 class.

From discussions with Mthembu, the centre manager, and facilitators, it was revealed that the students were happy with the curriculum because they were involved in the selection of subjects for each term. Mokubung (2002) and Dlamini (2002) maintain that the curriculum delivery, teaching methods, as well as academic support are the most important elements that need to be addressed effectively in order to retain adult students. In addition, Tinto (1993) points out that the institution has to commit itself to the success of the student. This commitment leads to satisfaction and retention. This argument is in line with the participants' responses. The facilitators employed learner-centred teaching methods whereby every student in the classroom was involved. Group work taking place during teaching and learning and group work that took place on Saturday classes allowed for self-discovery and experimenting. Rashida, in her Ancillary Health Care class, divided them into small groups where they learned to interact with each other and share ideas.

In addition, students mentioned that they were satisfied with the way the curriculum was delivered, and the knowledge they were gaining from the subjects that were offered.

5.4.4 Subject offerings

When the institution offers relevant subjects, the students are attracted to that particular institution and they stay. This is the case with Siyazama CLC. Students have persisted because the subjects they are offering assist in their future endeavours. But although the participants seemed to be happy with the curriculum offered at Siyazama Centre, they would like it to be reviewed. In order to qualify for the Level 4 certificate, they had to do subjects like Natural Science and Life Orientation. In their responses, it was evident that not all students wanted these subjects. It was revealed that some students, especially men, wanted to be engaged in practical skills. They would like to relate what they learn to their own lives. Therefore, they are calling for creative curriculum development. On this point, Tinto (2014) in his South African lectures emphasised that for adult students to stay and succeed, the institution needs to develop programmes that are effective and relevant. Likewise, Mokubung (2002) and Dlamini

(2002) in their studies conducted in the South African context came up with similar findings. They both claim that the curriculum is the most important tool to retain students.

In the above sections, the participants were requested to state the factors that motivated them to register at Siyazama Centre and the reasons that made them continue to participate until they finished the programme. In this section, the researcher now discusses the factors that the participants highlighted could further promote or maintain retention at their centre. These factors were identified by participants as integration, the balance between social and academic systems, recognition of AET, resources incentives, and financial support and goals and commitments.

5.5 Integration

Tinto (1993) defines integration as the combination of student's attitudes and values with the social aspect of student life, i.e., peers, institution life and goals (Fig 2). As the integration in the social as well as the academic environment of the campus increases, the goals and commitment of the student will also increase, and this leads to continued participation and retention. Tinto (1993) further points out that this social and academic integration leads to success and the achievement of goals and commitment.

In the researcher's opinion, the participants at the centre were integrated into the social and academic system of the institution. This was revealed by them during discussions. Saturday classes, WhatsApp group chats and lift clubs are evidence. Nevertheless, Siyazama Centre is an adult centre where there are no extracurricular activities therefore, the students do not fully gain social integration.

5.6. Balance between social and academic systems

During interaction with the participants, they were requested to put forward some strategies that they thought could be employed to keep the students in the system until they achieved their goals.

Tinto (1993) in his study on retention found that the integration of the academic and social environment has a serious impact on retention and graduation. Pascarella (1985) agrees with Tinto in that the relationship that exists with peer groups and student-teacher interaction influences academic achievement.

According to the findings, the students who participated in the study confirmed Tinto's (1993) ideas. The curriculum that was offered at Siyazama Centre addressed the needs of the participants. Earlier on, they mentioned different reasons that made them choose their subjects. They enjoyed studying at that centre. The environment was welcoming and conducive to learning which motivated them to stay. This

environment was witnessed by the researcher during an observation lesson. During the lesson, the role of the educator was to direct the lesson. The teaching methods used were learner-centred. Students managed their own learning.

Findings also revealed that there were study groups that took place on Saturdays. These study groups were initiated by the centre manager as extra classes to assist the students that had challenges. Although the Saturday classes were voluntary, most of the students attended. . They worked in groups to assist each other. The lift clubs and the WhatsApp group chats improved the social aspects of each student. These relationships are also supported by Wenger (1998) in his community of practice. He points out that when students work in groups, they develop a sense of commitment and ownership. The students become comfortable in sharing ideas with others. This promotes participation and retention.

In the researcher's opinion, the participants were comfortable at Siyazama Centre and liked being part of the campus. This is also evident in the type of communication with each other and also the staff. The support they received from their peers and from the facilitators meant there was a balance between the academic and social environment at Siyazama Centre.

5.7 Goals and commitments

The fifth segment in Tinto (1993) Model of Integration is labelled goals and commitments. The first two attributes in the model, which are pre-entry and initial goals and commitments, play an important role in preparing the adult student for college life. These attributes represent the characteristics that the student possesses at the time of entry. The greater the student's integration into the institution's atmosphere, the greater his or her commitment and motivation to persist and complete the programme (Tinto, 1993).

The above argument was supported by participants during the interviews. These students had been at the centre for a long time because they started at AET Level 1. They were now at AET Level 4. The support they received from their families, peers and the institution itself motivated them to persist. According to the participants, when they came to register at this centre they had their own intentions and commitments. Similarly, the centre had its own commitments and goals designed for students. Therefore, these two parties, i.e., the students and the institution worked together and common goals (outcomes) were reached, which are the completion of the programme and graduation.

5.8 Findings outside Tinto (1993) Model

During the analysis of data, the researcher used both the deductive and inductive reasoning. Therefore, the following findings are specifically outside theory, meaning that they are not in line with Tinto (1993) but they were found to be relevant to the study.

5.8.1. Recognition of the AET Certificate

The lack of recognition of AET certificate came up as a concern with students, which according to the participants will promote retention as soon as it is addressed. All the students claimed that there was no clear direction in terms of where to continue with the studies when a student finished the programme. According to policy, after the student finishes AET Level 4, he or she has to register for Grade 12. This argument was supported by facilitators when they pointed out that most of their students who proceeded to Grade 12 did not cope, because they had skipped two grades, i.e., Grade 10 and 11. The facilitators also revealed that those students found the subjects challenging and difficult. They were concerned that the AET certificate alone does not always assist them to find jobs. Facilitators agreed with what was cited by students.

Additionally, the participants felt that AET does not get enough attention as compared to Grade 12. Therefore, students suggested that AET results should also be announced on national television and also be published in newspapers. This could promote or change the mind-set of other community members who undermine this certificate and think that it is a waste of time.

Participants were concerned that the government introduced AET certificate, but they wonder if there is any progress or monitoring of it as they pointed out that they had not even read in the newspapers about any new developments in AET. They suggested that more publicity and advocacy should be done.

5.8.2. Resources

The supply of sufficient resources was cited as a factor that contributes to retaining adult students. Although the centre has basic resources, they are not enough. The centre is not supplied with stationery, e.g., exercise books, pens and pencils, etc. This concern made them unhappy regarding the treatment they receive from the Department of Education. They referred to in the disparity that public schools have allocations that they have to use to purchase all the resources needed but adult learning centres did not.

What the participants raised was in line with the Report by the Ministerial Task Team Committee on the review of the funding framework of TVET Colleges (DHET, 2017), which revealed that community colleges are underfunded. This committee recommended that for adult education to be effective so that the implementation of programmes is visible, funding to these institutions should be affected.

The above argument aligns with Tinto (1993, 2014) who points out that an institution needs to be committed to the progress of the student in order to promote academic performance and retention. Institutional commitment is exercised by allocating resources, namely teaching materials, as well as the human resources necessary to achieve the goals of both the institution and the student.

To confirm Tinto's (1993) argument, the institutional support at Siyazama was seen as playing a vital role in providing resources for students. According to the findings, the facilitators, as well as the centre manager, did not fold their arms and wait for the Department of Education, but improvised. The centre plays a crucial role in raising funds to buy the resources needed. Furthermore, the insufficient supply of resources does not serve as an obstacle. The facilitators provided some, e.g., teacher Rashida takes her supplies from the school she is employed to use it at the centre. This shows support and commitment.

However, the shortage of human resources, namely, educators, was raised by both facilitators and students as a concern that needed immediate attention. The educators interviewed revealed that most of the adult education facilitators are employed on a full-time basis at public schools. Adult facilitation is a part-time job to supplement the salary. As a result, some facilitators are not committed to their job. There is a high level of absenteeism which can demotivate students.

5.8.3. Incentives and rewards ceremony

It was discovered that there was a reward ceremony held at the centre yearly in February. This ceremony involved all Levels, i.e., AET Level 1 to AET Level 4. The categories awarded are good-performance, achievement with distinctions, good attendance, and coming to class early.

It was revealed that when students reached level 4 especially, they look forward to this day because that is where they are seen by the whole community. The centre invites dignitaries from schools as well as the Department of Education.

The Level 4 students looked forward to this big day from the beginning of the year. They had never worn a graduation gown in their lives. This motivates them to perform well so that they will get the opportunity to be awarded a certificate at the podium with cameras and all the attention on them.

5.8.4. Financial support

Students pointed out that at public schools, learners do not pay school fees. Those who live far from the school are provided with learner transport and there are feeding schemes for most of the schools. At TVET colleges, students are supported financially in the form of NSFAS. They get stipends on a monthly basis. It is a concern that most of these students are poor, living in informal settlements but the Department of Education treats them differently. In light of this concern, they suggest that the Department of Education should likewise support them financially, as some students drop out because of financial constraints and because some students lived far from the centre and could not afford taxi fares.

This argument is in line with Tinto (2014). He states that providing the students with only the opportunity to register is not enough; students should get the financial support needed to complete the programme. In my opinion, the attributes that are mentioned by Tinto's (1993) Model of Student Integration are in line with what was raised by the participants. Moreover, there are new ideas such as resources and financial support that were cited by participants as having an influence on retention whereas Tinto did not cover them in his model. However, these aspects are revealed in his latest lectures in South Africa. Additionally, what Tinto (1993) stated is important and relevant to the South African context and AET centres. All the segments mentioned in his model have an impact on retention and could assist in dealing with retention in community centres.

5.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has presented a theoretical analysis of the study using the lens of Tinto's (1993) Model of Student Integration. Participants' responses were interpreted and discussed in light of this model.

In the next chapter, the researcher will present the summary of how the study unfolded including the summary of the key findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the study by highlighting the research questions the study aimed to answer, the context, focus and research procedures followed. Reflections are made on the research design, data collection tools used, and the sample selected. The summary of key findings of the study is presented and the theoretical framework employed is summarily discussed. Conclusions in relation to objectives of the study and broad and general conclusions are outlined. Limitations of the findings of the study are also presented. The chapter ends with the recommendations that emerged from the findings.

6.2 Background to the study

The study explored the factors that lead to student retention at the Siyazama Centre. There is a high rate of dropouts in most of the AET Centres at uMgungundlovu District. The researcher is an education specialist at the District office who is based at the Examinations and Assessment sub-directorate. Her job is to develop, support and monitor all the schools, including the AET centres in the district. As a person who works closely with adult centres in terms of monitoring during examinations, she became concerned by the low numbers of students who turn up to write their examinations.

During visits to adult centres, it was noticed that Siyazama Centre was exceptional in numbers that were writing the examinations and that triggered the interest to explore why and what they do differently to retain students.

Therefore, this study tried to answer the following research questions;

- What motivates students to enrol and stay in AET?
- What factors promote adult student participation?
- What can be done to maintain and promote retention in AET centres?

This study was conducted at Siyazama CLC which goes from AET Level 1 to AET Level 4. Therefore, the population was the Centre Manager, two Level 4 facilitators and three Level 4 students. Among the students interviewed, were three female students. It was not easy to get male students which was a limitation employed as purposive sampling. Each respondent was chosen for a particular purpose. As Nambinga (2007) states, the strength of purposive sampling is that it always relies on selecting informative rich cases for in-depth analysis of the main issues that are under study. In the researcher's

opinion, this sample was relevant in that the research participants succeeded in creating strong ideas in terms of what can be done to promote retention in adult centres.

This study focused on understanding the factors that promote student retention at Siyazama Centre. The researcher has used the case study, and this has assisted in creating a boundary where she focused on student retention at this AET centre (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The interpretive paradigm was relevant for this exploration because it assisted the researcher in engaging with the participants' viewpoints, thus she was able to explore the perspectives which inform the students' behaviour of deciding to stay and finish the programmes while others choose to drop out.

A variety of data collection tools were used to collect data from the sample. These tools were semi-structured interviews, class observations and focus groups. There were three Level 4 students, two facilitators and the centre manager who were interviewed. The purpose of using different data collection methods was to compare sources, thus triangulate in order to enhance the credibility of the data (Patton & Yin, 2008).

The inductive and deductive approaches were employed to analyse the data. The notes and transcripts from interviews and observations were simplified and organised so as to identify patterns and themes that emerged.

The centre was revisited to show the participants the transcripts so that they could verify whether the transcribed data was really a true reflection of their responses. This was to ensure that the conclusions drawn from the data were credible and trustworthy (Guba & Lincoln, in Baxter & Jack 2008). During this process, the participants were provided with the documents. They were asked to read the records and verify whether what was recorded was a reflection of the situation as they saw it. They were excited and confirmed that the records were true reflections of their responses. This added to the rigor, credibility and trustworthiness of the conclusion drawn from the data.

6.3 Summary of the key findings

In this section, key findings of the research are presented. The researcher has used the research questions listed above as subheadings to structure this section.

Participants from the Siyazama CLC, as previously stated, were AET Level 4 facilitators as well as AET Level 4 students. These students came to the centre with different goals and expectations. They came from different socio-economic backgrounds. They had suffered poverty and were unemployed. Siza and Nomusa were from rural areas, they knew very well how it felt to go to bed with an empty

stomach. They both decided to leave their homes in order to look for work in an urban area. That was a drastic step to take. They both had little education and the only job they could get was to be domestic workers. Natasha wanted to change and improve her standard of living by going back to school so as to improve her education and become an entrepreneur. In summary, all these participants had goals and intentions.

6.3.1 Motivation of students to register at AET

The economy of the country is increased when the citizens are literate and employed. Therefore, based on the findings of the study, all participants were motivated to register at Siyazama Centre by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. The curriculum offered played a role as they wanted to be educated for the betterment of their lives so as to contribute to the economy of the country. They wished to access higher education to open up opportunities for better jobs, i.e., extrinsic motivation.

The students had goals which were to develop their careers, change their social life and return their human dignities. Siza and Nomusa were in their thirties and working as domestic workers. They did not wish to spend their whole life working in kitchens and doing washing for other people. Their goals were to finish school and open their own businesses.

Siyazama Centre is a multi-racial centre and the medium of instruction is English. This is also one of the factors that motivated the students to register at this centre. They wanted to learn English in order to be able to socialise. They wanted to learn to communicate well with their employers. The participants, Nomusa and Siza, had children who were attending school. They wanted to contribute to their children's education by attending parent meetings and assisting them with homework.

From the data, it also emerged that being educated changes the social life being of an individual. Participants were now able to attend community meetings and also make contributions. Initially, they could not because these meetings were conducted in English.

Natasha and Siza felt that the jobs they were doing were tarnishing their dignity. Similarly, Natasha believed that she lost her dignity the day she lost her job as she was living in an area where everyone was working. Therefore, these participants attended adult classes in order to restore what was lost.

6.3.2 Factors that promote continued participation

The facilitators' support was one of the motivating factors that made these students persist in their education. The facilitators at this centre are hardworking and very supportive, and this support has motivated the students to stay against all odds. These facilitators were there to assist each and every student in order to achieve his or her goal. They treated them with respect and dignity. They also encouraged them to seek guidance when they were stuck. Initially, the isiZulu-speaking students were struggling to express themselves in English, but through the educator's assistance, they got through that. Sometimes the curriculum became very challenging and the facilitators would unpack, simplify and employ teaching methods that were learner-centred. The support did not end in the classroom. These educators even organised lift clubs for their students to arrive home safely.

Families and friends played a vital role in motivating these students to continue with their studies. They had children who assisted them with their school work. Nomusa was a sleep-in domestic worker who did not live with her family but the support she got from her employer was unbelievable.

There were study groups that took place on Saturdays. They were voluntary. The AET Level 4 students assisted each other by revising the work that was done during the week. Most of the students' performance had improved.

The curriculum was cited as being at the centre stage of their participation. The centre offered subjects that were relevant to the students' needs. The students were involved in the subject selection. They had goals and this curriculum would assist them in achieving their goals. The facilitators employed learner-centred teaching methods where every learner was fully involved so as to increase understanding.

From the conversation with the participants, it emerged that these students came from poor family backgrounds. They left their homesteads in rural areas in order to look for work in urban areas for the betterment of their standard of living. They had tasted poverty and did not wish to go back to that state. They wish to be educated and get better jobs to support their families.

6.3.3 Factors that promote adult student retention at Siyazama Centre

A curriculum that is rich in skills development was mentioned as a factor that attracted more students at the centre. It emanated from the data and observations that adult classes were mostly attended by women. They want to be taught skills that would allow them to make a living.

The resources were mentioned as one of the factors which retained adult learners. It was revealed that although the centre did not have enough resources, the facilitators improvise; they use their own

resources to provide teaching aids. The centre manager also had to do this. The lack of resources was disappointing because some students had to write notes on their laps. During conversations, students kept on comparing themselves to public schools and other institutions like TVET colleges. Public schools with Grade 9 learners are supplied with all the stationery each learner needs.

The awards ceremony and incentives that are organised by the centre every year played a role in motivating students to stay and complete the programme. The centre organised a graduation ceremony for Level 4 students. This ceremony is a big event at this centre which everyone looks forward to. It is done at the beginning of each year when AET Level 4 results are released. Well-performing students from other levels are also issued with certificates.

Financial support was raised as another factor that promoted retention at the Siyazama Centre. During conversations with the adult students at the centre, the issue of financial support was raised as a concern that, if attended to by the Department of Education, might increase the number of students that come to enrol at the centre. It was revealed that most of the people that are adult students, and also those that wish to be students are poor and unemployed. Some lived far from the centre and they would appreciate it if they could be assisted financially with taxi fares. These students felt that they were treated like stepdaughters by the Department of Education because they received no financial support. They compared themselves to other institutions, e.g., public schools, TVET colleges and tertiary institutions. Students from these institutions receive different forms of financial support.

6.4. Conclusions in relation to the objectives of the study

This section focuses on the conclusions that were drawn in relation to the objectives of the study. These conclusions were made from data collected from participants. The findings confirmed that the objectives, namely, to identify factors that contribute to adult learner motivation to enrol and stay at Siyazama CL, to identify factors that promote students' participation and to identify factors that maintain or promote learner retention at this CLC, were achieved.

The study revealed that the participants registered at Siyazama Centre because they had goals and commitments they wanted to achieve. After dropping out of school and stay at home for a long time without earning any income and thereafter work as domestic workers, they realised that education is key to a better future. They wanted to claim back their dignity by going back to school to further their studies so as to transform their wellbeing. Siza and Nomusa could not attend parents' meetings because they were conducted in English. That was an embarrassment to them as it was difficult to explain to

their children why they could not attend those meetings. The pre-entry experiences that these participants possessed drove them to their goals and commitments.

The positive experience, namely, the support from the academic staff and peers, the curriculum, the teaching methods that are used during teaching and learning were identified by the study as factors that promote students' participation at Siyazama Centre. It came out from the interviews that the facilitators at this centre work hard to assist the students towards the achievement of their goals. They used teaching methods which are learner-centred. Students are allowed to interact with each other during teaching and learning and that allowed them to gain a sense of ownership at the centre. It was also observed that they work in groups and that allowed them to know each other as peers. The group study interactions improved the students' performance and motivated students to persist and complete their programmes.

From the data, it could be confirmed that the institution could break or make the students. Academic and non-academic staff at the centre were both perceived as having the huge capacity to influence persistence. Similarly, the external community which is made of family and peers are also contributory factors for participation.

Resilience leads to retention, which in turn, results in the achievement of goals and commitments. It emanated from data that the factors that promoted retention from the centre were the positive institutional experience which increased integration into the social and academic system. This integration encouraged them to push harder in order to achieve their goals and commitments. The provision of resources that assist in teaching and learning promotes retention. Academic awards ceremonies that the centre organises annually to recognise good performance motivated the students to work hard.

6.4.1 General and broad conclusions

The study has revealed some new and interesting findings on the factors that can promote adult student retention. The provision of AET through CLCs is not enough. There is a need for regular monitoring by all stakeholders to ensure that the principles of redress and equity are achieved as aimed.

Improving student retention needs to be high on everyone's list at an institution. The study has shown that the support by the Department of Education and the educators inside the centre plays a vital role in retaining students. The provision of resources and funding being provided to AET just like in other institutions can keep adult students in the system.

The study also breaks new grounds by highlighting that neglect and non-recognition of AET by the Department of Education and the job market are grey areas that create cracks in this programme. Currently, there are many issues that have to be addressed in order to make the AET functional to citizens of the country since the purpose of adult education is to alleviate poverty and equip people with skills so that they can participate fully in the society and the economy of the country.

The findings of the study also identified academic as well as social integration as the motivators for student retention. Co-operation and interaction inside and outside the classroom promote learning and thus enhance retention. There is an indication that the educators together with the centre manager are trying hard to maintain student retention. However, there are factors that are beyond their control that must be addressed by the Department of Education in order to improve student participation.

6.5. Reflection on the theoretical frame

Tinto's (1993) Model of Integration proved to be a useful and appropriate framework that echoed the study. The framework clearly provided the factors that motivate or drive adult students to register at the Siyazama Centre. This theory argues that students are driven by goals and commitments to improve their lives and the standard of living of their families. When these goals and commitments were supported by the internal and external structures, e.g., educators, peers and family, the students were encouraged to resist and continue to participate. The framework, together with the participants' accounts, shed some light on the factors that lead to retention and also on the factors that, when taken care of, promoted retention. In summary, Tinto argues that when the institution commits itself to giving support to the students they have accepted, and the students commit themselves to learn being supported by their families, they stay and complete the programme. This framework has therefore provided an appropriate language for the researcher to understand the reasons that lead to retention.

This study also confirms that Tinto's (1993) Student Integration Model is not only applicable to full-time students. It is also confirmed that integration can occur at adult centres. The study has proved that social and academic integration promotes retention at an adult institution. According to the participants, the social and academic support they received from both the staff and other classmates made them stay and finish their programme. The facilitators made teaching and learning easy for them by employing teaching methods that were accommodative. The educators also introduced extra classes on Saturdays for those that missed the classes and also those that needed further assistance. They had group discussions, and this promoted social as well as academic integration. Their performance improved, and these classes assisted them with acquisition of knowledge and better interaction with each other.

6.6. Limitations of the study

The researcher's position as an official of the Department of Education who worked with the centre during the monitoring of examinations may have affected the study. Most of the facilitators knew her and this created a position of some power. Departmental officials are perceived as being on a fault-finding mission when they visit schools. Nevertheless, this was acknowledged, and the study was conducted according to ethical principles.

The researcher had to conduct a small-scale case study within the constraints of a tuition schedule. The duration for tuition was only two hours. Permission had to be obtained and time found to ensure that the teaching and learning process was not interfered with. The researcher had to communicate with all participants and not impose her schedule on them. Given this situation, it took more than four weeks to collect data at the centre as appointments had to be made for the days that students were not attending classes. In the end, this limitation was overcome by following the schedule recompiled together.

In addition, methodologically, the choice of using a case study was limiting because the study focussed on one case and there was no generalising.

As presented in Chapter 3, the initial sample also aimed at having a balance in gender and race. However, only female students were interviewed in the end, as male students were unavailable due to working shifts.

6.7. Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is evident that there is still so much that needs to be addressed in order to retain adult learners in the system. Therefore, the research results and findings have generated the following recommendations:

The Siyazama CLC has to be creative and introduce skills that will be incorporated into their programmes. Findings revealed that there are male students that drop out because they have some learning challenges. They prefer to learn practical skills so that they will be able to open small businesses on completion of the programme.

There is a lot that can be learned and copied from this study. Siyazama CLC is doing well in developing students' sense of resilience that results in retention. It is therefore recommended that the Siyazama study must assist other students, lecturers and centre managers that are faced with challenges of dropouts.

The study revealed that this CLC is not provided with basic resources. This was verified by the researcher during observations as well as by participants during interviews. For teaching and learning to be effective, an institution has to be supplied with resources, e.g., a photocopying machine, stationery for students and facilitators and textbooks.

It is also recommended that the centre should improve in balancing both the social as well as academic integration. Although there is a study group that is informal on Saturday, the centre can still come up with strategies that would increase the social aspect as it also plays a role in retention.

The government should also provide financial support to AET students. Most of these students are not working. They also take taxis and buses to school. It emanated from the findings that some students drop out because of financial constraints.

The AET Qualification Framework needs to be revisited. Students who succeed at AET Level 4 should proceed to Grade 12. There is a huge gap. Most of these students do not cope and they end up dropping out. This also needs further research.

Based on the findings, the AET Certificate does not receive much recognition as compared to other certificates. Additionally, the attention that is given to AET Level 4 results when they are released is not the same as that given to Grade 12. Findings revealed that the AET Level 4 certificate does not have much impact on the job market which means that it is not fully recognised. Because of this, the students had to contend with mockery and ridicule from their peers who say that they are wasting time by attending adult classes. Therefore, it is recommended that the AET certificate and the impact it has on students involved, be reviewed.

6.8. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the background of the study. The reflection on the methodology employed was highlighted. The summary of findings was given. The researcher went further to reflect on the theory that was used in the study. Conclusions in relation to the objectives of the study as well as broad and general conclusions were outlined. Limitations and recommendations were also presented.

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Appendix A: Ethical clearance letter



13 September 2016

Ms Glenrose L Nala 201509985
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Ms Nala

Protocol reference number: HSS/1187/016M

Project title: An investigation of factors leading to learner retention in AET Centre.

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 02 August 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shamila Naidu (Deputy Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Ms Zamokwakho N Hlela

cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza

cc School Administrator: Mrs B Bhengu-Mnguni, Mbalenhle Ngcobo, Philisiwe Ncayiyana, Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximban@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohuno@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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Appendix B: Permission to conduct research



higher education
& training
Department
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1:

APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1.	Title (Dr /Mr /Mrs /Ms)	Ms							
1.2	Name and surname	Glenrose Lindiwe Nala							
1.3	Postal address	69 Rawat Road Northdale 3201							
1.4	Contact details	Tel	033 342 6495						
		Cell	082 479 1640						
		Fax	-						
		Email	Lindiwe.Nala@kzndoe.gov.za						
1.5	Name of institution where enrolled	University of KwaZulu-Natal							
1.6	Field of study	Humanities							
1.7	Qualification registered for	<i>Please tick relevant option:</i> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Doctoral Degree (PhD)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Master's Degree</td> <td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (please specify)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Doctoral Degree (PhD)		Master's Degree	X	Other (please specify)	
Doctoral Degree (PhD)									
Master's Degree	X								
Other (please specify)									

2. DETAILS OF THE STUDY

2.1	Title of the study
To investigate factors leading to adult learner retention at an AET centre	

2.2	Purpose of the study
1. To explore factors that promote adult learner retention 2. To promote retention of adult learners at Phumelela Centre 3. To find different strategies to be used to motivate adult learners to register at the centre.	

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

3. PARTICIPANTS AND TYPE/S OF ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE COLLEGE

Please indicate the types of research activities you are planning to undertake in the College, as well as the categories of persons who are expected to participate in your study (for example, lecturers, students, College Principals, Deputy Principals, Campus Heads, Support Staff, Heads of Departments), including the number of participants for each activity.

3.1	Complete questionnaires	Expected participants (e.g. students, lecturers, College Principal) N/A	Number of participants
		a)	
		b)	
		c)	
		d)	
		e)	
3.2	Participate in individual interviews	Expected participants	Number of participants
		a)centre manager	1
		b) facilitators	2
		c)Level 4 learners	3
		d)	
		e)	
3.3	Participate in focus group discussions/ workshops	Expected participants	Number of participants
		a)facilitators	2
		b) level 4 learners	5
		c)	
		d)	
		e)	
3.4	Complete standardised tests (e.g. Psychometric Tests)	Expected participants N/A	Number of participants
		a)	
		b)	
		c)	
		d)	
		e)	
3.5	Undertake observations <i>Please specify</i>	Observation will start from when the researcher enters the centre. Availability of signs that gives directions. The researcher will observe the process of teaching and learning.	
3.6	Other <i>Please specify</i>		

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

4. SUPPORT NEEDED FROM THE COLLEGE

<i>Please indicate the type of support required from the College (Please tick relevant option/s)</i>		
Type of support	Yes	No
4.1 The College will be required to identify participants and provide their contact details to the researcher.	x	
4.2 The College will be required to distribute questionnaires/instruments to participants on behalf of the researcher.		x
4.3 The College will be required to provide official documents. <i>Please specify the documents required below</i>		x
4.4 The College will be required to provide data (only if this data is not available from the DHET). <i>Please specify the data fields required, below</i>		x
4.5 <i>Other, please specify below</i>		
The researcher will use the purposive sampling to select the participants she would like to work with. Data will only be collected from participants.		

5. DOCUMENTS TO BE ATTACHED TO THE APPLICATION

<i>The following 2 (two) documents must be attached as a prerequisite for approval to undertake research in the College</i>	
5.1	Ethics Clearance Certificate issued by a University Ethics Committee
5.2	Research proposal approved by a University

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

6. DECLARATION BY THE APPLICANT

I undertake to use the information that I acquire through my research, in a balanced and a responsible manner. I furthermore take note of, and agree to adhere to the following conditions:

- a) I will schedule my research activities in consultation with the said College/s and participants in order not to interrupt the programme of the said College/s.
- b) I agree that involvement by participants in my research study is voluntary, and that participants have a right to decline to participate in my research study.
- c) I will obtain signed consent forms from participants prior to any engagement with them.
- d) I will obtain written parental consent of students under 18 years of age, if they are expected to participate in my research.
- e) I will inform participants about the use of recording devices such as tape-recorders and cameras, and participants will be free to reject them if they wish.
- f) I will honour the right of participants to privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and respect for human dignity at all times. Participants will not be identifiable in any way from the results of my research, unless written consent is obtained otherwise.
- g) I will not include the names of the said College/s or research participants in my research report, without the written consent of each of the said individuals and/or College/s.
- h) I will send the draft research report to research participants before finalisation, in order to validate the accuracy of the information in the report.
- i) I will not use the resources of the said College/s in which I am conducting research (such as stationery, photocopies, faxes, and telephones), for my research study.
- j) Should I require data for this study, I will first request data directly from the Department of Higher Education and Training. I will request data from the College/s only if the DHET does not have the required data.
- k) I will include a disclaimer in any report, publication or presentation arising from my research, that the findings and recommendations of the study do not represent the views of the said College/s or the Department of Higher Education and Training.
- l) I will provide a summary of my research report to the Head of the College/s in which I undertook my research, for information purposes.

I declare that all statements made in this application are true and accurate. I accept the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.

DHET 004: APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR STUDENTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN PUBLIC COLLEGES

SIGNATURE	<i>[Signature]</i>
DATE	24 June 2016

FOR OFFICIAL USE

DECISION BY HEAD OF COLLEGE

Please tick relevant decision and provide conditions/reasons where applicable		
Decision		Please tick relevant option below
1	Application approved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Application approved subject to certain conditions. <i>Specify conditions below</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>All research procedures are followed accordingly.</i>	
3	Application not approved. <i>Provide reasons for non-approval below</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NAME OF COLLEGE	MANABE C.L.C. - PHUMELELA SATELLITE	
NAME AND SURNAME OF HEAD OF COLLEGE	S.T. JINI	
SIGNATURE	<i>[Signature]</i>	
DATE	27/06/16	

**KZN DEPT. OF EDUCATION
PHUMELELA PALC**
PRIVATE BAG 134
MSUNDUZI, 3231
TEL NO: 033 367 4291/ 2
FAX NO: 033 397 9599

Appendix C: Informed consent declaration

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

I----- (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the documents and the nature of this research project and I consent to be interviewed. I also agree for the interview to be audio-taped, and for data to be used for research and dissemination of the findings.

I clearly understand that:

- I can withdraw from the study at any time should I so desire
- My participation is on voluntary basis
- My identity will not be divulged
- I will have access to all transcripts and a right to change or withdraw aspect of data that I have given
- There is no payment for participation

I hereby also provide consent to:

Audio- record my interview YES/NO

Audio- record focus group discussion YES/NO

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

Appendix D: Participant questionnaire

Ifomu lemvume yokubamba iqhaza kucwaningo

ISIHLOKO: Uphenyo lwezindlela ezingasetshenzizwa ukugcina abafundi bakwa AET besesikhungweni sokufunda

Mina _____ (igama eliphelele nesibongo) ngiqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyazi futhi ngichazeliwe ngenhloso yocwaningo. Ngichazeliwe ngeqhaza lami nenqubo ezosetshenziswa ngesikhathi kucoshelwa ulwazi olubambisana nocwaningo. Umcwaningi ungichazele nangolimi olizwelana nami, ulimi engiluqondayo. Akekho osebenzise izindlela zokungiphoba nganoma iyiphindlela ukuba ngibambe iqhaza. Ngizithathele mina isiqhumo sokuba ngibambe iqhaza.

Ngiyakuqonda ukuthi umcwaningi uzobhala izimpendulo abuye asebenzise isiqopha mazwi .

Nginyaqonda ukuthi:	Yeb o	Cha
Ukubamba kwami iqhaza kungukuzinikela		
Ayikho inkokhelo ehambisana nokubamba kwami iqhaza		
Ngizomazisa umcwaningi uma ngingathandi ukuba kusetshenziswe igama lami langempela uma sekubhalwa umbiko		
Ngizomazisa umcwaningi uma kungenzeka ngizizwe ngingasathandi ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kanye nokuthi ngiyonikwa ilungelo lokwenza loko		
Ngizonikwa lokho okuqoshiwe uma kungenzeka ngikucele kanye nokuthi uma ngidinga ukuba ngilungise lokho okuyobe kuqoshiwe ukuze kube khona engikulungisayo kumbe kungasetshenziswa uma ngikhetha ukuyeka lungakaqedwa ucwaningo		

Ngifundile ngaqonda konke futhi ngavuma imibandela kanye nemigomo ehambisana nocwaningo.

Kusayina lowo ophendulayo (abacwaningwayo)

Usuku okusayinwe ngalo

Kusayina umcwaningi

Usuku okusayinwe ngalo

Appendix E: Participant invitation

175 Loop Street
Pietermaritzburg
3201
05 April 2016

Dear Centre Manager /Facilitator/Learner

PARTICIPANT INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I hereby invite you to participate in a research project. I am a masters student at the school of education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The title of the study is: An Exploration of Factors that Lead to Student Retention at Siyazama Community Learning Centre

. The aims of the study are: to explore factors that promote learner persistence so that they take part in lifelong learning for both economic and social development, to promote retention at AET and also to find different strategies to be used to motivate adult learners to register at AET.

In order to get necessary information, the study requires me to conduct interviews, to observe you during the process of teaching and learning and also to have some discussions in the form of focus groups. These interviews will not interfere with the normal running of the school. They will take part at a time that suits you.

You have rights as a participant. These rights include participating voluntarily, meaning that you can withdraw from the study at any stage. You have the right to be protected from any harm. To protect your identity, false names will be used during the interviews. You will have access to all the transcripts of the interviews before they are used in the study. You have the right to delete any excerpt from the interview. The information that will be collected is intended for this study only. All recordings and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet in the project leader's office. When I complete the study, the findings will be shared with you in a hard copy or electronically.

Please note that there is no payment for participation in this study.

For further clarification you can contact the project leader, Dr John Voughn, Tel: 033 260 5069.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

G.L.Nala

082 479 1640 033 341 6483

Appendix F: Gatekeeper permission

Department of Education
Examination and Assessment
175 Loop Street
Pietermaritzburg
03 May 2016

Regional CET Unit Manager

KZN Dept. of Education

Dear Sir

Re- Permission to conduct a research

I am a Masters student (No 201509985) at the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal in Pietermaritzburg. I am required to conduct a piece of research. The title of the research is:

An Exploration of Factors that Lead to Student Retention at Siyazama Community Learning Centre

. I am writing to ask for permission to conduct this study there.

The aim of the study is: to explore factors that promote learner persistence so that they take part in lifelong learning for both economic and social development, to promote retention of adult learners at Siyazama and also to find different strategies to be used to motivate adult learners to come and register at the centre.

Adult Education and Training is a right that is enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the constitution of the country. Despite the new developments to redress the areas that have been neglected, it is a concern to the researcher that some adult learners do not use this opportunity. Some register at the beginning of the year and do not complete the programme.

I am seeking your permission to conduct the study with the centre manager, two facilitators and three Level 4 learners. The study requires participants to be interviewed once. Level 4 class will be observed during teaching and learning processes. The learners that have been interviewed will also participate in a focus group discussion. These interviews will take place after school hours. There is no aspect of the research that will interfere with the normal teaching and learning process

The ethical issues will be observed. The right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected. To protect the identities of all participants, false names will be used. Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any stage without any intimidation. The data that will be collected is only intended for the research purposes. Participants will not be paid for taking part in the study. All data recordings and transcripts will be stored safely in a locked cabinet in the project leader's office

For further information or clarification please contact project leader, Dr John Vaughn on Tel: 033 260 5069

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

G.L.Nala

082 479 1640

Appendix H: Interview questions for the centre manager

1. How do you recruit the learners to the centre?
2. Give a brief background of the centre. When was it established?
3. How do you market the centre to the community?
4. How long have you been a centre manager and what is your level of education if you don't mind revealing it.
5. Please briefly tell me about yourself.
6. What do you think motivates learners to enrol at this centre?
7. What factors do you think promote adult learner participation at the centre?
8. What do you think can be done to retain them to complete the programme they enrolled for?
9. Do you get any support from the Department of Education? How important is this support?
10. Does your centre have resources? What role is played by the availability of resources in terms of learner retention?
11. Please tell me about the curriculum in this centre, i.e. learning areas offered from Level 1-4.
12. Who designed it?
13. Does it accommodate learner's needs? In your understanding, does the curriculum have an effect on learner retention? How?
14. What monitoring strategies have you put in place to monitor whether teaching and learning is happening in class? How does this help in retaining learners?
15. What support system do you provide for both facilitators and learners?

Appendix I: Interview questions for facilitator

1. What culture do you seek to create in your class as it is a multi- racial class?
2. How long have you been teaching at this centre?
3. What kind of learners do you have in your class?
4. As an educator at this centre, what is your vision and commitment? What role does this play?
5. What is your level of education if you don't mind telling me? Are you married?
6. Briefly tell me about yourself and what do you like about this centre.
7. Please tell me about the curriculum. Who developed it? Are the learners involved in curriculum development? If so, how?
8. What do you think are the factors that contribute to retention of adult learners?
9. How do you make your learners to continue to participate against all odds?
10. What motivational strategies do you use to motivate adult learners to attend?
11. What do you think are the reasons for them to stop participating in the progamme?
12. How do you deal with that?
13. How do you allocate subjects to learners?
14. Is there any support you get from the Department? How important is this support?
15. Is there any support you get from the community?
16. How is the relationship between you, the centre manager and the learners?

Appendix J: Interview questions for learners

1. What motivated you to enrol at this centre?
2. In which year did you start at this centre and at which Level?
3. What are your expectations from this centre? Are these expectations motivating you to participate?
4. Briefly tell me about yourself and learning areas you are doing.
5. Do you like them? Y/N. Why?
6. What challenges do you find in this centre? What do you think is the remedy?
7. What makes you to continue participating against all odds?
8. What motivates you to participate?
9. What do you think are the barriers to participation?
10. Do you get any support from the facilitators? Name the nature of support.
11. Do you support each other as learners? How?
12. What is the relationship between you as the learner, the facilitators and the centre manager?
13. Do you get any support from your family? How important is this support?
14. Are you able to balance study and family time?
15. Are you happy with the language of instruction used in this centre?
16. What do you think can be done to attract more learners to this centre?
17. What do you think can be done to retain learners in this centre?

Appendix K: Focus group activity

The researcher will greet and introduce herself

1. Let us do a quick round of introductions. Can each one of you tell the group his or her position at the centre e.g. centre manager, educator, learner?
2. Imagine that the Minister of Higher Education or an official from province or district (decision makers) came as a team and visited your centre and asked you what they needed to do to retain learners at your centre. What would you suggest?
3. What would you request so that you and others to motivate you and other learners and educators alike to enrol and finish the programme?
4. What does your centre do to retain its learners?
5. What attracted you to enrol at the centre? What information did you get and how did you hear about the centre? E.g. word of mouth, poster or pamphlet.
6. If you were the centre manager, the facilitator or the learner at this centre, how would you ensure that adult learners stay at the centre and that it supports them to achieve their goals?
7. Is there anything we have not discussed yet you think is relevant for this centre to know about as we explore factors that lead to retention?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix L: Observation schedule

Observation will begin when the researcher approaches the gate to the centre. Things to observe will be:

Location of the centre

- Where is the centre located?
- The infrastructure in the host school.
- The social- economic background around the area.

In the research site

- The availability of advertisement boards indicating that there is an adult centre operating inside the school.
- Signs that give directions to the centre manager's office, classrooms, toilets etc.
- Where the centre manager, facilitators would be as the learners arrive i.e. to observe the interactions.

Inside the classroom:

- The role that is played by both facilitators and learners during teaching and learning i.e. how activities are facilitated will be observed.
- What activities are learners engaged with.
- Methods used and also questions that will be asked to guide teaching and learning.
- Interactions between the learners and the facilitator and among the learners themselves.
- The atmosphere in the classroom.
- The level of learner involvement during teaching and learning.