

The importance of teacher development in the completion of business programmes in South African vocational education

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Abstract

A key contribution towards economic growth in South Africa was the approval of the three-year National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)) programme at Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVET) in 2006 (South Africa 2006:4). Since its inception, the NC(V) programme has experienced low levels of student retention and programme completion. Interdependent factors both preceding and concurrent to post-school education significantly influence retention and programme completion. This article analysed importance of the teacher as factor that influences INC(V) programme completion during 2017. Research was conducted on two NC(V) business studies programmes at a TVET college in Cape Town, South Africa, with a population of $N=63$. A cross-sectional mixed method approach was employed, benefiting from quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Numeric data was collected from $n=62$ using a rating scale which converged in a self-completion questionnaire for in-depth qualitative data collected from $n=3$. This article advocates that institutional social interaction is dynamic over the study period, prioritised by the achievement of academic goals and support. Findings indicate that teachers play a pivotal role in influencing NC(V) programme completion compared with other social interactions, for example with friends and parents. Research findings provide policy makers with an alternative student perspective with which to review TVET and NC(V) programme policies.

Key phrases

National Certificate (Vocational); programme completion; South Africa; teacher development; teacher influence and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges

1. INTRODUCTION

In agreement with Thomas (2014:225), this article adopts an alternate approach to the issue of NC(V) programme completion and student success in South Africa. Existing South African studies have investigated factors that influence student dropout rates, poor performance or attrition. This article focuses on the teacher attitude and actions as a factor that influences vocational programme completion. Literature on student success in higher education is analysed after discussing the introduction of NC(V) and the South African experience. The research design and findings emerging from data collected are presented before discussing the contribution emanating from this article and recommendations toward future research.

2. THE INTRODUCTION AND INITIAL EXPERIENCE OF NC(V)

The advent of democracy in South Africa following the first democratic election in 1994 resulted in the prioritisation of reform in education, legislation, policy, access, curriculum development and modes of delivery (South Africa 2008:1). The South African Further Education and Training (FET) Act (South Africa 1998) was passed in 1998 as a vehicle for intensive post-apartheid vocational education policy reform. Since 1994, education structures have continuously been made more accessible to previously disadvantaged groups who were given limited access or denied education in South Africa (South Africa 2008:38).

In 2002, 152 Further Education and Training (FET) technical colleges were integrated to form 50 multi-campus institutions, and renamed in 2012 to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges (South Africa 2013:12). The primary aim of TVET is to provide greater opportunity, access and advancement in post-school education, which includes training in skills and gaining knowledge and attitudes required by the labour market. This training includes mid-level skills required for the economic development of South Africa (South Africa 2013:13).

In 2006, the Minister of Education, Grace Naledi Pandor approved and introduced 11 National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)] programmes as the primary element in the transformation of vocational education, with the first intake of students in 2007 (South Africa, 2006:4). The roll-out of the NC(V) programme was considered by the South African College Principal's Organisation (South Africa 2007) as a major achievement for South African

education transformation. The primary purpose of the NC(V) programme was to meet the state's goal of making post-school education more accessible through vocational programmes (South Africa 2008:243). The National Certificate Vocational [NC(V)] is offered by TVET colleges at levels 2, 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (South Africa 2010:41). The qualification takes three years to complete and was designed to provide both theory and practical vocational education (Engelbrecht, Spencer & van der Bijl 2017:328).

However, the TVET sector has been described by Perold, Cloete and Papier (2012:63) as inefficient regarding retention and throughput rates in the NC(V) programme as well as high dropout rates. The challenge of student retention and programme completion negatively affects an educational institution's success and, more so, the personal economic and employment potential of the individual student. The students' retention and early departure challenge has rippling financial consequences for society and government, resulting in increased unemployment rates for individuals with no or part-qualifications. Voluntary participation in post-school education serves as an influential catalyst to student retention and programme completion. Varied interdependent internal and external factors, both preceding and concurrent to post-school education, significantly influence student retention and programme completion (Bean & Eaton 2001:73).

Student retention, including their intention to complete programmes, which they have started, is a commonly studied area (Tinto 2006:1). There are existing studies in South Africa such as Maharaj's study (2008), which conducted research on the effects of the social interaction among mechanical engineering students on the National Technical Education (NATED or Report 191) N4 to N6 programme, and research by Papier (2009), which focused on factors contributing to poor performance and the dropout rate in four NC(V) programmes. There are also other studies. Ngcobo (2009) researched factors influencing the choice of college, programme completion or non-completion among engineering students in the N4 to N6 programme and research by Pather (2015) focused on pre-entry factors influencing first-year education students at a university of technology. Moodley and Singh (2015) researched student dropout rates at universities and Lawrence (2017) focused on attrition among NC(V) civil engineering students.

Thomas (2014:225) argues that, although studies have investigated factors that influence student dropout, poor performance or attrition, not much concerning factors that influence

student programme completion have been investigated. By not investigating, the factors that influence student retention and programme completion will indirectly result in overlooking a potential reduction in students' failure rate. By focusing on retention this article provides information what makes students remain and complete a programme.

3. STUDENT SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Completion of higher education programmes has advantages for students, the institutions with which they are enrolled at and the national economy. Completion of NC(V) programmes is envisaged by the state (South Africa 2006:12) as a method for bridging the national skills gap by improving skills of TVET graduates, thereby meeting labour market needs and, in turn, promoting economic growth. The contributory works of Vincent Tinto and John Bean provide clear and strong foundations for understanding student retention and attrition. Bean has been widely cited for his work in programme completion in higher education and Tinto in student dropout rates. Tinto's (1993) Student Integration Model (SIM) and Bean's (1981) Student Attrition Model (SAM) emerge from different and unique foundations, namely suicide and employee turnover. However, both models emphasise the importance of background factors and student experience. According to Bean and Eaton (2001:73), voluntary participation in post-school education serves as an influential catalyst for the intention of completing a programme and, therefore, student retention.

Many students who start a college qualification but do not complete the programme, do so based on an potentially complex array of factors, the identification and measurement of which is itself a topic of debate (Roberts & Styron 2010:2). Hillmert and Jacob (2003 in Harris 2014:50), argue that individual decision-making, discretion and weighing up of options form part of every student's education process as well as not leaving prematurely.

Tinto (2012:4) argues that a classroom is for most students the primary space in which they interact with academic staff and other students. He notes that classroom success is most likely to make a significant impact on student success. Tinto (2012:4) attributes classroom success to:

- The expectations of teachers¹, the institution and study programme being communicated to students through assignments, conversation or orientation. This allows students to know what is expected of them and adjust their behaviour accordingly.
- That there is a mechanism in class to support the student to achieve the expected deliverables. Tinto argues that support, including support related to personal issues and support aimed at improving academic performance is most important during the student's critical period of decision-making with regard to completion or departure, namely during the first year.
- Student engagement or involvement is considered the most important attribute. The stronger the academic and social engagement, the more likely it will be for student success. Meaningful teacher-student engagement provides social affiliation and emotional support.

Tinto (2012:4) argues that classroom dynamics is a contributor to student success are within an education institution's control, compared to student attributes, which are largely out of education institutions' control. According to Armstrong (2015:32), teachers are an instrumental and influential resource in education, and, as such needs to be understood and effectively utilised.

Varga (2017:32) argues that student success in the classroom is the result of a positive teacher-student relationship. Her study investigated 'simple relationship-building strategies' against undesired behaviour, namely non-engaged students, and found that a simple teacher intervention of greeting students upon entry and exit from the classroom as well as developing brief interpersonal conversations, improved classroom behaviour. Varga (2017:33) argues that small adjustments to teacher disposition and routine can create a positive teacher-student relationship and learning environment, as students spend a minimum of 25% of their day in a classroom and need to feel that they belong in order to achieve engaged and motivated students.

In an earlier study, Wenglinsky (2001:1) produced a view similar to Varga's (2017) by arguing against the notion that education problems exist outside of the school, thereby

¹ In South Africa, TVET educators are called lecturers. However, as much of the international literature refers to them as 'teachers', the latter term will be used.

neglecting the primary venue students attend during their learning process, namely the classroom. Wenglinsky (2001:1) found a similar positive correlation between classroom practice and teacher characteristics.

Teachers are clearly a fundamental component of any classroom. Teachers influence students at various levels, 'having an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something' (Cotnoir, Paton, Peters, Pretorius & Smale 2014:1). The following themes emerged from a study by Cotnoir, Paton, Peters, Pretorius and Smale (2014:1) regarding a teacher's influence:

- Building a relationship, this refers to the ability to build a personal connection. Teacher characteristics associated with this theme were, among others, being supportive, calm, sincere, humorous and kind. Participants stated that influential teachers ensured their success without judgment.
- The general passion of teachers for their subject and work, which inspired participants. Interestingly, certain participants were more impressed with teachers' work passion than vast content knowledge.
- Influential teachers were willing to assist students to improve and experience success by mentoring through modelling. These teachers believed that all students could achieve excellence and have the ability to think.
- Having high expectations of students referred to teachers who would take time out of their required schedule to assist and teach their craft. This related to teachers who taught new teachers the knowledge, skills and practices they had accumulated over their teaching career.
- Teachers who go beyond their work refer to the dedication teachers put in after hours. Specific mention was made of teachers who dedicated additional time to extra-curricular activities such as sport, music or drama. Participants in the study referred to teachers having genuine compassion and took note of what was happening in their lives beyond the classroom, namely bullying, and addressed the situation.

Cotnoir *et al.* (2014) suggest that the impact of teachers should be understood in order to grow and nurture teacher-student relationships. Similar views have been expressed by others. A study by Ismail and Hayes in 2005 (cited by Cotnoir *et al.* 2014) notes that the teacher's passion and enthusiasm impacts on student motivation. Similarly, Martinez and

Munday (1998) indicate that students being less satisfied with the teaching quality, influences their decision-making process towards their likelihood of a premature college departure. Maharaj (2008:27), in a study of South African college students, attributed poor retention and completion rates mainly to an absence of classroom social interaction and outside-of-classroom interaction, over and above the formal interaction between teacher-student. Similarly, Ngcobo (2009:72) identifies satisfaction with the quality of teaching and learning, among others, as the reason for programme completion.

Beausaert, Segers and Wiltink (2013:11) investigated participants' perceptions of teachers' influence on their approach to learning. They found that teachers who were student-centred, influenced a deeper approach to learning from students when compared to teachers who were teacher-centred. Beausaert *et al.* (2013:9) also argue that when supporting a student-centred approach to learning, the teacher's approach to teaching should be noted and developed. Rebreaan (2017:1) argues that a non-existent positive relationship between teacher and student can be associated with educational risks such as early departure, low self-efficacy and low self-confidence. According to Bergeron, Chouinard and Janosz (2011:278), a negative teacher-student relationship is a strong forecaster of an intention to make an early departure for most students.

Participants in Rebreaan's (2017:45) study of the Romanian education system indicated that model teachers and being respected as a human being are primary aspects for motivation in an educational environment. Participants indicated that they expected their opinions to be considered and teaching time and punctuality to be respected. Rebreaan (2017:45) revealed that a 'good teacher' is one who is calm, patient, competent, dedicated, with the capacity to communicate and respects students by being punctual. Rebreaan's (2017:45) overall study outcome highlighted the importance of didactic (subject and delivery) training as well as counselling services for teacher development.

Findings from a study by Barile, Donohue, Anthony, Baker, Weaver and Henrich (2012:19) revealed that policies or reward systems, such as monetary incentives and being assigned students with higher achievement levels, were implemented to encourage teacher performance, had no significant effect on positive teacher-student relationships. Barile *et al.* (2012:19) concluded that student dropouts and early departure were lowered by a positive teacher-student relationship climate. A positive teacher-student relationship climate was also

evident in schools where students were allowed to evaluate their teachers. Similar findings were evident in a study by Manefield, Collins, Moore, Mahar and Warne (2007:38), indicating that a positive teacher-student relationship climate stemmed from students who were consulted and given the opportunity to provide input.

Barile *et al.* (2012:19) argue that a student's perception of their teacher being good, caring of them and believing in their success was an indication of a teacher's ability to retain students even if they struggled academically. Students' decision to persist and complete their programme can be influenced by warm, genuine and supportive teachers, compensating for their challenging integration and college experience. However, Barile *et al.* (2012:19) state that a positive teacher character still needs to be complemented by effective pedagogy, effective communication style and teacher experience to achieve students' academic outcomes. Lack of education resources, limited funds and the school or classroom size all affect the teacher-student relationship climate. Directly linked to teacher-student relationship climate are factors such as school location (urban and suburban) and teacher pay (Barile *et al.* 2012:19). Barile *et al.* (2012:19) also revealed that students who had friends with high education aspirations and supportive parents were less likely to depart early and could foster a stronger teacher-student relationship climate.

Cribbs (2016:iv), however, argues that teachers' emotions and emotional experiences are equally as important as classroom presentation and the required teacher character for student success. Teachers experience positive emotions as well as negative emotions, stemming from the emotional labour² required by the profession (Cribbs 2016:iv). The emotions are linked to various outcomes such as joy and pride because of the students' acquisition of knowledge, or frustration because of constant student annoyance or misbehaviour.

According to Cribbs (2016), teachers are challenged when having to regulate and appropriately express their emotions based on their interaction with students. Cribbs (2016) found that emotional labour is experienced in the absence of an explicit display of rule (code of conduct) and necessary emotional training (for teachers). In contrast to most service

² **Emotional labour** is the process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emotional_labor

delivery services, teaching and student interaction is emotional work (Cribbs 2016:93). Cribbs (2016:93) found that the absence of emotional training resulted in negative emotions being suppressed or inappropriately expressed.

Education institutions are capable of ending negative emotional labour with appropriate training (Cribbs 2016:93). A great deal of emphasis is placed on the importance of student emotion and interaction within educational institutions at the expense of neglecting to understand teacher emotions when confronted with various situations (Cribbs 2016:95). Participants in Cribbs' (2016:96) study admitted to being concerned about discussing emotion and inappropriate reactions out of 'fear of receiving a negative evaluation or performance review'. Cribbs (2016:95) argues that to promote positive emotions, educational institutions together with teachers should limit the presence of frustration, by understanding the source of frustration. Bergeron, Chouinard and Janosz. (2011:278) argues that the ability of teachers to create a positive teacher-student relationship can be achieved by educational institutions providing special/appropriate training to minimise or avoid negative interaction or emotion with students. According to Bergeron *et al.* (2011:278), pedagogical or curriculum delivery measures and enhancements should also be developed.

It can therefore be conclusively argued that student retention and successful programme completion is positively influenced by meaningful teacher involvement. Wenglinsky (2001) points out that educational concerns should exist within the school, namely the classroom. Tinto (2012) states that student success in the classroom is influenced by student-teacher expectation, support mechanisms and student engagement. Beausaert *et al.* (2013) argue that a student-centred teaching approach yields a deeper-learning approach by students. Cotnoir *et al.* (2014) note that a teacher's influence is manifested through building relationships, a teacher's passion, teachers mentoring through modelling and going above and beyond normal work to ensure student success. However, Cribbs (2016) acknowledges the emotional labour teachers experience in their profession on a daily basis. Rebreen (2017) notes that a positive teacher character, healthy emotional labour and teacher-student relationship can be achieved through teacher development, training and counselling. Varga (2017) concludes that a positive teacher-student relationship influences student success.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

In 2017, the factors that influenced programme completion among NC(V) business students enrolled in the Office Administration NC(V) programme, were investigated. Research was conducted at one campus of the identified TVET college. Ethical approval was obtained from the following institutions through which the study was conducted:

- the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET);
- the selected TVET college and campus;
- participants in the study.

The study embraced a subjective ontology and epistemology, positioned within the critical research paradigm. A cross-sectional mixed method approach allowed the study a broader perspective from which to support its findings. The use of a mixed method approach was further motivated by an explanatory sequential contribution of collected data and convergence of analysed data. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used to address the research objective. One data collection instrument was assigned to each methodology. The quantitative component used an attitude or rating scale and the qualitative component used a self-completion questionnaire. The quantitative attitude or rating scale instrument sequentially contributed to the use of the qualitative self-completion questionnaire. Quantitative data was used to develop the qualitative data collection instrument.

The population was selected and the sample was gathered using probable and non-probable sampling methods to meet both quantitative and qualitative research requirements. The research population ($N=63$) was registered NC(V) Level 4 students of 2017 enrolled in two Business Studies NC(V) programmes, namely Office Administration and Finance as well as Economics and Accounting. Applying a random probability sampling technique, together with a 99% confidence level, a quantitative sample of $n=62$ was derived in which 46 consented to participate. Applying a purposive non-probability sampling technique, together with an honest judgement of gathering the units of analysis, a qualitative sample of $n=6$ was derived of which three consented to participate. Quantitative data was collected by means of self-completion questionnaire produced in word format and forwarded to the researcher. Data was collated on a Microsoft Excel and analysed manually. After analysing the qualitative data through content analysis, correlations were identified with quantitative data

findings, in either support or deviance to provide a better understanding of the research topic.

Research statements and questions used in the quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments investigated various internal and external factors that influenced student decision-making, promoting their programme completion. Factors included as variables in both data collection methods were collected from exiting literature on student departure and retention.

5. FACTORS CHARACTERISING STUDENT SUCCESS AND COMPLETION

Quantitative rating scale statements assessed the influence of teachers regarding their supportive nature, interaction outside of the classroom, teaching style, lesson delivery and assistance with understanding the work. In total 94% of participants agreed that teachers were supportive and assisted students to understand their work. The supportive interaction from teachers can be assumed only to be within the classroom as 48% agreed that their teachers do not interact with them outside of the classroom. 85% agreed that their teachers had a good teaching style and 95% positively agreed that lessons were presented in a fun and understandable manner. Clearly, the teacher's attitude, communication style and lesson presentation influenced the students positively toward programme completion. Not only was interaction appreciated as being meaningful, the manner in which lessons were presented made the programme more acceptable to pursue. The pedagogy and soft skills employed by teachers had a far-reaching, positive influence in conjunction with the curriculum and programme content.

Expanding on the variables tested in the quantitative study, the qualitative self-completion questionnaire focused on certain internal variables, specifically the teacher. The qualitative self-completion questionnaire provided in-depth data to clarify the numeric data. Qualitative data was sifted through manually, using content analysis to identify frequency in participant response.

Participants were required to share their views on what they enjoyed about campus and what specific influences on campus made them stay there during times when they wanted to leave. One participant (B24) enjoyed the friendly and caring nature of teachers. However,

least enjoyed was that certain teachers were perceived as being unpredictable with 'mood swings', emotions and outbursts, which diluted the college experience. The specific campus factor that influenced programme completion was the friendly academic staff and the manner in which they transferred information, making the programme more acceptable. One participant (B6) indicated:

'the teaching style helps me understand the curriculum content in relation to real world context. My lecturers constantly remind me what is expected of me, giving me the desire to stay. The faculty and campus location allows for quiet and focused study areas and teachers are friendly and make us aware of the world out there and our expectations versus reality.'

The response frequently acquired was that the teachers were influential internal factors in relation to content delivery and assisting students to realise and to align expectation with reality.

The questionnaire moved to more focused questions related to the tested variables, specifically teachers. Participants were required to share their view on the role and influence of teachers in participant decisions to complete the programme. All participants stated that the role of their teachers had been positive. They agreed that certain teachers encouraged them, motivated them daily, listened and provided support, reminding them of the importance of education and the expectation in the labour market. One participant (B6) indicated that teachers said they were 'glad to teach them' and went the extra mile outside of curriculum and classroom requirements. These responses clarified quantitative data that the role of teachers was beyond curriculum and classroom requirements. Programme completion was supported by teacher dedication and genuine interest taken in students and their academic achievement.

Participants were asked where they would generally seek academic or personal support. One participant (B6) stated that:

'I would seek assistance from one specific subject teacher who has always played an encouraging and supportive role since 2015 in Level 2 for me and my friends, and outside of college I have my family for support.'

Another participant (B24) indicated that:

‘For academic and personal support, I have specific teachers who have assisted me since enrolment in 2015 and continue to assist me. If they don’t know, they will ensure to refer or assist me obtain an answer or get the needed support.’

Clearly, a teacher holds a primary and greater influence with regard to student support and programme completion when compared to alternative external support structures, such as parents or friends.

The questionnaire required participants to rank eight variables in order of importance that influenced their programme completion, namely bursary, teaching quality, friendly teachers, family support, friends, college support, job certainty and social interaction. Analysing all responses, the four highest-ranking elements that had influenced participants’ decision to stay and complete their programme were, in order of importance:

- Teaching quality,
- Friendly teachers,
- Social interaction, and
- Friends.

Based on their rankings, participants were required to explain their reason for ranking their first variable and how it had influenced them for the duration of the programme. One participant (A25) indicated:

‘Teaching quality helps one understand the work better. The work is transferred in a way I can relate and it is relevant to daily activities, as opposed to examples which are not relevant to us as youth.’

Another participant (B6) indicated:

‘Teaching quality, as each lesson comes with a positive message, making it memorable and easier to understand, and assist you if you do not understand first time.’

Participant B24 indicated:

‘Friendly teachers, because when someone is friendly you feel accepted and welcomed, and you will return for that friendliness. Friendly people come across as knowing their job and would assist you at any time and not get frustrated, and that made me return and enjoy my programme completion.’

Clearly, positive teacher attitudes and actions positively influence the students’ acceptance of programme, student success, retention and programme completion. Participants in this study hail from, in South African terms, ‘previously disadvantaged’ backgrounds and poor socio-economic conditions. However, successful completion was predominately and greatly influenced by positive teacher-student relationships as opposed to the negative influence of socio-economic conditions or background. Participant’s perception of their teachers as being good, caring and believing in student success encouraged their retention despite academic challenges. Adopting a student-centred approach and teaching style encouraged a deeper-learning experience and engagement by students. Genuine care and interest expressed by teachers toward student success fostered a positive teacher-student relationship. Participants were appreciative of teachers who mentored through modelling, provided support mechanisms and went above and beyond their required duties as a teacher. The manner in which lessons were presented and related to practical real-life examples made the programme easier to accept and complete.

Some participants had experienced certain teachers as being unpredictable with ‘mood swings’ and emotional outbursts which had marred their college experience, but this indicated that negative emotions were being experienced by teachers. Acknowledging the importance of teacher interaction and involvement, Thomas (2014:225) emphasises the responsibility of institutions towards improving the student’s intention to complete college.

6. SUMMARY

Evidently, the fundamental institutional social interactive variable that emerges as influencing programme completion is the quality of teacher and style of teaching. Teachers are an internal factor of influence and their performance ability is within a TVET college’s direct control. Participants feel motivated and connected with their programme are based predominantly and primarily on the manner in which their teachers interact with students, how they relay and relate the programme content, leading to understandable practical

application. This study recommends that reward systems and policies should be considered or revised to create or improve a meaningful teacher-student relationship. Research findings provide policy makers with an alternative perspective from which to review policies within TVET and NC(V) such as programme delivery, student-teacher satisfaction surveys, internal quality management, teacher-student relationship and teacher development. According to Bean and Eaton (2001:73), the voluntary participation and nature of post-school education attendance, as well as student retention is affected by policies and culture. Policy review, focusing on the development, effective management and efficient use of teachers, could potentially improve vocational programme completion and retention rates in South Africa. Teacher support, performance and well-being are partially the responsibility of the educational institution (Maharaj 2008:13). Teachers can ensure a welcoming classroom environment, but TVET colleges also have a responsibility to ensure that teachers are well equipped and supported in doing their duty, to promote quality teaching and positive learning environments.

Future research is encouraged to investigate emotions experienced by teachers and how they conflict with required emotional labour from the teaching profession. Outcomes of such future research could present a foundation for teacher intervention policies and programme interventions by educational institutions in South Africa, specifically in vocational education.

7. CONCLUSION

Because participation in post-school education is not compulsory, and therefore voluntary, many students enter a college programme but not successfully complete it. The decision-making process of students is influenced by an array of interdependent internal and external factors. At most, education institutions can only influence factors within their direct control. One such factor is the influence of teachers, their teaching quality and teacher-student relationships, which promote student success and programme completion. Promoting and encouraging positive teacher-student relationships and interaction has a much greater influence on student success and development than opposing influences, such as socio-economic conditions or friends.

The classroom is the primary environment in which social and academic interaction occurs between teacher-student and among students. Adopting a student-centred approach

together with a genuine care and belief in student success, the teacher-student, student-programme and student-college relationship can be enhanced. This enhanced relationship further influences a positive acceptance of the college and programme. However, teachers are required to deal with the emotional labour required by the teaching profession. Teachers experience both positive and negative emotions daily and need to be equipped with how to express their emotions to support a positive teacher-student relationship. By investigating and attending to factors that could improve, teachers' work experience and emotional labour, educational institutions have the potential of motivating an internal variable, namely teachers.

It may be argued that the teachers, who manage to motivate successful students to complete their programme, are one and the same teachers of unsuccessful students who have dropped out of college. Although teachers are the primary factor of influence, students need to be developed in a similar manner to be accepting of their programme and receptive to a positive teacher-student relationship. Teachers and students experience different situations and emotional labour daily, but their relationship can be improved with educational institution interventions to holistically influence student and teacher towards building on a positive climate.

This article encourages further research to be conducted in relation to South African TVET college teacher-student relations and climate, identifying factors that hinder the climate and suggesting that policies be amended to promote a positive teacher-student relationship.

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