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List of Abbreviations

ACP: Association for Computer Professionals

BAC: British Accreditation Council

BHC: Blake Hall College

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

CHE: Council on Higher Education

CSP: Commonwealth Supported Place

CV: Curriculum Vitae

DE: Distance Education

DoE: Department of Education

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

ETQA: African Education and Training Quality Assurance Body

HO: Home Office

HE: Higher Education

HEQC: Higher Education Quality Committee

ICS: International Correspondence Schools

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IT: Information Technology

LSE: London School of Economics

NCC: National Computing College

NCHE: National Commission of Higher Education

NWU: North West University

NQF: National Qualification Framework

OCR: Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

ODL: Open and Distance Learning

QAA: Quality Assurance Agency

RTO: Registered Training Organisations

SRC: Student Representative Council

TAFE:	Technical and Further Education
UEL:	University of East London
UK:	United Kingdom
UNISA:	University of South Africa
UoL:	University of London
US:	United STates
VET:	Vocational Education and Training

Chapter 1

Introduction and Rationale for the Study

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

As a force contributing to social and economical development, open and distance learning (ODL) is fast becoming an accepted and indispensable part of the main stream of educational systems. The growth of distance education (DE) has been stimulated in part by the interest among educators and trainers in the use of internet-based and multimedia technologies. It is generally recognized that traditional ways of organizing education need to be reinforced by innovative methods if the fundamental right of all people to education is to be ensured (UNESCO, 2002:3). DE was opted as a means of providing flexible and cost-effective education to people irrespective of their location and time available (Keyter, 2002:3). In the light of the global trends in life-long learning and the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) there seems to be a change in the role and nature of access in DE (Council of Higher Education [CHE], 2004:23). Research done by Keyter (2002:4) supports this changing role of DE in stating that it will increasingly be an essential factor in making education accessible at all levels, in all forms, to all people at every stage of their lives.

Eloff (2006), Vice-Chancellor of the North-West University (NWU), South Africa, noted in his opening speech at the NWU Convocation Ceremony in London that we live in a 'flat world'. This is a world where there are no restrictions on time, culturally diverse communities or boundaries to travel between world countries.

This flat-world-initiative has a direct influence on the academic enterprise as well as on the whole perspective of Higher Education (HE), especially DE. According to him we might experience an era within five to ten years where education institutions will not be capable of accommodating the magnitude of residential students because of the realization of life-long learning. It is therefore imperative to invest in efficient HE and DE institutions to cater for this population growth in students. According to Preece (1998:79), one of the main HE challenges in South Africa is to reconcile itself to global trends, in which HE is changing to a mass system, and to diversify its student population. This view is shared by Van der Merwe (2000) who investigated the management of transformation in HE institutions in the Gauteng province.

Eloff (2006) envisages an increase in high quality HE and DE institutions that should be value-driven to satisfy the needs of its clients. This need for skills, values and attitudes should be provided for within the context of the academic world, as well as in learning experiences provided to students (Akinsolu, 2005:64). Furthermore, for the HE institutions to be value-driven, according to Akinsolu (2005: 64-67) as well as Blunt and Cunningham (2002:135), it should be accessible to all learners and foster critical outcomes such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and providing support to learners through learning material which is easy to navigate and reader-friendly.

In this research the researcher takes a deeper look at how a HE institute with a dominantly South African influence and niche market is managed in the United Kingdom (UK). Blake Hall College (BHC) is a private college, situated in Surrey Quays (London), with 400 full-time students. The Board of Directors who initially founded BHC in 2001 identified a global trend of South African citizens moving to the UK in search of better vocational and educational opportunities. Since the inception of the college, it primarily has a South African staff component and as niche market, South African citizens living and immigrating to the UK. BHC is an

official British HE institute as registered with the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) and was accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Further and Higher Education (BAC) in October 2004. As a provider of HE and DE, the college is a delivery and assessment site where it delivers learning programmes to students and manages the assessment thereof (South African Qualification Authority [SAQA], 2001:9).

The college offers five different course fields of which courses are respectively awarded by various international HE institutions. These course fields are:

- Education   NWU and the University of South Africa (UNISA)
- Psychology   UNISA
- Sociology   the University of London (UoL) – London
  School of Economics (LSE)
- Business   NCC Education, CIMA, UoL – LSE
- ICT   NCC Education, Association for Computer Professionals (ACP) and Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Keeping the abovementioned in mind, the following problem statement and secondary question arise:

Problem statement: What are the perspectives of the management team on various strategies in managing a British college with a mainly South African niche market?

Secondary question: Which methods of teaching and management are used at BHC and what are the implications for surviving the UK HE marketplace?

1.2   AIM OF THE RESEARCH

There is an increasing number of South African students moving (immigrating) from abroad and also within the UK, wanting to study at quality HE and DE institutions in the UK. The reasons for this occurrence may vary from life-long learning to obtaining a study visa to prolong the students' stay in the UK. Currently BHC is the only HE institute in the UK with such a rich South African influence. It primarily has a South African staff component and as niche market, South African citizens living and immigrating to the UK. This research is aimed at recognising the perspectives of the management team at this HE institution (BHC) and making recommendations for surviving the competitive HE market in the UK.   In this respect, the value of cross-institutional collaboration and quality control in HE will be highlighted, as Gibson (1998:141) indicated ".... collaboration enhance(s) the quality of learning.... and foster(s) the use of higher-order skills..."

Change and development in the international HE scene call for a more innovative approach in the methods of teaching and in the management of DE.   These methods demand the design and management of specific organizational systems. In order to work effectively, these systems generally need to be institutionalized, or at least be based in a DE unit within the institution (CHE, 2004:149). Part of the research aim is to identify the innovative approaches in the methods of teaching and management at BHC and reflecting on what the implications are for surviving the UK HE market place, to understand to what extent the management team maintains and uplifts this institution. BHC is undertaking groundbreaking work in the HE arena in order to maximize learning opportunities to a South African market in the UK. Data collected in this research may generate new insights and understanding on how to manage a HE institution in the UK with a specific niche market.

The motivation to conduct this research as an ambassador for South Africa and of education, is to extend South African HE and DE in the UK. This should then form a basis to support South African students in the UK who, in the future, may return to South Africa.

In summary: The study aims to determine the perspectives of the management team at BHC on various strategies in managing a British college with a mainly South African niche market, in order to make recommendations on how BHC and other similar institutions can survive the highly competitive UK HE market.

1.3   PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this research is to discover those managerial factors and/or strategies that are crucial for the effective management of a HE and DE institution. The researcher will approach this research from a post-modernist perspective. Post-modernism has a worldview that emphasizes the existence of different worldviews and concepts of reality (Wikipedia, 2001). According to the post-modernists 'reality' is a social construction by a particular group, community, or class of persons. Postmodernism is also concerned with questions relating to the organization of knowledge. That is the reason why the researcher would like to explore the world of HE and DE, and how it is managed.

It is imperative for this research to explore the phenomenon from the perspectives of the people in control of the institution (BHC). Modernism is the ideal of the liberal arts education. In a post-modern society, however, knowledge becomes functional - you learn things, not to know them, but to use that knowledge (Klages, 2003:1). It is the researcher's belief that this research can produce significant knowledge for any HE institution with international students and/or campuses to uplift the quality of management and thus sustain benchmarks of academic excellence.

1.4   DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.4.1   Council of Higher Education (CHE)

The Council of Higher Education (CHE) is an independent, stationary body established by means of the South African Higher Education Act of 1997. The CHE's mission is to contribute to the development of a HE system that is characterised by equity, equality, responsiveness, and effective and efficient provision, governance and management (CHE, 2004:vii). The framework of the 1998 Department of Education (DoE) document has organised criteria representing the main institutional elements for DE provision (CHE, 2004:150). These elements are also identified in the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (2001:23) document, namely

1. Policy and planning
2. Learners
3. Programme development
4. Course design
5. Course material
6. Assessment
7. Learner support
8. Human resource strategy
9. Management and administration
10. Collaboration
11. Quality assurance
12. Information dissemination
13. Results

This research will primarily focus on the management and collaboration criteria for the provision of HE and DE. An investigation into these criteria will help to answer the research question stated in 1.2.

The CHE governs the design of the programmes offered by an institution to ensure explicit and reasoned coherence between the aims and the intended learning outcomes on the one hand, and the strategies for teaching at a distance, the

scope of learning materials and the modes and criteria of assessment, on the other. In the case of BHC, the course programmes offered are Education, Psychology, Sociology, Business and ICT.

The particular demands of the DoE are taken into account in the staffing arrangements of programmes because it is an imperative factor of teaching and learning. It is expected that arrangements ought to be in place for proper recruitment, as well as the training and monitoring of the necessary part-time and permanent staff in the different course programmes. These development systems, and the training and monitoring of staff for administering and teaching should cover general communication, material development and presentation, learner support and feedback on assessment (CHE, 2004:146-147).

1.4.2   Distance Education (DE)

There are certain ways of distinguishing DE from other forms of educational provisions. The continuum of educational provision means that there are likely to be an overlap between the characteristics of various forms of educational delivery. This is because distance education is first and foremost 'education' – and only secondly 'distance' (CHE, 2004:145). It can also be seen as education that takes place when the instructor and student are separated by space and/or time. The term 'distance' does not denote only distance in space or time, as in traditional 'distance' learning, but also distance in terms of culture and community (Spector, 2001).

The gap between instructor and student can be bridged through the use of technology - such as audio tapes, video conferencing, satellite broadcasts and on-line technology, and/or more traditional delivery methods, such as the postal service (Oregon Network Education, 2006). Modern techniques of DE course development and delivery, for example video conferencing and satellite

broadcasts, are lowering conventional classroom barriers imposed by time and space.

A positive characteristic of DE is the experience of collective or group activity and the division of labour which is stronger than in conventional education. DE allows the students to manage their time, private life and studies according to their own needs and tempo. There is also a negative side to DE in that a lot of strain may be placed on the student on grounds of the isolation from group support and from constant interaction with various people at the institution (Pritchard & Jones, 1985:137-155). BHC provides learner support for UNISA's Education and Psychology degrees as well as for NWU's different education courses, which are primarily DE courses. It is from this perspective that students enrol for these DE courses at the college, to receive support varying from life-long learning support to personal support (one-on-one or group), none of which they would receive from the respective DE institutes.

1.4.3   Face-to-face education (conventional education)

Face-to-face education provides a daily or weekly contact session between educators and students. Face-to-face education is traditional classroom education, where the lecturer is face-to-face with the students (Fouché, 1999:1). Direct face-to-face educational interaction with students has been found to be one of the more effective strategies for improving teaching and learning. In this type of classroom environment students can 'sound-board' (check) their knowledge with the lecturer or their peers. Developing face-to-face education programs in an institution will inevitably improve the knowledge and practice of students. This method of education or teaching is reliant on interactions which build group cohesion as a safe haven to learning (Session Guide, 2006).

The college (BHC) also provides full lecture support to the students enrolled in the Sociology, Business and ICT courses. These students meet weekly with their lecturers for contact sessions. In this sense the lecturers not only present the curriculum to the students, but also facilitate the assessment of the students on a continuous basis.

1.4.4   Higher Education (HE)

HE is education provided by universities, vocational universities, colleges and other institutions that award academic degrees and/or diplomas. HE is also referred to as 'third level' or 'tertiary education', which is a non-compulsory educational level following the completion of secondary education, such as school. This level of education includes teaching and research activities which, in the realm of teaching, includes both the undergraduate level and graduate (or post graduate) level (Wikipedia, 2001). The vision of HE is laid out by the CHE (2001:5-6) as well as in the Government Gazette (1997:7-8) as follows, namely HE:

a)   must lie at the heart of social, cultural and economic transformation;

b)   should meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives;

c)   has to contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society;

d)   has to contribute to the advancement of democracy by fostering open and critical debate;

e)   should foster the upgrading of professional knowledge and skills, and create flexible opportunities for life-long learning. HE teaches and trains people to fulfil specialised social functions such as those of politicians and doctors; and

f)   is crucial to the resolution of the complex problems and the developmental challenges that face the African continent.

BHC is an official British HE institute as registered with the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) and was accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Further and Higher Education (BAC) in October 2004. All the academic degrees and/or diplomas are awarded by the awarding universities or colleges that stand in partnership with BHC, as mentioned earlier.

1.4.5   Cross-institutional collaboration

'Collaboration' refers to all processes where people work together and applies to individuals and larger collectives, for example, organisations (Wikipedia, 2001). The conditions for effective collaboration include mutual trust and esteem among the partners, effective communication systems, and commitment to and control over the project by the relevant individuals and groups (Moran, 1990). Cross-institutional collaboration has a definite effect on the growth, maintenance and progress of each institution. Emphasis is placed on the co-existence of two respective institutions and the dependability on each other. The following factors influence the successful co-existence of institutions: experience, cooperative development, the establishment of credit-transfer systems, shared teaching arrangements, and the creation of new overarching structures or agencies to do some or all of these.

The diverse qualifications offered at BHC are awarded by various international HE institutions, i.e. South Africa, Britain and Europe. Emphasis is placed on the co-existence of the two respective institutions and the dependability on each other.

1.4.6   Providers

Providers of DE are accountable to the South African Education and Training Quality Assurance Body (ETQA) for the management, development and delivery of learning programmes and service, leading to the standards and qualifications for which they are accredited. In South Africa, the providers are also responsible for the quality of the learning experience according to the requirements of the registered standards and qualifications (SAQA, 2001:9). Provider categories could be outlined as follows:

a)   Delivery only site (this is a provider who is responsible for training and formative assessment).

b)   Assessment only site (responsible for summative and RPL assessment).

c)   Delivery and assessment site (delivers learning programmes and manages the assessment thereof).

The HE and/or DE institution is the provider of the learning environment (campus, staff, literature, management and support) where students can study to receive recognition for their time and money spent at the institution (SAQA,2001:19). As a provider of HE and DE, BHC is a delivery and assessment site because it delivers the learning programmes to the students and facilitates the assessment thereof. It is therefore in the interest of this research, that the researcher will concentrate on the managerial strategies used at BHC to position itself as a competitive provider of HE and DE in the UK market place.

1.4.7   Quality control

Quality control is a very important and determining factor in regulating HE and DE provision. The HE Act explicitly recognises that quality issues are central to the notion of a transformed HE system (CHE, 2004:98). Quality control or quality

management within an institution is usually compared against a standardised body of authority to determine the level of management. Each educational institution (provider) must be able to demonstrate to the relevant South African body, the Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) body, or to the British Accreditation Council (BAC) in the UK, that it has a quality management system in place that includes quality management policies and procedures, as well as review mechanisms to ensure quality teaching and learning. The degree of quality control should be indicated and reflected in the mission statement and objectives of the provider (SAQA, 2001:22). "Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating services and products against set standards, with a view to improvement, renewal and progress"(Government Gazette, 1997:12).

To understand to what extent the BHC management team maintains this HE and DE institution, emphasis will be placed on the following: Cross-institutional collaboration and quality control. Quality control relates to

a)   management and

b)   teaching mode (mixing DE with face-to-face interaction).

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This research will consist of a qualitative design which will be characterised by the way in which this in-depth study is context bound, to understand and describe the educational phenomenon of managing a HE institution in the UK with a mainly South African market (Coolican, 1999:450-451). The qualitative research approach will involve a phenomenological approach where, according to Henning (2004), the participant sketches his/her experience best when asked to do so in his/her own words by means of reflective interviews. Further characteristics of the design are elaborated on in section 1.6.3 and in Chapter 4. The findings of the research will be explained in Chapter 5.

1.5.1 Ethical measures

The research ethics adhered to in this research were influenced by ethical guidelines presented by Coolican (1999:474-485), Mouton (2001) and Smit (2001:82). These are as follows:

a) Informed consent.

   Participants will be well-informed of all aspects of the research in order to be able to give informed consent to participate (see Appendix A).

b) Publication and access to data.

   The research will not adversely affect the participants, therefore the researcher will also exercise caution as to where it is published.

c) Confidentiality and privacy.

   All information given by participants will be treated as confidential.

d) Deception.

   Deception will not feature in this research.

e) The right to non-participation.

   Participants may withdraw at any stage in the procedure for whatever reason.

f) Intervention.

   When intervention is applied it should be a positive event.

g) Preconceived ideas.

   The researcher will strive to be as objective as possible during the research.

The issue of research ethics will be addressed in detail in Chapter four.

1.5.2   Trustworthiness

To portray a true and reliable set of results the researcher will make use of the Guba model of trustworthiness (Poggenpoel, 1998:334-353). In this Guba model four strategies are proposed to ensure trustworthiness:

1.   Describe the phenomenon as accurately as possible to reflect the true value of the research results and thereby increase their credibility.
2.   Demonstrate that the findings are applicable and transferable to other academic institutions. Comparability exposes the research design to other researchers and could serve to guide them in other fields of study.
3.   Be consistent throughout the research process to increase dependability.
4.   Research results should be the sole representation of the findings as they were obtained from participants, not a subjective interpretation of the researcher.

Details of the research design and methods will be given in Chapter 4.

1.5.3   Method

1.5.3.1   Sample

Babbie and Mouton (2001) point out that research methodology focuses on the process and the kind of tools and procedures used, while research design looks towards what the end product will be. This study will qualitatively be concentrating on recognising the perspectives of the management team at BHC and will be considering these perspectives with regard to various managerial strategies, such as cross-institutional collaboration and quality control. To this end, purposeful

sampling will be used to utilise a small group of information-rich participants. Further details will be given in Chapter 4.

1.5.3.2   Data collection

To illuminate and understand the research field of the management of HE institutions, a qualitative research method will be used which, in effect, will make the researcher the main research instrument. The purpose of qualitative research is to understand a social phenomenon from the participant's frame of reference (Morse, 1994; Smit, 2001:65). Data collection will be by means of semi-structured interviews. The data collection will continue until data saturation is reached (Vital & Jansen, 2001:21). More details will be given in Chapter 4.

1.5.3.3   Data processing

Analysing and processing data is an important act in the research process which entails making sense of, interpreting and theorising the data. This is accomplished by organizing, reducing and describing the data (Smit, 2001:80). The research data, from a qualitative perspective, will be analysed and processed according to the guidelines of Dey (1993) and the bottoms-up strategy of Johnson and Christenson (2000:426-431), as will be explained in Chapter 4.

1.6   DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: *Introduction and rationale for the study*

Chapter 1 sketches the broader outline and intention of the research and the rationale behind it. This chapter explains how the researcher will approach the research and familiarises the reader with the researcher's paradigmatic erspective.

Chapter 2: *Cross-institutional collaboration*

Emphasis is placed on the co-existence of two respective institutions, BHC in liaison with any one other HE institute, and their dependability on one another.

Chapter 3: *Quality control*

To understand to what extent the BHC management team maintains and uplifts this HE institution, this chapter places emphasis on the following:

Criteria on management and administration.

Teaching mode: Mixing DE with face-to-face interaction.

Chapter 4: *Research design*

This research will consist of a qualitative design which will be characterised by the way in which this in-depth study is context bound, to understand and describe the educational phenomenon.

Chapter 5: *Results and discussion of results*

The data collection will be done via semi-structured interviews with the top and middle management of BHC, where-after the results will be discussed.

Chapter 6: *Conclusion, recommendations and limitations*

This final chapter will synthesise all textual and field data to describe the phenomenon as accurately as possible. In the conclusion the knowledge gained from this research will be highlighted, and the limitations of the study will be indicated.

1.7 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 explicated the introduction and rationale for this research which focuses on HE and DE. The problem statement and research questions indicated what the

intention of the researcher is, which is clarified in the research aim, as well as from a paradigmatic perspective. The research aim is to recognise the perspectives of the management team at BHC and to integrate these perspectives with various managerial strategies, with the emphasis on the value of cross-institutional collaboration and quality control. Most of the important concepts used in this research were pointed out in this chapter. A brief outline was given of the research design and the methods used, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 4. This chapter is concluded with an overview of the different chapters of this dissertation, with a short description of what to expect in each.

In chapter 2 the emphasis will be on the co-existence of two institutions respectively, namely BHC in liaison with other HE institutes, and their dependability on each other. The chapter will focus on how cross-institutional collaboration has an effect on the growth, maintenance and progress of each institution.

Chapter 2

Cross-institutional Collaboration

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 1 the introduction and rationale for this research were presented, with the accent on the management of a HE and DE institution in the UK with a South African niche market. In this chapter the following three factors, namely growth, maintenance and progress, as identified by Moran (1990) will indicate the unique role of cross-institutional collaboration in HE and distance learning. The advantages of such collaboration were identified as far back as the 1980's (Moran, 1986; Anderson & Nelson, 1989).

Collaborative management and learning has been gaining momentum as a promising pedagogy in HE and DE. Collaborative learning strategies seem to be relatively commonplace in many grade levels and for many different types of learning. However, one area is often overlooked, namely faculty collaboration, which is usually overshadowed by cross-institutional collaboration (Wang, Dannenhoffer, Davidson & Sector, 2005:405). These two areas, faculty and institutional collaboration, are both important for the successful governance of an institution. Gibson (1998:141) indicated that, 'collaboration enhance[s] the quality of learning and foster[s] the use of higher-order skills' (see chapter 1). This chapter in particular, focuses on the elements influencing collaboration between Blake Hall College (BHC) and other HE institutions in the United Kingdom and abroad. These elements include co-existence, enrolments, co-operation, programme evaluation, communication, knowledge sharing, accreditation and the transfer of institutional cultures.

Much of the collaboration takes place in the context of distance and distributed learning environments. This is partly for economic reasons and partly for pedagogical reasons (Wang *et al.*, 2005:406). BHC (a private college) is an exceptional example of what Wang *et al.* (2005:406) referred to regarding this collaboration, due to the fact that it offers five different course fields for which courses are awarded by various international HE institutions in South Africa, Britain and Europe, as mentioned in Chapter 1. In this chapter the emphasis will be on the co-existence and collaboration of the respective institutions and their dependability on one another.

2.2   GROWTH

2.2.1   Co-existence of institutes

Cross-institutional collaboration involves creating close working relationships among participants from different institutions. Such collaborations can have positive effects on teaching and learning (Gatliff & Wendel, 1998). The co-existence between the collaborating institutions is mainly for academic credibility and financial growth.

Primarily, every institution or training facility is an institution of learning, a place where people come to learn from teaching. Teaching is an act of facilitating this learning by enabling learners to perform relevant learning tasks (Monteith & Nieuwoudt, 2007:IV). Co-existence does not only influence the growth of the institution but also affects the knowledge and experience of each participant (staff and student).

Wang *et al.* (2005:405), stress the fact that faculty collaboration is usually overshadowed by cross-institutional collaboration which has an effect on

knowledge sharing (as will be discussed in 2.4.1). Faculty collaboration can be seen as horizontal collaboration between different departments within a specific institution. Horizontal collaboration usually takes place between partners at the same level and it is a key factor for the creation of innovation networks (Dodgson, 1994:285). It is that place, or work environment, where people know and trust one another to generate new ideas and methods for the institution to advance and grow.

The South African HE plan places the emphasis on this concept of horizontal and institutional collaboration, with the intention of promoting co-ordination and collaboration to enhance the articulation of programmes, the mobility of students between institutions, and the sharing of resources, including scarce academic and technical staff, and the library and information facilities (Government Gazette, 1997:19-20). This concept of 'collaboration' is relevant to all HE and DE institutions across the world as a means to co-exist and for the growth of the institute, and of the individual.

2.2.2 Enrolments

The life-line of all academic institutions, in particular a private institution like BHC, is growth in the number of student enrolments. The growth or decline in student enrolments has a direct effect on the financial stability of such an institution. There are numerous factors that may or may not influence the number of enrolments at a HE or DE institution. According to Eloff (2006), positive influences on student growth are the realisation of life-long learning, and the fact that there are no restrictions on time, culturally diverse communities or boundaries to travel between world countries (studying abroad). All the factors identified by Eloff (2006) point to an increase in enrolments and a stable financial future for HE and DE. There are also more challenging realities, for example, the regulations

regarding international students and visas (see Chapter 3), which may have a negative impact on an institution's enrolments.

Comprehending the impact of enrolments, more emphasis should be placed on the factors influencing students to enrol. Research done by Braxton (2007:78-80) focuses on the importance of the role of the external environment and the demonstration of institutional commitment to the welfare of its students. External factors such as commuting, working students or having dependent children, require a sensible amount of welfare from the HE and DE institution. In the case of BHC, the most pressing external factor that influences enrolment is for the students to obtain study visas from the UK Home Office (HO). Institutions committed to the welfare of its students play a positive role in the student's persistence, which leads to the growth and development of not only the students but also of the institution.

2.2.3   Cooperation

Cooperation is that factor that realises the co-existence of institutions that share a common goal or interest, whether it is teaching and learning, enrolments or a bigger market exposure, amongst others. Collaboration in itself refers to all the processes where people work together, and applies to individuals and larger collectives, for example organisations (Wikipedia, 2001). Cross-institutional collaboration or cooperation involves not merely the decision on content and the delivery of the course, but also involves course evaluation and the setting up of shared infrastructure. By sharing each other's infrastructure (resources) and managerial strategies both institutions have the potential to grow.

For a team design and teaching effort to be effective, success is highly dependent on commitment to planning and communication, which takes tremendous time in a

cross-institutional collaborative effort (Wang *et al.*, 2005:420). These two determining factors (planning and communication), should be the foundation for both faculty and institutional cooperation to be successful. (The effectiveness of communication between institutions will be discussed in 2.3.4).

Worldwide there are many different HE institutions, i.e. Universities, Colleges, Technikons, Adult Based Education Institutes or Distance Education Institutions, competing in the same arena. It is therefore more beneficial for institutions to cooperate than to compete as opposing entities. To promote cooperation within a competitive environment it is necessary to consider current institutional responses to global challenges and the perceived threat posed by increased competition.

Moja and Cloete (2001) categorised the institutional responses based on their study of the HE landscape in South Africa as follows:

a) The need to compete and increase the market share.
   The institutions reluctantly embrace changes and respond by adopting market strategies for change. Students are treated as clients, budgeting is organised into cost centres, and management emphasises efficiency in all operations at the institution.

b) The need to focus on local changes and to ignore global changes.
   Institutions transform their governance structures to be in line with legislative requirements. BHC had to restructure its entire governance strategy due to changes made by the UK HO. The HO no longer allows international students to make an in-country switch on their study visas as they did in the past, to extend their stay in the UK. These changes made by the HO not only affected the enrolments at BHC, but fundamentally also the future of the College. The

management of local changes could cause conflict between stakeholders and leadership, and in transformation demands in cooperating institutions.

c) The need to fight new cultural imperialists.

This happens where there is a perceived threat of a takeover by foreign providers. The UK HO tightened their policies regarding the immigration law in 2006 to prevent foreigners entering or overstaying in the UK for no particular reason. Some strategies for adapting to these changes, as BHC did, have been to form partnerships and cooperate with UK Universities and Colleges, tapping new resources and increasing institutional infrastructure.

Cooperation between institutions has to be a win-win situation. All partners involved must feel that their interest and purpose for entering the collaboration are well served. They should be able to see actual returns, whether through increased enrolments or increased infrastructure and service on their investment and partnership (Wang *et al.*, 2005:421).

2.2.4   Challenges affecting growth

Cross-institutional collaboration is a perfect managerial initiative for those HE and DE institutions wanting to grow, to be innovative, and to compete locally and internationally. However, a number of authors found that there were some practical difficulties in cross-institutional collaborations (Bishop, Cox, Fothergill, Kyle, Lawson, Mitchell, Rathbone, Stone & Thelwall 2001:5-8). These include differences in the level of student intake, time pressure on staff, differences in aims and objectives, differences in type and volume of resources, and differences in information technology platforms, all of which influence the growth potential of an institution.

In the modern world, HE and DE has become an international business opportunity where HE and DE institutions compete to optimise growth and authority. Competitiveness makes undoubtedly more business sense to private providers and entrepreneurial institutions that have to profit from the teaching and learning enterprise as a business venture. These institutions have to strive to position themselves among the top league of HE institutions by providing HE learning programmes and conducting relevant scientific research to ensure that they remain institutions of prestige and excellence (Cele, 2005:192).

DE is well placed for expansion (growth) given the existing infrastructure in both the public and private sectors. Clearly, expansion cannot take place without any additional investment, especially in learning technologies, staff development and student support (Government Gazette, 1997:27). With this in mind, Bishop *et al.* (2001) highlight that there are many challenges within such a collaborative agreement that should be dealt with and that there will be risks for both partners involved. The risk that should be avoided is a *laissez faire* proliferation of HE course provision programmed by an increasing range of providers, without the benefit of a planning framework and without adequate safeguards to ensure the quality of provision. This would most certainly result in the unplanned blurring of institutional roles and functions, and given resource constraints, a strong tendency to over-provide low-cost programmes in low-priority curriculum areas (Government Gazette, 1997:23).

Other challenges affecting growth are psychological, pedagogical, cultural, and pragmatic perspectives that should be taken into consideration when designing teaching strategies and environments. In addition, the design or management team has to invest a significant effort into getting to know each other and to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses (Wang *et al.*, 2005:420). This underlines the importance of the commitment to planning and communicating between collaborating institutes and faculties. To fulfil the requirements of

teaching collaborations, the very first issue facing a design team is to choose a design project that would meet both institutions' objectives. This can be particularly difficult since the students come from several different departments and two different institutions.

What is important is that the design or management team should be able to operate in a way that is acceptable to all. This state of acceptability can be reached if the members are able to debate issues, often where there are significant differences of opinion, until a decision can be arrived at (Wang *et al.,* 2005:410-411). Documenting challenges that faculty collaborators had to face and the way that they were overcome will probably be of significant benefit in future projects (Wang *et al.*, 2005:406). Essentially, these documents will be a reflection of the institution's growth.

2.3   MAINTENANCE

2.3.1   Co-operation and partnership

Collaboration is a cooperative endeavour that involves common goals, coordinated effort, and outcomes or products for which the collaborators share the responsibility and credit (Austin & Baldwin, 1992:1). A successful working relationship has proven many times that two are better than one, because they have a good return on their work (Holy Bible: Eccl 4). Collaborative relationships extend and expand the capacity of the participants to accomplish objectives that could not be accomplished by any participant alone (Hemming, 1984). That is why maintaining a partnership is a high priority between collaborating institutions.

There should be an easing of boundaries between the three institutional types, colleges, technikons and universities, not to continue with mutually exclusive missions and programme offerings. This should facilitate the recognition of the

scope for collaboration on the basis of common purposes and mutual interests, and of their distinctive roles (Government Gazette, 1997:24). Maintenance is no longer a reactive process but rather a proactive process where institutional goals should foster (Government Gazette, 1997:14)the following, namely

a)   co-operative decision-making between separate but functionally interdependent stakeholders who recognise their different identities, interests and freedoms, while pursuing the common goal of a co-ordinated and participative policy and civil society; and

b)   interaction through co-operation and partnership among institutions of HE and between such institutions and all sectors of the wider society.

Co-operation and partnership give some understanding and explanation to the first research question: what are the perspectives of the management team on various managerial strategies in managing a British college with a South African niche market? It is evident that maintaining a co-operative partnership should be the primary managerial strategy for the HE and DE management team.

2.3.2   Prerequisites for effective collaboration

There exist certain prerequisites for an effective collaboration across institutions. Implementing and maintaining these prerequisites may lead to the success of the HE and DE institution. Gatliff and Wendel (1998) suggest that certain activities have to be done at the beginning of a collaborative project to ensure an effective collaboration. These include, identifying stakeholders and including them in the planning process, identifying the political dynamics, establishing good communications, and establishing leadership. The conditions for effective collaboration include mutual trust and esteem among the partners, effective

communication systems, and commitment to and control over the project by the relevant individuals and groups (Moran, 1990).

Members of an organisation need to trust one another to be honest, capable and committed to joint aims (Dodgson, 1994:291). Trust could be the most vulnerable prerequisite to maintain of all. Davenport and Prusak (2000:35) confirm that the processes of making knowledge transparent, and sharing, distributing and utilising knowledge, largely depend on trust. Trust is fundamental to most collaborative work because if there is no trust, "...no one will risk moving first, and all will sacrifice gains of cooperation in order to remain safe" (Rijamampainina & Maxwell, 2002:6).

The commitment and perseverance of both management teams will allow the partnership to evolve and mature into a more highly functioning unit. Successful collaborations are always the outcome of a successful negotiation process in which terms are set out clearly and agreed upon by all (Wang *et al.,* 2005:421).

2.3.3   Evaluation of a programme

The evaluation of educational programmes is monitored by authorized organisations or independent bodies evaluating programmes against national and international standards, for example the South African ETQA or the BAC in the UK (see chapter 3). There should be a commitment from all HE and DE institutions to evaluate whether a new course or programme meets its objectives, where there may be shortfalls in an existing course, or when changes or improvements can be made in future offerings (Wang *et al.*, 2005:407-409).

Wang *et al.* (2005) further discuss an iterative approach to course design, where the design is elaborated on, refined, and tested until the desired performance or usability is achieved. Iterative design is a popular approach for developing a new

environment or when little is known about the target environment. This design can be of great help when HE and DE institutions collaborate with the aim of developing new programmes. In this method there are four steps in the iterative design which are:

1. Design: Generate ideas, analyse and create solutions.
2. Implement: Implement the design by creating a prototype.
3. Evaluate: Uncover pitfalls by evaluating the prototype.
4. Refine: Use the evaluation results, refine and improve the design.

The iterative design is one of the most cost-effective methods of gaining design insight and direction early in the design process (Schrum, 2000). This design is an efficient method for institutions to conduct self-evaluation on their programmes, and on those programmes shared between collaborating institutions.

Programme evaluation needs to be considered while a programme is being developed, as well as during its delivery, and after its completion. The intended end-results should be identified at the beginning of the programme planning process (Diem, 2003). Evaluation (external or internal) of programmes is imperative to maintaining high standards. The researcher therefore thinks that every member of the organisation is liable for maintaining these set standards. This research will focus on BHC collaborating with international HE and DE institutions, and the necessity of programme evaluation.

2.3.4   Effective communication systems

"We see the things not as they are, but as we are" (Tomlinson, 2007). This statement is true about our perception of life and the way in which we communicate. Effective communication is crucial at every level of an organisation,

and it is a skill that requires practise (Stennes, 2005). A lack of adequate communication may cause misconception or misinterpretation of the organisation or the task at hand.

Successful communication has four main goals, namely to inform, to request, to persuade and to build relationships, all of which are important for maintaining the realisation of cross-institutional or cross-faculty collaboration. Through effective communication skills people or organisations stimulate others to take action to achieve their goals. It also encourages them to think along new lines and to act more effectively (Kotelnikov, 2007).

Communication is a two-way process involving an exchange of ideas. Consequently, communication is collaborative and not competitive. Maintaining a balanced collaborative relationship between institutions should therefore be more focused on the needs of the partner. In order to share ideas the institutions must first shape the idea of collaboration coherently. This creates a pattern for the institution (collaborating partner) to grasp the larger picture intuitively, and to focus on the details of the collaboration (Stennes, 2005). Accurate information should be provided throughout the collaborative agreement, especially when responsibilities are clarified to achieve set targets.

Communication is complicated by complex and often conflicting relationships. Some of the reasons giving rise to conflict could be, power struggle, self-fulfilling assumptions, the manager's hesitation to be candid, and assuming others see the situation the same as they do. Some of the most complicated and difficult situations are often caused by complex interpersonal relationships and cultural differences. Relationships are affected by decisions made by superiors (the management team), which may be perceived differently from those by a subordinate or a peer. Conflict can be intensified by cross-cultural situations where effective communication requires the deciphering of basic values, motives,

aspirations, and assumptions that operate across geographical lines (Wertheim, 2004).

It is important for the central management to make resources available for long-term learning in terms of money, time, staff motivation/training, and to improve communication between the various groups. By doing so, every member will feel a sense of belonging and will be able to work towards a common goal. For the better integration of students as part of the learning community, the management team should establish a Student Representative Body which could enhance student participation at different levels of the institute's decision-making (Ukpo, 2006:41).

Managers should provide a positive work climate by establishing open and effective communication systems, where it would be possible for employees to solve problems on the spot and have a degree of freedom and independence (freedom of speech). What managers have to realise is that communication is human interaction. When individuals are not successful in communicating in different situations, they are likely to withdraw rather than engage in behaviour that may lead to failure. This has a direct effect on the collegial partnership between institutions and the success of the venture. Management should therefore not only negotiate (communicate) with collaborating institutions but also with its employees so that everyone involved may experience a sense of appreciation and value (Bennett & Jandt, 1988:1-6).

2.4   PROGRESS

2.4.1   Knowledge sharing and dissemination

Ngulube (2005:42) defines 'knowledge management' as "...the sum of processes that facilitate the creation, identification, validation, acquisition, sharing, utilisation,

integration and retention of knowledge resources in an organisation, irrespective of their location and formats, and in order to improve the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness". The production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge and the development of high-level human resources are core functions of the HE and DE system. Research plays a key role in both these functions. It is the principal tool for creating new knowledge. The dissemination of knowledge through teaching and collaboration in research assignments is the principal tool for developing academic and research staff through postgraduate study and training (Government Gazette, 1997:14).

Cross-institutional collaboration implies that there will be institutional sharing of various resources that can increase (among other things) course offerings and research opportunities at each institution (Wang *et al.*, 2005:408). Knowledge sharing and collaboration hold significant potential for improving the quality of research outputs in academic settings. It could facilitate the transformation and progress of personal knowledge into institutional knowledge. Knowledge management could help research supervisors or institutions to share, transfer, update and improve their knowledge and skills as well as quickly adapt to a changing environment (Ngulube, 2005:56), such as the one BHC is exposed to, that is affected by the changes in HO regulation regarding study visas. Organisations that share knowledge increase the opportunities for the creation of new ideas that have the potential of adding value to their activities (Mitchell, 2003:69).

One appealing factor of cross-institutional collaboration is the requirement for faculties that serve students from diverse backgrounds and environments to collaborate on an issue in which all participants share in the outcome (Wang *et al.*, 2005:407). These communal outcomes could be teaching and learning, enrolments, or a bigger market exposure, amongst others. According to Prusak (1996:6), "...the only thing that gives an organisation a competitive edge, the only

thing that is sustainable, is what it knows, how it uses what it knows and how fast it can know something new". It would therefore benefit institutions to collaborate and share professional experience and knowledge with institutions that have many years' experience. In this respect, more sophisticated understanding can be built collaboratively rather than individually, progressing towards attainable goals (Dornisch & Land, 2002).

Failure to manage and share knowledge systematically could be a barrier to knowledge creation and distribution (Webb, 1998:10), not only on institutional level but equally for faculties and students involved. Collaborative classroom environments, where knowledge is shared, are believed to deliver students who are highly motivated, who learn more, and who are generally more successful (Kitchen & McDougall, 1998/1999; Sharan & Sharan, 1992). The progress of the institution, and of the various individuals involved, is significantly influenced by the sharing and dissemination of knowledge.

2.4.2 Accreditation

In South Africa a standing committee of the Council of Higher Education (CHE), the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), is responsible for conducting institutional audits and accrediting programmes (Kilfoil, 2005:5). In the UK the British Accrediting Council (BAC) has similar functions and authority. These two establishments, the BAC and CHE/HEQC, provide significant information regarding accreditation at all levels of education.

'Accreditation', according to SAQA (1998), means the certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution, as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance systems set up by SAQA in terms of the Act and the 'Education and Training Quality Assurance

Body'. This means a body or institution is accredited in terms of section 5(1)(a)(ii) of the Act responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards or qualifications. The CHE/HEQC (2002:9) gives a clear definition, namely 'accreditation' indicates that programmes that lead to registered qualifications achieve set standards, conduct their activities with integrity, deliver outcomes that justify public confidence and demonstrate accountability for the effective use of public or private funds. It allows Government to invest public funds with confidence in programmes that demonstrate their ability to pass through a process of rigorous external scrutiny. The accreditation of a HE or DE institution indicates progress towards higher national and international standards.

The quest for private gain and entrepreneurship in the accreditation of institutions and learning programmes created a paradigm which necessitates the establishment of the 'norms and standards legislative framework for institutional accreditation of private HE institutions', such as BHC (Cele, 2005:189). There are two conditions that are relevant to the underlying rationale for accreditation: 'accountability' and 'improvement'. HE is a costly enterprise to the nation, to parents and to students. It is a decisive factor in the economic success of a nation, which means that graduates and employers, as well as the state, all become stakeholders. Institutions have to balance accountability and autonomy. The more responsibly institutions act to control and manage quality internally, the more likely they will be granted self-accreditation status (Kilfoil, 2005:6). This may influence the perspectives of the BHC management team on various managerial strategies to achieve self-accreditation status.

An important factor about accreditation that BHC had to take into consideration is that in the UK as well as in the United States, the accreditation agencies are membership bodies, not governmental organisations. These agencies concentrate on self-regulation and quality improvements as instruments of accountability, not on control. To understand self-regulation and accountability better the CHE/HEQC

policies need to be explored again. The CHE/HEQC has three directorates: Institutional Audits, Programme Accreditation and Quality Promotion and Capacity Development. They work according to the following definitions of quality: fitness of purpose (link to national goals, priorities and targets); fitness for purpose (relationship to institutional mission); value for money (efficiency and effectiveness, cost recovery, responsiveness to labour market), and transformation (of the individual and society) (Kilfoil, 2005:9-10).

The following are the most familiar quality assurance inadequacies (Cele, (2005:195), which influence the accreditation of HE institutions:

a) There is no investment in the necessary basic infrastructure, resources, policies, and systems that define the HE institutions.

b) The management team does not conduct academic planning processes that inform programme cost of chosen modules and the resourcing of programmes.

c) The mission statements of the HE and DE institution are not informed by benchmarks and measurable indicators.

d) There does not exist sufficient understanding in HE and DE of the self-assessment dimension of quality assurance.

e) In many HE and DE institutions there are not any quality assurance and feedback systems in place.

f) Some HE and DE institutions have poorly conceptualised and fragmented human resource policies.

g) Some HE and DE institutions have insufficient library facilities.

h) They have no clearly formulated teaching and learning policies and strategies.

i) Some HE and DE institutions rely on part-time staff to conduct the core business of the institution.

j) In many HE and DE institutions there are only sporadic and uncoordinated learner support systems and programmes.

These deficiencies regarding what are supposed to be the 'common sense' in the HE and DE enterprise, undermine the imperatives of quality assurance in HE.

Morrison, Magennis and Carey (1995:129) warn that "...universities are being encouraged to report simple, readily available quantitative measures at the expense of complex qualitative assessment of the quality of HE, based upon professional judgements". An analysis done by Cele (2005:188) reveals that the majority of HE and DE institutions remain ill-informed of the norms and standards that shape the HE teaching and learning enterprise, and also, of what is expected from them before they apply for accreditation through the CHE/HEQC or the BAC. It is important for members of staff to volunteer to be trained as peer evaluators in order to ensure that good practice is shared.

Another problem, internationally, is the perceived threat to university autonomy by external quality assurance measures. The planned system allows universities to guard their autonomy by moving towards self-regulation and quality improvement, and gaining self-accreditation status (Kilfoil, 2005:11). The CHE/HEQC evaluation process shifts the focus from descriptive anecdotal assertions to evidence-led claims. Evidence-based evaluations simply mean that institutions need to produce a detailed policy document when required, instead of providing a single paragraph explaining how they conduct business. This evidence-based evaluation has to do with systemic evaluation processes reduced to critical report documents that serve as tangible evidence – quality assurance props - during CHE/HEQC evaluations. This implies that institutions have to produce comprehensive and detailed policies and 'quality assurance props' as evidence of progress and of how the systems function at the institution (Cele, 2005:197).

2.4.3   Transfer of institutional cultures

The culture of an organisation indicates a dialectical process that is formed through the common understanding that shapes social interaction and in turn, gets reshaped through those interactions. According to Rhoads and Valadez (1996) 'culture' can be described as not only providing the parameters for social interactions. It also provides a framework for how we define ourselves in relation to others.

Cross-institutional collaboration gives institutions the opportunity to create a knowledge-sharing culture. Everyone is willing to learn from others if the operation of an organisation is based on the ethos of sharing knowledge. The culture of the organisation cannot change nor can there be a sharing of knowledge without innovative and inspirational leadership. A culture that encourages knowledge-sharing should have trust, systems-thinking, teamwork and leadership as key elements in the development of the knowledge-sharing process (Ngulube, 2005:52-56).

Systems-thinking can act as a catalyst to foster collaboration and teamwork among research supervisors, students and collaborating institutions, since the commitment of the institution has as its aim the welfare of its students (see section 2.2.2 on enrolments). It embodies the cultural values of a college or university and their day-to-day enactment which requires little or no direct financial costs (Braxton, 2007:81).

Leadership has a key role to play in promoting knowledge sharing (Martiny, 1998), and a lack of leadership with foresight may be a barrier to knowledge management (Du Plessis & Boon, 2004). The leadership team should progress towards a 'critical multi-culturalist' ideology, where critical elements of the students' home culture

and identity are recognised in both institutions. The institution makes it possible for the students to both affirm their cultural identities while acknowledging their need or desire for formal education (Rendon, 1994). The cross-institutional cultural influence both frame human interaction, and is reframed as these interactions influence the culture of the institution (Shaw & London, 2005:4).

It is essential to promote the development of institutional cultures which will embody values and facilitate behaviour aimed at progress, peaceful assembly, reconciliation, respect for difference and the promotion of the common good (Government Gazette, 1997:42). Phelan, Davidson and Yu (1993:53) point out that, "...when borders are present, movement and adaptation are frequently difficult because the knowledge and skills in one world are more highly valued and esteemed than those in others". These borders might be the values of an institution's language, behaviour or beliefs fostered at the institution.

In contrast, the term 'boundary crossing' is used to denote movement between two cultures in which the socio-cultural components of each world are accorded equal status and legitimacy. Movement between these two worlds is less traumatic, as it does not require an abdication or repudiation of a prior identity or 'home world' (Shaw & London, 2005:5). It is in these circumstances that to fully collaborate the management teams of both institutions would encourage integration that would rise above the resistance related to boundary crossing.

Different institutions cannot be examined in a vacuum, since they have developed in response to, or at least in tandem with the students' culture. Much of the variances seen between the two institutions may be due to differences in the students' cultural and class background, their aspirations, or their prior educational experiences. Thus it is necessary to first examine the general characteristics of the students enrolled at the respective institutions before advancing the culture transfer process (Shaw & London, 2005:15).

Every institution has it own institutional culture with staff that have unique attitudes, needs and aspirations which will be affected when exposed to other institutions in a collaborative agreement. The primal goal during cross-collaboration should be to create a sense of mutualism where institutions share their culture and experiences for the benefit of both.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the focus was on cross-institutional collaboration. Cross-institutional collaboration has a definite effect on the growth, maintenance and progress of each institution. Focusing on institutional growth highlights the co-existence of two respective HE and DE institutions and the cooperation between them. Collaboration involves creating a close working relationship among participants from different institutions to share their knowledge and experience for the benefit of both. A successful partnership is highly dependent on the commitment to planning and communication, where both the institutions involved are in a win-win situation.

'Maintenance' as the second sub-topic elaborates on the prerequisites for effective collaboration and the importance of communication to foster a healthy partnership. The different institutions cannot be examined in a vacuum, since they have developed in response to, or at least in tandem with, the students' culture.

The third sub-topic of this chapter, 'progress', illustrates the effects of accreditation, knowledge sharing and the transfer of institutional cultures on the progress of each institution. Senge (1990:4) said that we should "...discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels". Experience and evidence show that the success of collaboration depends on the commitment, effort, and conviction of the implementing partners. In a global education climate,

cross-institutional collaboration is needed to foster universally beneficial development (Wang *et al.*, 2005:422).

The following chapter will focus on quality management and control to illuminate the factors and challenges for the successful management of a HE and DE institution.

Chapter 3

Quality Control

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter will first of all be on quality management within a HE and DE institution. Quality control is usually compared against a standardised body of authority to determine the level of management.

Secondly, the focus will be on the different types of teaching methodologies use at HE and DE institutions. Part of the research aim is to identify the innovative approaches in the methods of teaching and management, such as found at BHC, and what the implications are for surviving the UK HE market-place. The aim is also to understand to what extent the management team maintains and uplifts its institution by focusing on the following: criteria for management and administration, and teaching mode, namely interacting DE with face-to-face instruction.

BHC as a private institution is undertaking groundbreaking work in the HE arena in order to maximize learning opportunities for a South African market in the UK. The private sector has a role to play in providing educational programmes to the majority of people who, in the past, did not have access to HE (Moja, 2002:10). Data collected by means of this research may generate new insight and understanding in how to manage a HE and DE institution in the UK with a specific niche market.

3.2   QUALITY MANAGEMENT

3.2.1 Quality control

Eloff (2006), Vice-Chancellor of NWU, envisages an increase in high quality HE and DE institutions that should be value-driven to satisfy the needs of its clients. For institutional quality assurance regimes and systems to be successful in any HE institution, senior management has to send the correct message to the organisation and take front-line leadership in quality assurance initiatives. This necessitates mutual co-operation and concern by all institutional stakeholders: learners, educators, administrators, managers, cleaners, governors and technicians (Heckroodt, Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004). This simply means that there exists no hierarchy or protocol in quality concerns. All stakeholders are to be equally concerned and practically involved in quality matters in relation to their levels of responsibility, their structural position and domains of expertise (Cele, 2005:191). Each educational institution (provider) has to be able to demonstrate to the relevant South African ETQA that it has a quality management system in place that includes quality management policies and procedures as well as review mechanisms to ensure quality teaching and learning. In the UK these competencies have to be demonstrated to the BAC. The degree of quality control should be indicated and reflected in the mission statement and objectives of the provider (SAQA, 2001:22).

Quality control is a very important and determining factor in regulating the provision of HE and DE. The HE Act explicitly recognises that quality issues are central to the notion of a transformed HE system (CHE, 2004:98). Various terms are linked to quality: control, assurance, management and audit. Middelhurst (1992) places the responsibility for quality control on academics, where the accountability of the profession entails using methods and designing activities that

lead to quality outcomes. These outcomes, according to Middelhurst (1992), are academics' knowledge, enthusiasm, the use of appropriate media, the monitoring of student progress, planning and instructural design, which all work together in quality control.

Quality assurance, as discussed in section 2.4.2 on accreditation, can be seen as a significant paradigm on issues of accountability, defined through a threefold trajectory of 'fitness of purpose', 'fitness for purpose' and 'value for money' (Cele, 2005:188). It is a responsibility of management who should place mechanisms and standard procedures in place to ensure that quality control is working (Middelhurst, 1992). Harman (1998:346) says, "Quality assurance refers to systematic management and assessment procedures adopted to ensure the achievement of specific quantity or improved quality, and to enable key stakeholders to have confidence in the management of quality and the outcomes achieved".

Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating services and products against set standards, with a view to improvement, renewal or progress (Government Gazette, 1997:12). Moore and Kearsley (2005) suggest that once appointed and trained, both academic and other staff should be monitored and evaluated to ensure the quality and effectiveness of their work, maintaining and applying academic and educational standards, both in the sense of specific expectations and requirements that should be complied with, and of ideals of excellence that should be aimed at. These expectations and ideals may differ from context to context, partly depending on the specific purposes pursued.

Quality assurance is a data-driven system, which means that the institutions need to establish a system of data and management information collection for strategic planning, continuous quality improvement and for quality assurance purposes (Kilfoil, 2005:11). Private providers such as BHC should build quality management systems to maintain norms and standards. Cele (2005:198-201) and Senge (1990)

helped to describe these systems, namely as putting in place reasonable infrastructure, resources, policies and systems that reflect and protect the integrity of the HE enterprise. Infrastructure and resources, taken up as input to form a solid base for meaningful teaching and learning, remain critical distinguishing factors that define and reflect the readiness of HE institutions to execute their higher learning mission without failing in this duty (Scott, 2004:13-26).

Quality assurance in HE seeks to ensure that the design of learning programmes is a purposeful act that reflects the co-ordinated and meaningful planning of learning experiences, informed by teaching, learning and assessment strategies, learner support initiatives and academic development programmes. According to Cele (2005), quality assurance involves:

a) Learning opportunities planned and distributed to learners, that reflect value for money for every learning programme.

b) Putting in place feedback systems that provide opportunities for the frequent monitoring of processes, operations and outcomes. These constantly align performance indicators with strategic plans and the reconfiguration of internal policies.

c) Institutional systems and resources that promote internal departmental collaboration, external networking and the alignment of all segments of the institution. These systems are in support of strategic planning and the institutional mission/vision statements.

d) Institutionalisation that promotes responsibility and widens accessibility to multiple learning programmes.

e)   The management of resources through sound academic leadership and the strategic advancement of academic excellence that are imperative for quality assurance.

In the changing educational environment, information and communication technologies are enabling more established providers to re-think and re-engineer the nature of their student services (Ukpo, 2006:40). One of these strategies has to do with the accessibility of students to HE and DE institutions. Ensuring equity of access must be complemented by a concern for equity of outcomes. Increased access must not lead to a 'revolving door' syndrome for students, with high failure and drop-out rates. In this respect, achieving redress and equity must be linked to measurable progress towards improving quality and reducing the high drop-out and repetition rate (Government Gazette, 1997:22).

The evaluation of HE and DE standards is important to sustain a quality management system that is of national standard. These standards are regulated by the BAC and CHE/HEQC, ensuring that quality control at each HE and DE institution is maintained.

3.2.1.1   The British Accreditation Council

The British Accreditation Council (BAC) was established in 1984 and acts as the UK's national accrediting body for independent further and higher education. It is independent of the government and of the colleges which it accredits.

A HE or DE institution which is accredited by BAC undergoes a thorough inspection every five years, with an interim visit after two to three years. At present the BAC accredits over 200 colleges in the UK, and nearly 30 colleges overseas. The BAC includes nominees of a number of the major bodies concerned with the maintenance of standards in British education, including the Association of

Colleges, the British Council, the Council of Validating Universities, Universities UK, the Chartered Institutes, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education and UKCOSA (the Council for International Education) (British Accreditation Council [BAC], 1984).

In awarding accreditation the BAC has four main purposes:

1. To support and advise independent institutions of further and higher education in the maintenance and enhancement of their provision of quality.

2. To provide independent guidance to students seeking to undertake further or higher education in an institution outside the state sector.

3. To provide assurance of the good standing of an institution to government departments and other interested bodies.

4. To enable an institution to state policy that it has voluntarily accepted independent inspection and has satisfied the BAC that all aspects of its operation are maintained at a satisfactory level.

There are three stages in the inspection process for UK HE and DE institutions:

Stage 1:   The scrutiny of documentation.

Stage 2:   Compliance with statutory requirements and the BAC's minimum standards. The inspection concentrates on, amongst others, health and safety, management, staffing and student welfare. This inspection also includes an initial assessment of academic resources.

Stage 3:   The provision of education and the enhancement thereof.

Since the Education Reform Act of 1988, UK colleges may not offer British degrees unless they are authorised to do so by the government or are in partnership with a British university. The UK authorities recognise those institutions which have been granted degree-awarding powers by either a Royal Charter or an Act of Parliament. These are known as 'recognised bodies'. All UK universities and some HE colleges

are recognised bodies. Other institutions, which do not have the power to award their own degrees, i.e. BHC, may provide courses which lead to a degree of a recognised body. These are known as 'listed bodies'.

Colleges may offer degrees from overseas universities provided that they make it clear that these are not British qualifications and that the colleges themselves are not the awarding bodies. The BAC requires that accredited colleges offer courses leading to such degrees only if the awarding universities are properly recognised by the appropriate national authority in their own countries (BAC, 1984). An example of this practice is where BHC offers courses of UNISA and NWU which are recognised by the CHE/HEQC in South Africa.

3.2.1.2   The CHE and HEQC

The CHE is responsible for quality assurance and promotion in HE through its permanent committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) (see section 2.4.2 on accreditation). As stipulated in the HEQC Guidelines for accreditation of private providers the CHE was established in terms of Section 4 of the HE Act. According to this act the CHE, through its permanent committee, the HEQC, has to perform the duties of promoting quality assurance in HE namely, auditing institutional quality assurance systems and management mechanisms of HE institutions, and accrediting HE learning programmes (Cele, 2005:191).

The CHE is a major statutory body established to provide independent, strategic advice to the South African Minister of Education on matters relating to the transformation and development of HE in South Africa. It also manages quality assurance and quality promotion in the HE sector (Government Gazette, 1997:37-39).

The CHE is responsible for advising the Minister of Education on:

a)   The governance of HE institutions and the HE system.

b)   The policies and regulatory frameworks that should govern the private provision of HE.

c)   Regional collaboration among providers, and where appropriate, the merger or closure of institutions, the reclassification of institutions and the establishment of institutions.

The mandate of the HEQC to preside over quality assurance matters in HE as the standards generating body and quality assuror is derived from an array of legislative frameworks and policies by the National Department of Education (DoE). By virtue of promulgating the HEQC as the South African HE 'Education and Training Quality Assuror' (ETQA), the DoE has, through statutory provision, positioned the HEQC as the acknowledged key role-player in quality validation through institutional audits and programme accreditation processes based on set criteria for accreditation and institutional audits (Cele, 2005:189). The responsibility of the HEQC for the accreditation of providers and their learning programmes seems to be comparable to the responsibilities of the BAC.

The HE Act will provide for the co-ordination of quality assurance in HE through the HEQC. A regulatory framework will be established under the HE Act to ensure that only private institutions with the necessary infrastructure and resources to provide and sustain quality HE programmes will be registered (Government Gazette, 1997:26-28). The aim is to achieve institutional autonomy for all HE institutions, which will be guaranteed by the HE Act, within the context of public accountability. This institutional autonomy will ensure that each institution is governed in terms of its own institutional statutes (Government Gazette, 1997:37).

The above-mentioned audits check that internal control and assurance systems are in place. It ensures that an institution conducts regular institutional research based

on relevant data collection, and it bases its strategic planning and management decisions on information obtained from such research (Kilfoil, 2005:5). BHC as a private, British, HE and DE institution with its South African niche market, should invest ample time and energy in its infrastructure to maintain the quality standards as required by the CHE/HEQC and the BAC.

3.2.2   Investment in infrastructure and capacity building

'Infrastructure' is generally seen as structural elements that provide the framework supporting an entire structure. It may also refer to information technology, informal and formal channels of communication or social networks. The concept means that infrastructure provides the organizing structure and support for the system or organization it serves, i.e. a HE and DE institution (Wikipedia, 2001).

Academic infrastructure provides a means of describing academic standards in HE education. It allows for diversity and innovation within academic programmes offered by HE (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2002). A management that invests in quality infrastructure not only affects the academic standards, but also the capacity building at the institution.

According to Lesser (2000:4), social capital is the accumulated wealth that an individual benefits from as a result of having social relationships with others (see section 2.2.1 on the co-existence of institutions). Leadership at academic institutions should use the advantages provided by the social capital in their organisations to bring about knowledge-sharing and innovation (Ngulube, 2005:55).

The leadership of the university and the programmes should also focus on building social capital and the interaction of people in an organisation in order to promote collective action (Ngulube, 2005:55). This partnership among universities could

contribute to capacity building in the production and use of knowledge, in delivering and disseminating knowledge to masses of students, and in contributing to the development of human resources with high-level skills that in turn, could contribute to development (Moja, 2002:9).

The above-mentioned observations create a new focus on quality control. Instead of only pursuing innovation, HE and DE institutions should be looking at their strengths and contexts, attempting to define their products more clearly, and considering whether they have the capacity to meet the identified needs (Blunt & Cunningham, 2002:135).

For capacity building to have an effect on the infrastructure of a HE and DE institution a lot of planning has to be done by management. According to the Government Gazette (1997:19), planning has a three year cycle: to gather data, to make resource estimates, and to set targets and plans which are annually updated. This enables the planning of growth and change in HE to be more flexible and responsive to social and economic needs. It includes market signals, permits adjustments made on the basis of actual performance, and introduces greater predictability and hence stability into the budget process.

The successful development of a single co-ordinated system requires more than a commitment to transformation. It is critically dependent on building and enhancing capacity in all spheres, i.e. academic, management, governance and infrastructure. This will give effect to new policies and ensure the efficient functioning of the expanded and transformed HE system (Government Gazette, 1997:33). In particular, attention has to be given to:

a)   the management of change, leadership and strategic planning at institutional and national level;

b)   a co-operative governance of the system at all levels;

c)   the development and maintenance of a management information system for HE;

d)   better quality teaching and learning in the context of an expanded and diverse system; and

e)   the provision of administrative and infrastructural support (including a library and ICT).

Institutions concerned with launching quality assurance systems have realised that outstanding leadership breeds quality decision-making, good strategic planning, sound quality management and control mechanisms, robust quality systems, and general organisational health. These institutions have also realised that investment in infrastructure that defines the space of the HE enterprise, is an almost inevitable factor that underscores the norms and standards of what is of academic worth in the HE landscape. Regardless of the nature of HE institutions, reasonable investment in basic infrastructure, systems and resources is expected to be made by all HE and DE institutions that seek to occupy space in the HE domain and that strive to provide quality HE learning programmes to the general public (Cele, 2005: 193).

3.2.3   Factors influencing quality management

3.2.3.1   *Globalisation*

Globalisation in HE refers to multiple inter-related changes in society and in cultural and economic relations. The changes are linked to the widespread impact of the information and communications revolution, the growth of trans-national scholarly endeavours, the accelerated integration of the world economy and intense competition among nations. Against this backdrop, HE must provide quality education and training to develop the skills and innovations necessary for national

development and successful participation in the global economy (Government Gazette, 1997:9).

In addition to the above, HE has to be internally restructured to face the challenges of globalisation. This refers in particular to the breakdown of national and institutional boundaries which remove the spatial and geographical barriers to access (Government Gazette, 1997:9). The importance of boundary crossing and accessibility were discussed in Chapter 2, but here the emphasis is placed on quality management. Improving the quality of management means thinking and acting differently. In this regard, Muller, Cloete, and Badat (2001:287) say, "Think global, act local".

According to Moja (2002:4), HE has become a multi-billion dollar market as the quantity of education is increasing rapidly, and it is reported to double every five years. This is in support of what Eloff (2006) said, as reported in Chapter 1 (see section 1.1). In 1999 it was estimated that the United Sates (U.S), being the biggest provider of education services, earned $8.5 billion of the $30 billion market from this trade alone (Hayward, 2002).

The role of HE has shifted more to supporting an economy that is knowledge-intensive at global level. Changes taking place have put a lot of emphasis on the need for accountability to society beyond financial accountability, on a demand for intellectual leadership, and on a partnership that could contribute to development (Moja, 2002:5). Iglesias (2001), president of the Inter-American Development Bank, said, "The more we become integrated in the world economy, the more we are under pressure to increase our competitiveness, the more we need to have education of higher quality than we have today".

The management of BHC should certainly understand that the key feature of globalisation is increased competition. Competition has become a driving force for

innovation and entrepreneurship (Moja, 2002:6). The private sector offers some lessons on strategic partnership in order to become more competitive. BHC has shown its competitiveness through its partnerships with UNISA, UoL, LSE, NCC Education, ACP and OCR.

This brings us back to the second research question: Which methods of management are used at BHC and what are the implications for surviving the UK HE market place?

It seems that the emergence of multiple, networked, global knowledge production sites will help the HE and DE institution to survive (Moja, 2002:8). The cooperation between collaborating institutions must have an impact on the quality management of the institution.

3.2.3.2   Private HE and DE institutions

Private institutions are educational or professional bodies that offer nationally accredited courses (and often non-accredited courses), but which are neither universities nor Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges. Many private institutions were established by professional bodies such as the Securities Institute or the Association of Professional Engineers. The courses offered by private providers span the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and HE sectors. Those which offer VET courses are called Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Those providers which offer HE courses are called Registered Higher Education Providers. As universities have been forced to re-negotiate many undergraduate courses, the playing field has levelled out, encouraging new entrants, ranging from management consultancies to training colleges, to offer HE courses that are the equivalent of university courses (Hobson & Kulo, 2008).

A HE and/or DE institution is a provider of a learning environment where students can study to receive added value for the time and money spent at the institution (SAQA, 2001:19). Here, added value may be the outcome of quality management. As a provider of HE and DE, the management of BHC is challenged to position itself as a provider of quality HE and DE in the UK.

According to Ukpo (2006:40), for an institution to change its student services there has to be commitment from the government for the provision of resources and infrastructure that can support HE and DE. The South African Ministry recognizes the fact that private provision plays an important role in expanding access to HE, in particular in niche areas, through responding to labour market opportunities and student demand (Government Gazette, 1997:26). According to the National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE), there were some 150 000 learners in 1995 enrolled at private HE institutions. The tuition received at these institutions led to degrees awarded by UNISA and universities based abroad (National Commission of Higher Education [NCHE] Report, 1996:159).

Private providers of HE are critical role-players in expanding access in HE by responding to market opportunities and student demands. The gap between policy expectations and quality assurance practice that largely characterises the state of quality in the majority of private providers, can be influenced by the following factors (Cele 2005:194-195):

a) The first factor is the entrepreneurial spirit that has branded HE as a niche market for business opportunities, understanding that these institutional forms (i.e. international universities, private universities and colleges, cross-institutional partnership), informed by diverse market forces and social needs, are shaped by public imperatives, globalization, internationalization, and entrepreneurship phenomena.

b)   The second factor is the absence of a legislative framework on HE norms and standards that regulates the establishment of the new institutional forms in the HE enterprise. A portion of the HE space is occupied by private providers that has been less defined and regulated by explicit norms and standards legislation. This has led to a situation where HE today, specifically in South Africa, is characterised by severe unevenness and disparity. The two extreme sides of the continuum are the 'ivory tower' institutions on the one hand, and the informal 'vending machine' type of institutions on the other. All these institutions are struggling to assert themselves for accreditation and validation (Cele, 2005:195).

There is considerable evidence of self-examination and change among HE and DE providers, but major transformation requirements are still far from being met in many institutions. Extensive work still has to re-focus institutional missions, modernise courseware, and improve student support and cost-effective planning, so that the quality of provision and management can be enhanced (Government Gazette, 1997:27).

3.2.3.3   *Transformation of Higher Education*

We are in the midst of changing from an energy-based to a knowledge-based economy which will alter the rules of international economic competition, thrusting HE and DE institutions into roles they have not traditionally played. Two of the greatest challenges our institutions face are those of harnessing the power of digital technology, and responding to the information revolution (Hooker, 1997).

What technology will do is to exponentially transform the quality, speed, and breadth of our ability to effect the conversion of collections of facts and data into knowledge-information, and to convey it to our students and the public. Technology also gives HE and DE institutions the ability to market their products

virtually anywhere in the world. State and national boundaries will no longer define an institution's market area. Through technology the boundary is, in fact, the world (Hooker, 1997).

The focus of the curriculum and other institutional priorities should be changed by the HE and DE institution. There has to be a shift from the simple transmission of information to developing capacities that are essential to succeed in the global-based economy (Hooker, 1997). HE plays a central role in the social, cultural and economic development of modern societies (Van der Merwe, 2000). It has to lay the foundation for the development of a learning society which can stimulate, direct and mobilise the creative and intellectual energies of all people towards meeting the challenges of reconstructing and development (Government Gazette, 1997:7).

The vision of HE is laid out by the CHE (2001:5-6) and in the Government Gazette (1997:7-11), sketching the broader view of a future for all citizens. In this vision HE:

a) has to lie at the heart of social, cultural and economical transformation;

b) has to improve and sustain quality of life;

c) should meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals by means of the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives;

d) has to contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society; and

e) should foster the upgrading of professional knowledge and skills, and create flexible opportunities for life-long learning. HE teaches and trains people to fulfil specialised social functions, such as those of politicians or doctors.

Hooker (1997) predicts that knowledge will fuel prosperity and that those who can manage knowledge will enjoy a considerable advantage over those who cannot. HE, as the primary facilitator of the process by which individuals learn to use knowledge, will be even more essential for the economic success of regions, states and nations, and will become more important than ever before. However, there is no guarantee that traditional universities will be the preferred providers of HE.

In a world of certificate-based education, we risk losing what may be of the greatest value in traditional education. At risk is the quality of the lives of students who do not have the ability to make informed decisions. Another significant risk is that the current gold standard, the baccalaureate degree, may soon be devalued or may even disappear altogether. Non-traditional providers of education (i.e., BHC, UNISA, NWU, UoL and NCC Education) may begin working with employers to define desirable skills and to design educational modules in order to be able to provide them. As these partnerships emerge, the marketplace value of certificates validating the acquisition of specific skills may increase. They will signify exactly what abilities have been mastered by the holders of those certificates and what employers can expect of them (Hooker, 1997).

BHC, as an official British HE and DE institute, is constantly affected by the transformations made by the UK HO. The HO maintains an international perspective in ensuring that UK teaching and learning continues to meet the expectations of overseas students and maintains its international reputation. Due to the HO standard BHC has to constantly improve and transform its quality of management for it to survive as private HE and DE institution.

The management of BHC has to overcome the following problems, together with its niche market, affecting HE in the UK:

a)   British regulations regarding international students.

Governance arrangements reflect values regarding the distribution and exercise of authority, responsibility and accountability. Both local and international experience confirm the importance of governments working co-operatively with institutions of civil society in a spirit of partnership and mutual dependence. Therefore, the model of governance should be an interactive one (Government Gazette, 1997:35).

b)   British Home Office regulations regarding international visas.

Living in the UK is very expensive and therefore the first requirement for obtaining an international visa or study visa is proper funding. According to the UKCOSA website, the cost of living in the UK averages from £200 to £250 per week. Another inhibiting financial factor is that students have to prove their ability to pay for their studies. Overseas fees can range from £4,000 to £18,000 per year, depending on the institution, the level of the course and the type of course. The second factor to obtaining a study visa, is entry clearance to the UK, if the student is planning to stay for longer than six months (UKCOSA, 2007).

The demand of the external environment, as we have seen with the UK HO, causes rapid and radical changes in HE. The internal environment with its cultural textures also makes transformation very difficult (Hooker, 1997). Transformation is possible if quality management is practised in each HE and DE institution. According to the Government Gazette (1997:10), the transformation of the HE system and its institutions requires:

a)   Increased and extensive participation that must increase accessibility. It has to generate new curricula and flexible models of learning and teaching, including modes of delivery, to accommodate a larger and more diverse student population.

b)   Responsiveness to societal interests and needs.

c)   Cooperation and partnership in governance. Successful policy must reconceptualise the relationship between HE and the state, and stakeholders, and among institutions.

Drummond (1992:13-14) describes transformation for quality management as aiming to achieve customer satisfaction by a guarantee that basic standards are met in a particular product or service and by achieving continuous improvement in performance. The quality management and research system in countries like South Africa faces some challenges: it must address past inequalities, strengthen and diversify research capacity and it must keep abreast of the emerging global trends, especially the development of participatory and applications-driven research addressing critical national needs, which requires collaboration between knowledge producers, knowledge interpreters and knowledge managers (Government Gazette, 1997:31).

As we redefine the strengths of the physical university, we must attempt to draw connections between the experience of an on-campus living/learning opportunity and the development of social and cultural characteristics that add significant value to the graduates universities produce (Noam, 1995). National economies in the next century will have a competitive advantage in the way they develop, foster, nurture, cultivate, and deploy their brain power. Education has always been important in enabling people to live meaningful lives, but it has not previously been so essential to a nation's economic productivity and transformation (Hooker, 1997).

3.3   TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The notion of quality in teaching and learning has been a primary concern of various HE and DE institutions at different scales and levels as all institutions

began striving to brand themselves as exclusive and outstanding organizations through the quality of their products (graduates) (Cele, 2005:193). By improving the quality of teaching, the management team can respond to a change between staff and other resources. This needs to be an innovative exercise and has to adapt traditional practices in teaching methods to current student requirements.

Change and development in the international HE scene calls for a more innovative approach in the methods of teaching and management of HE and DE; these methods demand the design and management of specific organizational systems. In order to work effectively, these systems generally need to be institutionalized or at least, be based in a HE or DE unit within the institution (CHE, 2004:149).

3.3.1   Distance Education

In Chapter 1 (see section 1.5) DE was defined as education that takes place with the instructor and student being separated by space and/or time. The gap between the two can be bridged by means of technology, such as audio tapes, video-conferencing, satellite broadcasts and on-line technology, and/or more traditional delivery methods, such as the postal service (Oregon Network Education, 2006).

There are two types of distance learning, the first, synchronous distance learning, applies to situations where the lecturer and the students all meet for class at the same time, but they may be in different classrooms. Audio and video links connect the distributed learning sites, supporting cross-site discussions. Secondly, in a-synchronous learning, or different-time-different-place learning, the lecturer and the students interact from a distance and not in real time (Wang *et al.*, 2005:406).

Distance learning has evolved from an initial need to ensure equal access to education for all students (Bourdeau & Bates, 1997). A range of students studying

from a distance includes overseas students, post-graduate and research students, part-time, mature and vocational students, and those without the initial qualifications expected in HE. DE and resource-based learning are particularly appropriate for learners who are already in employment, or who need to work in order to meet study costs (Government Gazette, 1997:27).

DE and resource-based learning, based on the principles of open learning, have an important role to play in meeting the challenges to expand access, diversify the body of learners, and enhance quality in a context of resource constraints. DE enables learning to take place in different contexts, at a multiplicity of sites and at the students' own pace. In addition, the development of resource-based learning throughout the HE and DE system means that the quality and success of teaching need not be dependent on staff levels rising in tandem with increasing enrolments. DE and resource-learning approaches have huge potential for integrating lifelong-learning into the basic shape and structure of HE, and for increasing students' access to quality programmes (Government Gazette, 1997:26-27).

The DE institution has to select from a range of educational methods and technologies those that are most appropriate to the context within which it operates. In the past learning and teaching were often treated in isolation from each other, as if they were separable entities, especially in teacher training programmes. Consequently, teachers did not consciously link their teaching to specific learning tasks. Instead, they chose to use the same teaching method in all instances, rather than to vary their teaching methods according to the nature and purpose of the learning situation. A further consequence was that teachers started to emphasise the attainment of desired learning outcomes (e.g. the correct answers), rather than relevant and effective learning strategies (Monteith & Nieuwoudt, 2007:IV).

Although DE is considered an option for participation in education, contact between teachers and students and among the students themselves remain a challenge for most DE institutions. This is mainly due to the lack of resources and poor communication facilities. Despite the fact that open and distance learning has diverged by using a range of media to facilitate communication between the student and the lecturer and to make learning more interactive, some DE institutions have not been able to make the transition in its course delivery strategy. Since the course book serves as the main teaching resource, both the quality of course books and their availability are meant to impact on learning outcomes. The current situation is problematic for both tutors and students. For tutors, the lack of course books impacts negatively on their facilitative role, while students are unable to move beyond simply acquiring information or to be 'self-directed' in their learning (Ukpo, 2006:35-36).

HE by distance learning should be underpinned by principles that are generally relevant to HE. An institution intending to offer distance learning programmes should design and manage its operations in a way that applies those principles and, at the same time, takes full account of considerations specific to teaching its students at a distance (QAA, 2002). According to Kilfoil (2005:12), large, dedicated, DE providers understand best the systems that make ODL different from contact delivery (face-to-face education). It is these providers that have the expertise that allows for the creation of quality courseware, particularly blended approaches based on print. Yet, a quality management system that works for dedicated distance providers might not work as well for institutions that offer only niche courses through distance education or who use only on-line approaches as opposed to blended approaches.

Some institutions are purely DE, but many traditional universities now have DE components (Kilfoil, 2005:7). One important finding that emerged from Ukpo's (2006:39) study is that student support in DE does not mean merely putting a

bureaucracy structure in place. It means demonstrating commitment in terms of resources and effective tuition. DE is expected to produce equivalent outcomes and meet the same standards as traditional, campus-based (face-to-face education) programmes. To facilitate such outcomes the perceptions of students of the tuition they experience need to be considered (Ortiz-Rodriguez, Telg, Irani, Roberts & Rhoads, 2005). In addition, the influence of previous academic achievement on student attrition should also be taken note of (Roller, 1999).

3.3.2 Face-to-face education

Face-to-face education provides a daily or weekly contact session between educator and student. This method of education is also known as the traditional (conventional) classroom situation where the lecturer is face-to-face with the students (Fouché, 1999:1). Direct, face-to-face interaction with students has been found to be one of the more effective strategies for improving teaching and learning. The main approach to teaching a module is the modified lecture. Within the lecture there are exercises focusing on the development of specific teaching skills, where contact sessions are managed by the lecturer and study groups (Duffy, Gilbert, Kennedy & Kwong, 2002:74).

The educational service with the greatest potential for supporting students, particularly in its cognitive and affective functions, is the tutorial or face-to-face contact arrangements at study centres. Besides bridging the 'loneliness' gap between students and course writers, a space for interaction in groups is provided by this form of contact, as suggested by Ryan (2001). If properly managed this contact could pro-actively address the issue of student attrition (Ukpo, 2006:36-37). Ukpo (2006) summarizes the benefits of face-to-face contact as:

a) Students are impressed with regular sessions during the weekends and vacations.

b) Class times are convenient for students.

c) Contact sessions are seen as essential for understanding the coursework.

d) Tutors encourage group interaction during contact sessions.

e) The course workload is not too much for students to undertake.

f) Feedback on assignments is considered helpful.

Developing a face-to-face programme at an institution ought to improve the knowledge and skills of students. This method of education or teaching is reliant on interactions which build group cohesion as a safe haven to learning (Session Guide, 2006). Duffy *et al.* (2002:80) found that the increased contact that students have with their teacher/lecturer, due to both the means of delivery of their course and their class size, leads to increased scores in assignments.

According to Duffy *et al.,* (2002:72) face-to-face (classroom based) education leads to better academic performance than DE, as indicated by examination results. Face-to-face education does not seem to promote a high level of student participation, but it brings about more student satisfaction than DE. Students value face-to-face contact and criticise the late production/distribution of course materials and late release of results which are characteristic of DE (Ukpo, 2006:40). This indicates the important influence of both the students and the institution for academic performance. Students have to attend their contact sessions, and the institution must deliver the best possible tuition to its students for face-to-face education to be successful.

3.3.3   Innovative approaches

We know that no two learning styles are exactly the same and that no two students learn at the same pace. In addition, we know that individual students have varying levels of attention and different degrees of motivation from day to day. This is something that should be kept in mind by the management team when they plan on a teaching method that is effective for teaching at an institution. An appropriate fusion of technology and pedagogy offers the opportunity to overcome the negative effects of both (Hooker, 1997).

We hypothesized that a college's relationship with the community from which it draws its students reflects the importance it places on recognising students' external lives and identities, and in making connections between them and the educational experience (Shaw & London, 2005:9). Only a multi-faceted approach can provide a sound foundation for knowledge, and academic, social and personal skills. The creation of a culture of respect, support and challenge may lead to the development of an individual's self-confidence (Government Gazette, 1997:23).

Research done by Wang *et al.* (2005:411) suggests that there should be a new approach in teaching methodologies, one where there is a blend of conventional and open learning, called 'blended learning'. A conventional, structured teaching-learning environment is where teachers provide the students with background knowledge and the principles needed to solve problems, and in which the expectations of students are clearly defined. The open-learning environment, which provides less in the way of formal instruction, often requires of students to explore issues by themselves, with the teacher providing guidance only when required.

Lifelong learning is more market orientated, creating competition between educational providers (DE or face-to-face) for students. In contrast to what was

seen from Ukpo's (2006) research, Duffy *et al.* (2002:80) compared the average marks obtained by those students undertaking a degree by DE and those undertaking it by face-to-face education. They found that the DE students and face-to-face students overall generally obtained the same grades. It therefore seems that the academic success at HE or DE institutions is significantly dependent on the effort, motivation and drive of the students enrolling at these institutions.

Regarding blended learning, Wang *et al.* (2005:419), noted that the students enjoy the support of many lecturers, a broad range of topics, teamwork and the learning that occurs through teamwork. The students, furthermore, indicated great satisfaction with regards to working and socially interacting with students from other universities, which facilitated team collaboration and the in-depth research on specific topics.

Cross-collaboration between faculties or institutions in a blended learning approach requires much dialogue (see section 2.2.3 on cooperation). Dialogue, which is important in a distance teaching-learning process, is also crucial among teachers themselves, hence the need for peer group activities (Ukpo, 2006:40). It is believed that collaboration increases productivity, maintains motivation and stimulates creativity and risk-taking. Collaboration can maximize the use of limited resources and enhance the quality of teaching and research (Austin & Baldwin, 1992:1).

Innovative approaches often make use of tutors. However, the findings of Ukpo (2006:38) indicate that if the pass rates at some HE and DE institutions are low lit may be because course tutors are unable to provide the cognitive support necessary to impact on learning. His findings further indicate that tutors are often enthusiastic in performing their duties, as demonstrated by the quick assignment turn-around time. Although they are prepared to give the best support they can, they are sometimes inadequately supported in terms of the teaching materials

available to them, poor opportunities for staff development, the quality of supervision they receive and the poor and irregular remuneration for their job. This description may very well suit the circumstances of a private institution such as BHC.

Another innovative approach to teaching methodologies is the programme-based approach. This approach focuses on planning and development, ensuring greater articulation between the different sectors of the HE system. It also promotes flexibility and diversity in the range of the programmes offered, and fosters co-operation between institutions. The programme-based approach results in structural changes and a reconfiguration of the institutional landscape in the medium- to long-term. According to the Government Gazette (1997:17-24), a programme-based approach in HE and DE

a)   recognises that education takes place in a multiplicity of institutions and sites of learning, using a variety of methods, and attracting an increasingly diverse body of students;

b)   promotes diversification of the access, curriculum and qualification structure, encouraging an open and flexible system based on credit accumulation and multiple entry and exit points for learners; and

c)   promotes the development of a flexible learning system, a range of DE and face-to-face delivery mechanisms and support systems, using appropriate, cost-effective combinations of resource-based learning and teaching technologies.

An innovative approach of BHC is its attempt to apply a teaching method via three forms of course delivery:

a) on-campus delivery, in face-to-face form;

b) supported distance learning using network learning, with fortnightly face-to-face contact sessions; and

c) supported distance learning using network learning, with no face-to-face contact.

By means of this varied delivery method of tuition BHC is maximizing the options for students enrolling at the college. This teaching method may increase the students' motivation and drive towards their degree, knowing that they have the freedom of choosing whichever teaching method they prefer.

Being innovative means the successful exploitation of new ideas or the process of making improvements by introducing something new (Wikipedia, 2001). Whether introducing a multi-faced approach, a 'blended learning' approach or a programme-based approach, it depends on the management team who is embarking on something new and unique for its students.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The management of a HE and DE institution in the UK with a South African niche market is the research topic for this dissertation. Quality control, which was the focus of Chapter 3 was divided into quality management and teaching methodology.

Quality *management* was discussed by exploiting quality control, investment in infrastructure and factors influencing quality management. Quality *control* was assessed against the standards and accountability of HE and DE institutions to external quality assessors, which in the case of BHC is the BAC. One of the aims of external assessment is to determine the quality of the infrastructure at an

institution. Many different factors influence quality management at an educational institution. In this chapter the emphasis was on globalization (being a private institution), and transformation in HE.

The second main focus in this chapter was on the different types of teaching methodologies practiced at HE and DE institutions. Cele (2005:193) mentioned that the notion of quality in teaching and learning has been a primary concern of various HE and DE institutions at different scales and levels. Whatever the teaching method (DE, face-to-face or an innovative approach), it should always aim to increase the students' motivation and drive towards their degree, knowing that they have the freedom to choose the teaching method they prefer.

The following chapter (Chapter 4) will outline the research design. The qualitative design will be characterised by an in-depth study which is context bound, in order to understand and describe the educational phenomenon of managing a British institution with a mainly South African niche market.

Chapter 4

Research Design

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a description of the research design will be given. A research design provides the blueprint that gives direction to the research project. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project (sample and methods) work together to try to address the central research question (Trochim, 2006).

The central research question in this research is, what are the perspectives of the management team on various managerial strategies in managing a British college with a South African niche market?

To answer this question, this chapter will present an explanation of all aspects of the research design namely, ethical measures, trustworthiness, data collection and data processing.

4.2 AIMS

Currently BHC is the only HE institute in the UK with a rich South African influence. The research aimed at recognising and discovering the perspectives of the management team of BHC and integrating these perspectives with various managerial strategies. In this respect, the value of cross-institutional collaboration and quality control in HE will be highlighted, as Gibson (1998:141) indicated in Chapter 1.

This research also intended to identify innovative approaches (if any) in the methods of teaching and management at BHC and what the implications were for surviving in the UK HE market place, and to understand to what extent the management team maintained the institution. It is hoped that the data collected by means of this research may generate new insights and understanding on how to manage a HE and/or DE institution in such a way that it remains competitive.

4.3   RESEARCH DESIGN

This research employed a qualitative design which was characterised by the way the in-depth study was context-bound, to understand and describe the educational phenomenon of the management of a HE institution (Campbell, 1996; Coolican, 1999:450-451). This is called 'field research' since it was conducted in the natural setting of the participant (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam (1998:18), the design should also be emergent, evolving and flexible.

In this research a phenomenological case study design was used. McMillan and Schumacher (1997) indicate that such a design focuses on the phenomenon that the researcher selects to understand in-depth regardless of the number of sites, participants, or documents involved in the study. According to Henning (2004), phenomenology implies that participants sketch their experiences in their own words by means of reflective interviews. An interview schedule was used (see section 4.4.3.3) in this study. This schedule focused on two themes in particular, namely *management* and teaching *methodologies*, used at the relevant institution.

4.4   RESEARCH METHODS

4.4.1   Ethical measures

In qualitative research, the relationship with participants is on-going and evolves over time. Principles of ethical behaviour include the protection of the identities of informants with special attention to the sharing of sensitive information. In addition, researchers have to take care to treat their participants with respect and seek their co-operation (Campbell, 1996). The ethical considerations that directed this research project were influenced by the ethical guidelines presented by Coolican (1999:474-485) and Smit (2001:82), as follows:

a)   Informed consent

It was necessary and polite to obtain the permission from the authorities at BHC before the researcher conducted any of the interviews (see appendix A).

The researcher is not to withhold information regarding the procedures from participants. For example, all the participants were timeously informed of all the procedures of the interview and how the data would be used, namely for the completion of a dissertation.

b)   Publication and access to data

Each participant should have access to the interview data; it was therefore imperative to give a true reflection of what was said during the interview.

c)   Confidentiality and privacy

There is a pragmatic argument for guaranteeing the anonymity of participants at all times. Where a procedure is potentially intimate, embarrassing or sensitive, the participants would be reminded of their

right to withhold information or participation. This notification was given to all participants via a letter of informed consent.

d) Deception

The withholding of information may seem fairly innocuous but it can have serious consequences. For this reason deception was not part of the research.

e) The right to non-participation

Participants were given sufficient information on the likely level of discomfort. They were reminded of their right to withdraw at any point in the procedure and for any reason.

f) Intervention

This research may have the potential to alter the participants' views and broaden their perspectives beyond the specific research setting. It was hoped that the interviews would be a positive experience for the participants.

g) Preconceived ideas

The researcher actively sought to be aware of any biases and preconceived ideas, since assumptions may have blinded the evidence of the data.

4.4.2   Measures to ensure trustworthiness

As indicated in section 1.6.2, to portray a true and reliable set of results the researcher made use of the Guba model of trustworthiness (Poggenpoel, 1998:334-353). Within this Guba model four strategies are proposed to ensure trustworthiness:

1   Describe the phenomenon as accurately as possible to reflect the true value of the research results and thereby increase their credibility.

2   Demonstrate that the findings are applicable and transferable to other academic backgrounds. Comparability exposes the research design to other researchers and could serve to guide them in other fields of study.

3   Be consistent throughout the research process to increase dependability.

4   Research results should be the sole representation of the informant, without bias and confirmable, not the subjective interpretation of the researcher.

The following tactics were applied to ward off research biases (Schumacher & McMillan, 1992:391-392):

a)   A lengthy data collection period.
      The research was conducted over a period of 36 months (2006-2008). This gave the researcher the opportunity for continual data analysis and comparison to refine ideas.

b)   Field research
      Observations and interviews were conducted in natural settings that reflected the reality of life experiences more accurately than do converted or laboratory settings. For this reason most of the interviews were conducted on the premises of BHC.

c)   Disciplined subjectivity
      This refers to researcher self-monitoring which submits all phases of the research process to continuous and rigorous questioning and re-evaluation. The researcher wrote down his biases about the topic before starting the research.   He also monitored observations and records for evidence of

personal bias or prejudice to increase reliability trustworthiness (Key,1997). The study supervisor and typist all played a role in ensuring the quality and trustworthiness of the research. They also checked for bias. The procedures implemented during the study and the decisions made were critically reviewed allowing for a positive knowledge-building cycle (Golafshani, 2003).

d)   Verbatim accounts

Verbatim accounts of conversations, transcripts, and direct quotes from documents are highly valued as data. It is for this reason that the researcher presented extensive direct quotations from the data to illustrate the convictions of the participants.

e)   Low-inference descriptors

Concrete, precise descriptions from field-notes and interview-elaborations are hallmarks of qualitative research and the principle method for establishing reliability of patterns found in the data. Low-inference means that the descriptions are almost literal and any important terms are those used and understood by the participants.

f)   Mechanically recorded data

A Jet Flash (memory stick) recorder was used to record the interviews. This technology made it possible to record the interviews and save the data in a folder on the computer. A typist took down notes during the interviews, which also increased reliability. (See Appendix C for an example of an interview transcript.)

g)   Participant researcher

Many researchers obtain the aid of an informant to corroborate what has been observed and recorded, to give interpretations of the meanings of the

participants, and explanations of the processes. The researcher's supervisor to a large extent played this role.

h)   Negative cases or discrepant data

The researcher actively searched for negative cases or discrepant data. A negative case is a situation, social scene, or participant's views that contradict the emerging pattern of meanings. Discrepant data presents a variant to the emerging pattern.

4.4.3   Data collection

4.4.3.1   Sample

This study qualitatively concentrated on obtaining the perspectives of the management team and staff at BHC on important issues in managing a HE institution, such as quality control and teaching methodology. To this end, purposeful sampling was used to select a small group of information-rich participants at BHC. The importance of this procedure is that a few cases studied in-depth yield many insights on the topic. This means the researcher carefully handpicked the participants who would be most able to give him the information about the phenomenon under investigation (Polit & Hungler, 1999:284). As the researcher gained more insight into the phenomenon which was investigated, he redefined sampling on an on-going basis. Thus, data collection and sampling methods were emergent (Polit & Hungler 1999:284). Data collection continued until a saturation point was reached. In the end, the participants in this research were the management team and staff of BHC who included the managing director, treasurer, administrator and lecturers. Eight interviewees participated.

4.4.3.2   The researcher as instrument

In qualitative research, the researcher is not detached from the study but becomes immersed in the situation and the phenomenon being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:13). In this research the researcher assumed an interactive social role in which he recorded observations and interviewed participants. Thus, the data were collected by a person in contrast to an instrument such as a questionnaire.

The type of observation the researcher fulfilled was that of a passive participant as he assumed the role of bystander or spectator (Key, 1997). The only interaction that took place during the interview was between the interviewer and the interviewee.

The researcher was the main data collection instrument. This called for disciplined subjectivity and reflexivity. That is, critical self-examination throughout the entire research process (see section 4.4.2). The very subjectivity of the qualitative method leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approach and information. It is very difficult to prevent or detect researcher-induced bias (Key, 1997).

4.4.3.3   Data collection method

The purpose of qualitative research is the understanding of the social phenomenon from the participants' frame of reference (Smit,2001:65). Marshall and Rossman (1995) provided a comprehensive list of data collection methods along with their relative strengths and weaknesses. The primary data collection methods used in this research were semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Interviews allowed the researcher to obtain large amounts of expansive and contextual data quickly, but such data are open to misinterpretation (Campbell, 1996). The interviews aimed to have a natural conversational flow between the interviewee and the interviewer to make the interviewee feel confident and relaxed when answering the questions (Merriam, 1991:18). It is for this reason that most of the interviews were conducted on the premises of BHC. By using semi-structured interviews as data collection method sufficient data supporting the research could be collected (Smith 1995; Vital & Jansen 2001:21). Interviews were conducted over a period of two months.

Interviews are language intense. Researchers have been able to capture natural language or speech by means of both video and audio tapes. Many details, both verbal and non-verbal, are preserved in this way. More recently, rapid data entry at a website has been enhanced by the use of laptop computers, that was also used in this research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Computers can facilitate the account of progress in field-work and point out gaps in the data. Field-notes and journal entries may be recorded more systematically. Reflection becomes an integral part of data collection as interviews are transcribed into text files. The preliminary analysis actually begins during data collection (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

During the briefing the researcher gave the interviewees the assurance of their anonymity and of confidentiality. It was also necessary to ask their permission to use a voice recorder during the interview (see 4.4.1). A spare set of batteries was available as a backup as some of the interviews were quite lengthy (between one and a half and two hours long).

Each interviewee received an interview guide. This document explained the aim and rationale of the research, as well as the different themes and questions. Before each interview some time was spent going through the interview guide with

every interviewee. This hopefully set the interviewee at ease and served as guidance throughout the interview.

As regards the interview guide, it is advisable to have as few as possible questions or themes in a qualitative approach (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). There is always the risk of making the interview superficial and subjective.

Six questions focused on the two themes. These topics were derived from the literature as discussed in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (see Appendix B). Follow-up questions were asked and the researcher probed the answers to gain some depth in participants' views on the influence of the particular theme (Creswell, in Poggenpoel, 1998). Additional data were gathered by means of open-ended questions, that provided the possibility of presenting findings with direct quotations (Key, 1997).

The interview guide was as follows:

Theme A: Management
   A1.   How is your college, with the focus on a South African niche market, managed with regards to quality control, and institutional growth and progress?
   A2.   What are the perspectives of the management team on various managerial strategies in managing a British college with a South African niche market? What are the implications for surviving the UK HE market?
   A3.   Which factors may influence the maintenance of BHC, and what are their effects?
   A4.   According to your experience, what may influence quality management at a HE and DE institution?

Theme B: Teaching methodologies

    B1.   Which methods of teaching are practised at BHC, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of these methods?

    B2.   Are there any innovative approaches regarding teaching and learning that makes BHC unique in the HE and DE sector?

Data collection continued until the data were saturated. That meant that data collection continued until there were no new information; everything had been said. When in-depth interviews are conducted, saturation point is normally reached after about eight participants have been interviewed (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997), which was the case in this study.

4.4.4   Data processing

Data processing is any process that converts data into information or knowledge. This process manipulates raw data into information and is most useful and actually informative when well presented (Wikipedia, 2001). Analysing and processing data which means to make sense of and interpret the data are important acts in the research process (Dey, 1993).

The research data were analysed and processed according to the bottoms-up strategy devised by Johnson and Christenson (2000:426-431). This strategy entails:

a)   Segmenting - dividing the data into meaningful analytical units.

b)   Coding - the identified segments of data are coded by means of category names and symbols. These categories are the building blocks of qualitative data analysis.

c) Compiling a master list - every category name developed throughout the research is put on a master list followed by symbolic codes. The codes on the master list will then be reapplied to new segments of text.

d) Inter-coder and intra-coder reliability - addressing the reliability and consistency of the appropriate codes used by double-checking it.

e) Identify relationships between categories - after the above, Spradley's summary of nine possible relationships between categories guides the researcher to determine any relationships between the categories that were identified (Johnson & Christenson, 2000:437), such as:

- Strict inclusion	- Spatial	- Cause-effect
- Rational	- Location of action	- Function
- Means-end	- Sequence	- Attribution

This analysis was done with the aid of a Microsoft Word 2007 programme. With any technology there is a potential for data to be lost due to operator error or the equipment malfunctioning (Campbell, 1996). It is for this reason that back-ups of all documentation were continuously made during the research process.

4.5   CONCLUSION

Chapter four of this dissertation elaborated on the research design. This included a case study which made use of the phenomenological method. It involved a qualitative research approach.

In the next chapter the findings, and a discussion of the findings, will be presented.

Chapter 5

Research Results

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the comments and views of eight interviewees, interviewed over a period of two months. The interviews focused of the main research question which is, what are the perspectives of the management team on various managerial strategies in managing a British HE institution with a mainly South African niche market? In discussing the results the focus will be on two main themes (management and teaching methodologies) and on eight different categories, to answer the main research question (see Appendix B and Chapter 4, section 4.4.3.3).

5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.2.1 Theme 1: Management

5.2.1.1 Institutional growth and progress

According to the participants, the growth factor at BHC depended on the number of student enrolments. BHC, being a private college, does not receive any grants from the UK Government for educational purposes. Therefore, it was important for BHC to maintain a constant number of enrolments each month to ensure the minimum financial resources to manage the college as a business. This issue was addressed in section 2.2.2.

A participant identified BHC as a college managed *by* South Africans *for* South Africans, stating:

> "There are many private educational institutions in the UK, or colleges owned by a specific nationality. For example, a college managed by Pakistanis will by large, focus their niche market on Pakistani students. The South Korean college … where the bulk of the students tend to be South Korean. It is for the same reason that the majority of the students at BHC will be South African".

He summed it up as, "...natural growth which takes place because of the fact that BHC operates in a niche market; it is option-driven growth for the South African market."

BHC management looked at the market and realised that with the current developments as they are in South Africa (academically and socio-politically) a significant number of South Africans were looking at alternatives. They wanted to establish themselves in another country. The UK was by far the most popular destination for South Africans, and this fact had great potential for growth and progress for BHC, in particular because it was situated in London and managed primarily by South Africans.

According to one participant, three aspects influence growth and progress. Firstly, the requirements of some companies that applicants need degrees. BHC was not awarding its own degrees but was an institution that functions as a training college only for external institutions, namely UNISA, NWU and the University of Greenwich. Secondly, students start their courses with certain expectations. At BHC, a student can obtain an international qualification at a South African college which, according to participants, was an advantage. The third aspect focused on what BHC's vision would be for the future, for example, would they make provision for students to do a practical year somewhere else, or to obtain at least six

months' practical experience in most of their courses?   It would benefit BHC to "...make the students industry wise to keep them up to date, with examples of the current industry," a participant stated.

As a marketing strategy, UK HO invited people from anywhere on an international graduate scheme. This scheme implied that students could be granted a work visa after graduation.   Young South Africans could now study at BHC, achieve a UK degree, and then immediately get a 12 month work permit.   This was due to be extended into a 24 month work permit. The students could then receive a highly skilled migrant visa, which provided them with a five year work permit. It could eventuate in permanent residency and a passport. Thus, the UK HO was ensuring a qualified workforce in the UK. For the international student it opened a door to obtain an international degree and very valuable experience. London is a big and multi-cultural city, where the students can gain life experience from a vast number of cultures. It gives students the ability to move around.   However, the risk is that BHC may be trading in a diminishing market due to stricter HO regulations that could affect the number of enrolments.   The management of BHC needs to look at internationalising the college even more.   This situation can be compared to the challenges identified by various authors, as indicated in section 2.2.4.

Another marketing strategy, according to the participants, is 'by word of mouth'. This strategy is one of the main thrusts behind new enrolments. Students are inclined to refer their friends to the college.   Two participants pointed out that it was, therefore, very important to guarantee quality service and qualifications.   This would ensure that the students advertise the college in a positive manner.

 One participant stated:

> "Enrolments are basically, as far as we are concerned, the outcome of our marketing campaign.   Positive feedback from our student body will lead to

sustainability and growth at BHC. The reality is that if we don't enrol, there's no business, which could potentially lead to cash-flow problems."

Another interviewee confirmed that the number of student enrolments would increase, together with an increase in quality, but could be affected by limited resources.

In line with the above, the participants indicated that one aspect that influences the number of enrolments is academic results. Good academic results are important as a marketing strategy. That is why BHC has academic excellence as one of its key policies. Management knows that if the students perform well others would become interested in BHC. One stated that the progress made by BHC was related to the number of students that actually achieved high academic recognition from the various institutions. He was very proud of the one student being awarded the 'Global Best Achiever'. This award was for the International Advanced Diploma in Business Administration, and it was awarded to a student of 60 years! Participants agreed that BHC should constantly work on improvement. If they do not improve (progress) they would not be recognised and would not be able to compete with the other universities. One respondent declared, "In order to progress and grow, you need to offer a service of good enough quality so that more people (students) would want to join in."

Another strategy to increase the number of enrolments was to organise mini-seminars for international students on the opportunities to study and live in the UK.

One interviewee stated:

"The management of BHC should know the needs of their market; BHC should, for this reason, sell courses that attract international students, for example, the many different courses offered by UNISA."

5.2.1.2   Maintenance

Sustainability is also influenced by enrolments. Participants pointed out that BHC is effectively a business with the students as clients. They need to become even leaner in terms of overhead structures, for example cost management. "Cost management is a very critical factor of sustainability and maintaining the college and actually growing the college", one explained.

Quality is important for maintenance. There is no way that BHC can maintain or build relationships with its clients if the college does not meet the set quality standards. It is therefore necessary to maintain a positive attitude, and to ensure that BHC provides a good quality of service to its clients.

In this regard, one participant stated:

> "Maintenance comes back to quality, to maintain a high quality service. To maintain quality service we need to provide regular development courses for the lecturing staff, to ensure that they manage their time and course effectively. It will be strategic and wise to train the management staff to handle crisis situations and specifically, to maintain and enforce policies. It is for this reason that management should work closely with its collaborating universities to learn from each other, and in handling crisis situations."

An interviewee pointed out that it is important to maintain staff relationships and that they should work together as a team. There has to be synergy in the team. One participant said that staff members should work together so that they can learn from one another in order to maintain the functionality of the college, in case one of the staff members was absent. If someone on the management team is

absent it is important to ensure that the general management of the college still continued.

Administration was another maintenance factor. As far as administration is concerned, everything needs to be done well. One respondent stated, "Administrative issues are very important in the whole experience that a student has in order to excel." Other day-to-day maintenance issues which also need attention include the library, and the quality and quantity of books it contained.

The importance of effective communication was identified (see section 2.3.4). Accordingly, the participants emphasised that BHC should try to constantly improve its communication with other universities. These channels of communication should include updating policies and high qualification service standards. A strategy to achieve these high levels of service and communication is to train the staff in areas of time and quality management.

5.2.1.3   Management structure and leadership

A participant described the management structure of BHC as relatively 'flat' in the sense that BHC has a Chief Education Officer (CEO) and only a few members on the management staff. They take care of the operational and strategic responsibilities. Strategically, the CEO is mainly responsible for managing BHC but, in certain instances, the college administrator and financial director would be included in negotiations and discussions. Operationally, top management share their workload. It was seen as pro-active where members of the top management assist with one another's responsibilities in the event of some of them not being available.

According to the participants, in managing a private institute such as BHC it is important to ensure that it is competitive with other colleges -- financially and

academically – and that it remains a unique selling proposition. But it is just as important to ensure that management knows what the pitfalls are in the specific markets. Participants identified two main pitfalls: the first was the rules and regulations in reference to foreign students, specifically South African students. The second pitfall was the HO unilateral decision regarding the education market. HO attempted to get proper control over immigration by stricter roles. This, in effect, killed the market for private institutions. It killed the option for many people to student visas for BHC " … thereby ensuring that our main market, which is South African student enrolments, was removed". BHC now needs to keep in touch with the HO policy unit and set up a union for private institutions with other colleges. In this regard, one participant stated, "Leadership should provide a sense of mission. The management of BHC has to change its strategy to be able to survive in a new visa ruling".

Regarding finances, the CEO of BHC stated:

> "I got involved with BHC in 2001. As a result of the VISA situation in the UK it presented an opportunity for a South African entrepreneur to actually start BHC, the reason being that at the time during 2001, if a person on a two year working holiday did an IT course, for which he/she paid roughly £500-£600, they were allowed to stay on in the UK. Currently, in 2008, a major overhead strategy for BHC is the cost of the various courses. The average cost for an IT course in the UK is £7,500-00, but BHC can present the same course from the University of Greenwich for about £3,500".

Due to financial pressures the management of BHC had to restructure the overhead costs of the college. This had a direct effect on the lecturing staff of the college, because management made a shift from full time academic staff to contract staff. By doing this, BHC has been able to secure the services of highly qualified and competent lecturers. One such an example is the IT (Information Technology) lecturer who was qualified at the University of Harvard in America and

completed his Master's degree at Cambridge (UK). BHC would not have been able to afford this lecturer in a full-time capacity. The shift to only part-time staff had a big impact on the quality of lectures offered at the college.

Students' experience at BHC needs to be managed well. This includes the facilitation of their learning. One participant believed that if these two aspects were managed well, it would have a positive effect on students' examination results.

Leadership influences the financial situation of the college. As managing a private college was a 'business', any form of income was of interest. Participants believed that BHC needs to be marketed with companies who could refer students to NHC for studying there. Referral fees were involved: if BHC receives students referred by marketing companies, these companies would get a referral fee from BHC. The exchange rate for a referral fee was around 10% of the tuition fees for the student's first year of enrolment.

Leadership also influences the marketing of BHC. According to participants, the marketing strategy was basically to advertise to the students in Africa that BHC can provide the students with an international qualification at almost the same price as at most South African universities. Furthermore, BHC would not only provide them with a higher qualification, but also try to find them work in the UK after three years of study. An added bonus from the UK government was that once the students have completed their three years of study, they automatically receive a one year working permit. Thereafter they could apply for a highly skilled visa, because they had a degree.

Participants believed that the management team should hold regular meetings. During these management meetings all current issues could be discussed and addressed. These meetings should, therefore, not only focus on management issues but also on, for example, enrolments and marketing. A recurring topic

during these meetings has been the direct relation between marketing and enrolments.

The target market for BHC at this point in time has changed to students who actually remained in the UK and went onto other courses. BHC management has to change their marketing strategy to collaborate with UK colleges (form partnerships), and also to include Language Schools. The Language School students are enrolled for a short course where the duration of the course is one year. The course focuses on a European market of people who enter the UK and struggle with English. According to one participant, there is a huge market of students in London who are trying to obtain an internationally recognised qualification.

Participants believed that the quality of training that BHC provides and the price at which they provide it, is another unique selling proposition. Prospective students who are looking at the various colleges would hopefully find something at BHC which would attract them to enrol. According to one interviewee, internal management should focus on the ethos of management. BHC has the vision to create a tradition of academic excellence and lifelong learning, and to develop the full potential of its students. External management is, to a large extent, guided by the requirements of the institutions that it uses as service providers or with whom they collaborate.

According to the interviewees, the manner in which management guides the staff through changes is extremely important -- whether it is a change in the market requirements from different companies, or certain types of the programming language that changed. Management should prevent staff members from becoming despondent because that could reflect on the students. Therefore it is necessary to keep staff members motivated and to communicate any changes effectively and clearly. The staff should be kept up to date of the latest changes

regarding new courses or new partners. Management should include staff in all processes of change, which is in line with the views of Van der Merwe (2000).

In addition to internal communication, participants believed that external communication is also important (see section 2.3.4). Communication between BHC and other colleges would not only extend its knowledge regarding quality requirements but would also aid its market research. This would be especially helpful when BHC intends to introduce a new course.

Management, additionally, has to do with BHC's vision to improve in respect of the needs of the students and of local companies. The aim is to get BHC recognised as a HE institute providing a high quality service to students. In addition, BHC could attempt to support its international students with bursaries or student loans from a South African bank.

5.2.1.4 Quality Control

- *Collaboration and quality control*

Quality control encompasses a wide range of aspects of management, academia, public relations and marketing. According to the interviewees, it is very difficult to maintain a high service quality at a small college as BHC. BHC has been in the market for only about three years, and the college is expected to provide a service of the same standard as that of a University which has been in the market for almost 100 years. It was under these circumstances that BHC continuously has to develop itself. The collaborating universities periodically evaluate the situation. They visit the college regularly to evaluate its quality, and BHC also evaluate their quality standards. This could be seen as whole college development.

The association of BHC with legitimate UK universities, as in the case with the University of Greenwich, helps to ensure that the academic levels of BHC are acceptable according to the standards of a UK university. This means that the accredited standards are acceptable to the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) which is the quality assurance governing body for all UK universities. It is similar to a progress report where you get feedback in order for the HE and DE institution to achieve the specific benchmarks, participants pointed out. The quality targets of external agencies relate to procedures, monitoring and evaluation at BHC.

Examinations are set by the collaborating institution because BHC has only facilitative authority, meaning the authority to invigilate the process as set by the institutions. The examination and academic moderation are done by the management of BHC and by the Heads of Departments. All assignments are marked by the lecturers. Samples of marked work are sent to the Head of Department and to the Moderator of the collaborating institute for quality checks.

According to the interviewees, quality control is also influenced by the guidelines provided by the external institutions, for example with regard to academic and administrative functions. Administrative functions would be the day-to-day issues the staff handle, whereas academic functions would deal with assessment and appeals with regard to results. An Academic Head has the responsibility for the academic delivery of programmes and for quality assurance at BHC. It is also the responsibility of each Head of Department to continuously revisit the levels of quality. Interviewees emphasised that communication is therefore important, because the staff needs to know what is expected from them to maintain the quality standards.

A participant pointed out that BHC is an independent education institute and not a government funded institution. The fact that BHC is teaching 'foreign' students puts the college in a position where proper accreditation is necessary in order for

the government to acknowledge BHC as a training institution. It is for this reason that BHC was assessed by an external body for quality purposes. The British Accreditation Council (BAC) is the accreditation body in the UK who audits and accredits colleges. This assessment is done every five years with interim visits, where-after BHC has to submit annual reports as a continuous assessment. Any HE and DE institution that is not registered with the BAC before February 2009, would not be allowed to enrol any foreign students. BHC is one of the 10% institutions (40 out of 400), accredited by the BAC. (Also see section 3.2.1.1.)

BHC was not only accredited by the BAC but also by other collaborative universities. It is important that the collaborating universities ensure that their quality and standards are maintained by any institution that presents some of their courses. The double quality check is to verify the quality of the courses and that the courses presented at BHC are legitimate. These quality controls are necessary in order to award the foreign students study visas from the HO. The HO has to regulate that people coming to the UK are in fact doing what they applied for to enter the country.

- *Students*

Students have their own way of measuring quality, such as the HE environment and the marks they received.

One participant said,

> "The quality of the courses and the market place of those courses are very strategic for marketing, because we are obviously not the only college in London. Although there are a great number of colleges, none of them have such a big focus on the South African market as BHC. In the end it is still important that the courses offered to the clients are recognised internationally. Quality-wise it is about what the clients want. The greatest

advertisement at the moment comes by word of mouth of the students and therefore it will be a priority to ensure that BHC keep the students happy."

Students need to study at least 15 hours a week to receive a study visa, as determined by HO. Some students were staying on in the UK for up to four years in this way. They improve the UK workforce on graduate level. Therefore, all student visas were at the discretion of the accredited institution because when they obtain their British degrees, they qualify to work in the UK for one year. Eventually it would be graduates who dictate the economy and run the country, whether the UK or South Africa.

- *BHC staff*

From the interviews it was clear that participants believed that to maintain high standards and ensure that everything went according to plan, it is important that the members of the management team are qualified and experienced. "A high quality management team will be able to provide proper guidance and assistance, in a timely and quality fashion", one stated.

Quality control regarding academics includes that BHC needs to recruit academic staff with certain minimum academic qualifications. Visits from the University of Greenwich on quality assurance are also used to ensure the quality of lecturers. During these visits the members of the University of Greenwich would have informal discussions with lecturers, with the Heads of Departments and with the students to assess the level of quality control at the college. One participant noted, "BHC needs to make sure that it maintains an international quality service and not fall back into a South African quality service, because at the end of the day the college will still provide international qualifications."

It is the policy of BHC to assess every lecturer before they are employed in a full-time or part-time capacity. This includes assessment of each candidate's *curriculum vitae,* and the candidate him-/herself by means of an interview. They are also expected to give a demonstration lecture. By implementing this system management is trying to ensure that it employs high quality lecturing staff. Moreover, the management team continuously controls the quality of the lecturing staff after they have been employed. This is done by means of the schemes of work which are reviewed by the Academic Head. Academics are also assessed by peer lecturers and finally,   by the students. If the lecturers are under-performing according to the standards of the university, they are provided with additional notes and have to attend training courses to improve their standard of performance.

In addition to the above, quality is dependent on the morale of the staff. The management team of BHC therefore presents Time Management courses to motivate staff and to equip them to use their time efficiently. These courses improved the ability and the capability of the staff, according to interviewees.

Participants believed that constant communication between management and lecturing staff is essential to maintain quality tuition at the college. The lecturers need to give regular feedback on their experiences of courses and of students attending the courses, especifically in respect of those students who were performing badly. At this stage the Head of Department should assist with whatever problem there may be, before management took control of the matter. One participant was adamant about the communication between management and the students. HE believed that students also need to be aware of quality changes made by management, and should be part of it.

- *Courses*

The implementation of new Distance Learning courses would need substantial research before it can be introduced to the market. This is to ensure that if the new course was implemented, it would add to the quality of the curriculum presented at the college.

One interviewee mentioned,

> "We often too quickly jump in and introduce new courses, and we will at a later stage go back to the students and think about them [the students]. It has to do with the students and it is quite a difficult process to fit them into the picture if they were left out in the beginning."

When BHC was accredited for an IT degree from the University of Greenwich, the college had to complete several pages of documentation proving that it had the ability to present the course. It is furthermore important to have qualified staff with the necessary expertise to present a course and to provide good quality service. The first stage of quality assessment is documentation (see section 3.2.1.1), and the second stage includes visits from the University of Greenwich. Such a meeting would be with a board of seven people who visits the BHC for assessment. They interview all staff members, inspect the premises, interview a number of students, assess the training program, and lastly, take note of policy procedures. It is required from a university that all the lecturing staff go for training to ensure that they maintain quality of service.

- *Marketing*

Marketing is also affected by the quality control at the college. The thrust of the marketing at BHC is to ensure that it remains credible in respect of whatever

claims are made. Participants emphasised that, for this reason, the college should try its best to ensure that the minimum requirements and standards of credibility are attained.

One interviewee stated,

"The quality of academic lecturing, tuition, the 'menu' of courses and delivery should be above average. I have a philosophy which says, 'You can't sell what you don't have'. Whatever we put out to the market place needs to be credible. Quality also has a lot to do with consistency, and the manner in which the institution reaches its goals."

5.2.1.5   Collaboration

Participants saw 'collaboration' agreements as 'articulation' agreements, whether it was in the UK or outside the UK. According to one interviewee, collaboration is a constant negotiation process. The agreement between collaborating partners represents the legitimacy and credibility of a private institution. A private institution is dependent on academic standing and accreditation because the university values its market share. A participant stated, "The collaboration agreements are not cheaper by the dozen; they are very difficult to achieve." The different providers that BHC are in agreements with, are, UNISA, North West University (NWU), NCC (National Computing College), the University of Greenwich and the University of Wales. BHC also offers courses from ICS (International Correspondence Schools) and the UEL (University of East London).

In setting up collaboration, a private institution such as BHC would search for an institution that has been in the market for quite some time. The aim for the private institution would be to collaborate with a partner they can look up to and gain experience from. Such a partnership would improve the quality of service at the private institution and would influence accreditation.

Collaboration has the potential to open new doors at other UK universities (see section 2.2.2 to 2.2.4). The HO regulations regarding student visas caused a declining market for BHC. This led to BHC taking stronger steps towards collaborating with private UK educational institutions, with bigger numbers of international students outside of South Africa. It was possible for BHC to achieve this because BHC is now one of about 40 private colleges in the UK that have a direct relationship with a UK university.

One interviewee declared,

> "The BAC has been in contact with the HO, to enable us [BHC], as one of the 40 colleges in the UK, to qualify for foreign students from South Africa or elsewhere." This led to collaboration between the consulate of South Africa and the HO in the UK in order to enable BHC to continue enrolling foreign students from South Africa.

Securing collaboration agreements take a lot of time and planning. According to participants, it took BHC the better part of two years from the initial discussions to the time that the college was given permission to be acknowledged in a particular program. The reason for this was because a process of quality control was done by the collaborating institutes themselves to decide whether they would collaborate with BHC.

Interviewees pointed out that collaboration agreements enabled the college to facilitate the learning process of the students. This was the responsibility of module leaders. Thus, collaboration was not only between institutions but also between the institution and its students. It asked of the institution to communicate the results back and to investigate the level of student satisfaction. Most of these functions were normally done by the college administrator.

Participants emphasised the importance of ensuring that any relationship with collaborating partners was a very strong relationship. Proper relationships with specific people at different institutes were a big support during times when issues needed to be resolved. If you are in a situation where you do not have a strong relationship, it may be handled in an unsatisfactory way. Relationships are mostly affected by differences in culture, which could influence the way in which matters are dealt with. It is therefore important that both partners need to adapt and accommodate each other's culture. Likewise, it is important to remember that all involved in a partnership are *people*, and one needs to have open relationships with those at the other institution.

Regular contact is important in a partnership. BHC is normally visited every six months by the University of Greenwich. The sector Head as well as the lecturers of the university attend the meeting. Concerns and pitfalls in the relationship are discussed during the meeting. Recommendations are also made on the way forward.

5.2.1.6 Communication

Interviewees emphasised the fact that communication between BHC and collaborating partners is very important in maintaining the partnership. To make the communication more efficient, specific people should communicate with various institutions on specific issues. The Academic Head should take ownership to communicate with the academic contacts at the various institutions on academic issues. Administrative issues and strategic events should be communicated by the administrator or the CEO of the college. One interviewee recommended that meetings should be held via conference calls between the different parties.

In the literature review (see section 2.3.4), effective communication systems were described. According to the participants, communication with collaborating

partners includes the use of an *extra-net*. BHC has its own access to this system to communicate with, for example, the University of Greenwich. On this system BHC could get several documents to guide them towards effective teaching. A staff member can communicate with another lecturer to discuss certain concerns or improvements and quality factors within the college. Staff evaluation or staff training could also be done via this system. It presents the lecturers with the opportunity to communicate with the students by means of questionnaires where the management team can evaluate their feedback. Managers of the collaborating universities can also communicate with each other to ensure both management teams have similar goals and objectives. Finally, students need to be able to be in contact with the students of the collaborating university to build relationships, or to share library privileges.

The management of an institution cannot succeed in any venture if there is no communication between the members of the top management. Participants explained that BHC has quarterly strategic management staff meetings, where they normally go on a break-away outing. This strategic meeting is not only for the purpose of planning but also for team-building and to ensure that they work close together. This also will give them the opportunity to discuss major changes in the college and how to handle these changes.

Communication between the college management and students is extremely important. The experience of students at the college can be greatly enhanced if the communication between the college management and students are reliable and kept as an open channel. One such a reliable channel is the SRC (Student Representative Council). They can voice all their concerns, issues and needs to the management of the college. According one participant, communication should extend to all the universities, the lecturing staff and to management. This would help to maintain a high quality service and keep management up-to-date with the latest changes.

BHC has a dominant number of Afrikaans-speaking students, which at times may cause communication problems. All of BHC's e-mails, classes, resources, and lecture notes are in English. This could be a challenging factor for some students immigrating to the UK from South Africa. BHC has to maintain an English standard of communication and culture as part of their international accreditation.

In addition to the above, the college administrator explained:

> "We have had trouble in the past to relay information to students. For example, we have put information on notice boards or e-mailed it to the students. It is not an effective communication method because students don't remember to look at the notice boards or forget what they have read on e-mails. E-mails get lost in spam boxes and people change their email addresses."

His solution to this communication problem is found in a system called *Moodle* (see innovative teaching in section 5.2.2.2). This software system serves as a platform by which the college can communicate with the students by means of forums. This system also has its own calendar with events, and sections for all the different courses where lecturers leave notes, slides, relevant sources, on-line tests, and live chat sessions.

BHC is a small company with a relatively small number of staff members. This gives them the opportunity to use different methods of communicating with each other. One such a method is an open office where they may choose to work closely together in the same space. Another method is Microsoft Outlook. According to participants, this e-mail system provides the ability for task management. Staff members can also access each other's calendars. The most important function of this system is time-tabling, which indicates when lecturers are available.

5.2.2   Theme two: Teaching methodologies

5.2.2.1   Distance education and face-to-face teaching methods

The advantages and disadvantages of DE and face-to-face methods were explained in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 of the literature review.   In this research, participants agreed that DE was the most common teaching method of BHC as part of their collaboration agreement with UNISA, NWU, UEL and ICS (the world's largest DE company).   One participant said, "DE **is** more reliant on what you do yourself with your own motivation and study skills.   It is about facilitating people rather than teaching them". BHC supplies administrative and educational support in certain modules, but it is equally important that the students understand the entire process of DE. The challenge of DE is that students pay a lot of money to live in the UK and study part-time. Therefore, interviewees agreed, that the HE and DE institutions need to provide an environment which is as resourceful as possible for their studies.   Most of the distance learning material varied from on-line tutorials, and textbooks to study guides.   Normally UNISA provided study guides and video lectures while the NCC supported their students with video lectures and audio slideshows. BHC also ensures that students have access to all libraries in the UK and worldwide.

In comparison to DE, there is the face-to-face teaching method. This teaching method involves a lecturer who, in the old-fashioned style, has a lecture prepared and would be standing in front of the class to teach the students.   The students would be encouraged to participate.   One participant explained that twice a week (on Wednesdays and Thursdays), IT students sat in on lectures for about four to six hours a day. The lecturers were unable to cover all the necessary information in this time, therefore additional material was provided for students to do research on their own.   A disadvantage of this method is that students seem to have only

about 20% retention when information is merely relayed by a lecturer. The great advantage of face-to-face teaching is that the students receive personal attention. The lecturer uses examples in class and the students ask questions. This method is much quicker to communicate relevant information to the students and it focuses their attention. "Face-to-face teaching generates a valuable relationship between the lecturer and the students", one participant stated.

However, it is difficult to maintain interest in a lecture session when the class size becomes too big. The students then tend to lose interest. BHC therefore tries to keep classes to a maximum of 35 students per class. This method makes it much easier to attend to students personally and to explain something. Students find this class environment exciting and interesting, according to one participant.

Regarding teaching methods, one interviewee said,

"It is important to somehow facilitate people to get both sides of the brain working. We should stimulate the students in a fashion that they won't get tired of the one single thing that they are busy with. We have to apply creative, innovative ways of teaching so that students tend to participate more.' One of the best methods to stimulate students is by means of practical examples. We should try to use practical examples as much as possible in class."

Students should be stimulated more by combining various teaching methods. Such a blended approach could include video lectures, face-to-face teaching, tutorials, study groups and on-line tutorials. What needs to be determined is what teaching style is preferred by the students. It may be influenced by the number of modules they have enrolled for at the same time. The more management understands student preferences, the better they would be able to apply different teaching methodologies.

Other interviewees also supported the notion of blended learning. In this regard, BHC uses a variety of teaching methods.

One participant declared,

> "The blended learning module consists of roughly 50% to 60% lectures, and approximately 20% on-line research by the students themselves and the last percentage will make up one-on-one support with the tutors. The blended learning model has a retention rate of roughly 80%, compared to the retention rate of a pure lecturing (face-to-face) which could be 20% or lower."

Study groups could also be used as teaching method. However, one interviewee stated that a disadvantage of study groups is that all members in a study group do not participate to the same extent. It affects the entire synergy of the group. Personal problems often become a major focus whereby the group starts to dislike the lazy members. If study groups are not led properly, they end up as casual chat sessions where irrelevant points are discussed.

By means of a survey BHC found that many of their South African students were battling with writing assignments. BHC therefore presents additional courses in, for example, learn-to-learn, time management and a general computer course to support the students in completing their assignments.

5.2.2.2   Innovative teaching and learning methods

In section 3.3.3 of the literature review, there were referred to innovative teaching methods. In this research, interviewees explained that BHC was constantly trying to learn from its collaborating partners to improve its own service. BHC started off with a couple of lecture rooms where students were lectured on a part-time basis. Today BHC has evolved into a HE and DE institution lecturing full-time and part-

time students, and is applying different teaching methods and technologies to serve the students' needs. One such a new technology is Moodle.

One interviewee explained,

> "Moodle is a brilliant tool in the sense that lecturers post their notes onto that platform, and it can be accessed by students. If students missed something during the course of the lecture they have the opportunity to pick it up on Moodle. Everybody can access it from anywhere via the internet and students have log-in user-names which they use to access the information. Moodle is a communication mechanism between staff internally, and with students externally. It is also useful for management, and for academic and marketing meetings".

BHC is also busy developing an IT system which is an interactive website-driven interface, similar to Wikipedia. Students can submit their course-work onto the site from anywhere in the world. The lecturers provide their feedback onto this system. As an extra motivator for students their course-work can be made available for the public to read. Added bonuses to this system are that it is very easy to track down plagiarism, only the students are able to see the lecturers' comments and the students can easily update their course-work and assignments.

Discussion forums are a new and interesting method of sharing tutorials and participating in on-line chat sessions. Students from all over the world form part of the same big virtual classroom via Webcams. It is simply a matter of bringing together a number of students and providing a high quality service in a personal environment. A disadvantage of this model is that students are influenced by search engines such as Google during these chat sessions. They may easily be distracted.

During face-to-face lectures, lecturers not only use many practical examples, but also Promethean interactive whiteboards. These are touch-screen types of interactive boards, with a data projector. They give the lecturer the opportunity to use power-point slides, video projections and web casts. All of these could enhance the performance of the students because they can see, hear and write.

As an initiative of the management and lecturing staff, they arranged extra training courses relevant to the students' study courses, but not necessarily included in the course. In the education department, a remedial education course that focuses on Makaton training (sign language course) was organised. The IT department are negotiating with Q-Data, in order for students to visit the company where they can get hands-on experience in this field of study. The management team also allowed the students to participate in the development of the college management information system in support of their courses. In Business Communication the students evaluated the college's communication between the management and the students. This was an inexpensive and effective way to resolve many of the communication problems at the college.

5.3   SUMMARY

Chapter 5 of this dissertation reflected on the research results gathered from eight interviewees at BHC. The semi-structured interviews had two main themes relating to management and teaching methodologies. The aim was to obtain information in order to make recommendations for the management of the HE institution in the UK with a South African niche market.

 In the next and last chapter, Chapter 6, the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of this study will be presented.

Chapter 6

Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main research question that motivated this research is: What are the perspectives of the management team on various strategies in managing a British college with a mainly South African niche market? A secondary question focused on the methods of teaching and management used at BHC and the implications thereof for surviving the UK HE market place. In this final chapter the conclusions will be presented, recommendations will be made for managing a British HE institution with a mainly South African niche market, as well as for possible further research. The chapter will end with an identification of the limitations of this research project.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

6.2.1 Management

The literature review indicated that DE was starting to play a more important role in HE (see section 1.1). Research done by Keyter (section 1.1) supports this changing role of DE by stating that it would play an increasingly important role to make HE accessible at all levels, in all forms, to all people at every stage of their lives. The results indicated participants' notion that the success of managing a DE institution internationally is to make the enrolments, resources, lectures and the submission of assignments as viable as possible (see sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2).

More and more South Africans are looking at alternative education opportunities due to the socio-political situation in South Africa. They want to establish themselves in another country, and the UK is a popular destination. However, new regulations could make it more difficult for South Africans to obtain study visas.

The management team at BHC realized that to remain competitive, they should always have the students and their needs as their primary focus. The students are the clients of the private institution and without them there is no business. Management has to do with improvement, and attending to the needs of the students and of local companies (section 5.2.1).

In support of Hooker (see section 3.2.3.3), the greatest challenges institutions face are those of harnessing the power of digital technology and responding to the information revolution. ICT has become a necessity in the HE and DE sector. It exponentially transforms the quality, speed, and breadth of the institution's ability. It also affects the collection of facts and data which are converted into knowledge-information that should be conveyed to students and the public. The results of the survey confirmed that private institutions should be willing to adapt and transform to the modern age that HE and DE is exposed to. It is thus necessary for the institution to stay abreast of technological developments and the utility thereof in the education sector (see section 5.2.1). ICT opens new doors to HE institutions and its students in respect of accessibility, communication, collaboration and quality control.

6.2.2   Quality control

The aim of private HE and DE institutions such as BHC is to be accredited by the BAC as a HE institute providing a high quality service to the students (see section 3.2.1.1). Eloff envisaged an increase in quality services which is necessary in HE and DE to satisfy the needs of its clients (section 1.1). Referring to the results

(section 5.2.1), participants believed the vision of BHC should, firstly, be to create a tradition of academic excellence and lifelong learning, and secondly, to develop the full potential of its students.

Quality control in both countries (the UK and South Africa) is managed by government bodies, namely the CHE and the BAC, for the purpose of development, equity, equality, responsiveness, effectiveness, governance and management (see sections 1.5 and 5.2.1.4). In the case of BHC, accreditation is essential for the privilege to enrol students from South Africa. The results of the research indicated that quality control means to have in place reasonable infrastructure, resources, policies and systems that reflect and protect the integrity of the HE enterprise. Infrastructure and resources are drawn in as input to form a solid base for meaningful teaching and learning. These two aspects, infrastructure and resources, remain critical distinguishing factors that define and reflect the readiness of HE institutions to execute their higher learning mission (sections 3.2.1 and 5.2.1.4).

6.2.3   Collaboration

The aim of a private institution such as BHC is to collaborate with a partner that it can look up to and gain experience from, so as to improve the quality of the institution (section 5.2.1.4).   In support of other authors (see section 2.3.1), collaborative relationships extend and expand the capacity of the participants to accomplish objectives that could not be accomplished by any participant alone. Collaboration should enhance the quality of learning and foster the use of higher-order skills (see Gibson, in section 1.1). A co-operative partnership should be one of the primary strategies when managing a private HE and DE institution.

Cross-institutional collaboration or cooperation involves not just the decision on content and the delivery of the course, but also course evaluation and setting up

shared infrastructure (see section 2.2.3 on cooperation). This was illustrated by the relationship between the BHC and the University of Greenwich. Regular contact is important in a partnership. BHC was normally visited every six months by a number of the collaborating partners. During these visits mutual concerns and pitfalls were discussed, as well as ways to move forward collaboratively (see section 5.2.1.5).

Results also indicated collaboration within BHC. This enables staff to support the work done by others when someone is absent (see 5.2.1.5).

6.2.4 Communication

Communication between the management, staff and students of the collaborating institutions are very important. The constant communication between the different parties influences the support and atmosphere the students experience at the institution. It is necessary for staff and students to voice their concerns, their issues and needs to the management of the institution (see section 5.2.1.6 on communication). This helps to maintain a high quality service and keeps management up-to-date with any changes that are occurring.

Areas that need to be bridged in DE are mainly the lack of resources and poor communication facilities. Despite the fact that open- and distance-learning has diverged by using a range of media to facilitate communication between the students and the lecturer and to make learning more interactive, some DE institutions has not been able to make the transition in its course delivery strategy (see section 3.3.1 on DE). In respect of the results (see section 5.2.1.6), effective communication between management and the lecturing staff is essential to maintain quality tuition at the HE and DE institution.

6.2.5   Teaching methods

There exist many different types of students with different learning preferences and needs. Thus, various teaching methodologies should be used at an institution to support the full- and part-time students. It seems that students always look for different methodologies to suit their differing needs (see section 5.2.2.1). Eventually, students need support to obtain a qualification that will secure an occupation for them.

DE is a very popular learning method for mature students, taking into consideration their occupational and personal responsibilities. The responsibility of the DE institution is to regularly communicate with these students and to provide them with as much resources as possible (see section 5.2.2.1). Communication between students and the institution can be ensured by means of technology, such as audio tapes, video-conferencing, satellite broadcasts and on-line technology, as well as the more traditional delivery methods, namely the postal service (see section 1.5 and section 3.3.1). The results indicate participants' views that the use of ICT in DE is a matter of bringing together students, and providing them with a high quality of service in a personal environment (section 5.2.2.2).

There is a negative side to DE, namely that a lot of strain may be placed on the student being isolated from lectures and group support, or from personal interaction with the institution (see Pritchard & Jones, in section 1.5). Students enrolled in a DE course, especially first year students, need to realise that DE is more reliant on what they do themselves, and not on what the institution provides. A DE institution such as BHC only assists students enrolled in DE courses, and does not provide full lecturing support to them. It demands a lot in respect of personal motivation and study skills from the student to succeed in a DE course (see section 5.2.2.1).

Face-to-face education is perhaps one of the most popular study methods chosen by HE institutions and students. This method of teaching has been found to be one of the more effective strategies for improving teaching and learning. In this type of classroom environment students can sound-board (check) their knowledge with the lecturer or their peers. According to the Session Guide (see section 1.5), this method of teaching is reliant on interaction which builds group cohesion and provides a safe haven for learning. The great advantage of face-to-face teaching is that the students receive personal attention, which generates a valuable relationship between the lecturer and the students. Face-to-face teaching is a quick way of communicating relevant information to students (see section 5.2.2 and 3.3.2).

A new approach to teaching methods is necessary in the HE and DE environment. This involves a blend of conventional and open learning (Wang *et al.*, in section 3.3.3). In this teaching-learning environment lecturers provide students with background knowledge, the principles needed to solve problems, and with expectations that are clearly defined. It gives students the opportunity to explore issues by themselves, with the teacher providing guidance only when required. The blended learning module at BHC is managed by means of 50% to 60% lectures, approximately 20% on-line research and 20% one-on-one support with the tutors (see section 5.2.2.1). Using technology to interact with students at other universities brings about significant student satisfaction which facilitates team collaboration and the in-depth study of particular topics.

HE and DE institutions should be student-centred rather than institution-centred. Learning is possible in a teaching-learning situation if students are free to explore ideas, materials and resources that are readily available (see section 3.3.1). An important factor regarding the teaching of HE and DE students is the type of lecturer employed at the institution. It is not necessarily the best qualified lecturer that has the most influence on students. The lecturer who has the greatest impact

on student results is a lecturer who will apply every possible teaching method to give all kinds of students the best possible support(see section 5.2.2.2).

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 Recommendations for managing a British HE institution with a mainly South African market

- The management team of a private institution should understand that the key feature of globalisation is increased competition. Competition has become a driving force for innovation and entrepreneurship. Institutions should embrace change and respond by adopting marketing strategies for change. The emergence of multiple, networked, global knowledge production sites and competition will help HE and DE institutions to survive.

- An increase in enrolments realises a stable financial future for a private HE and DE institution. Then there are also more challenging realities, for example, the UK HO regulations regarding international students and visas which may have a negative effect on a DE institution's enrolments. Managing a South African niche market in the UK is very challenging when most of the enrolments are reliant on study visas. This external factor influences every sector of the future planning by the institution. There may be a constant flow of enrolments, or none at all. This presents a challenge for the agreements made by the South African and UK HO to exchange students. The change in the HO regulations regarding study visas led BHC into a new competitive market, namely students from European countries. European students do not need study visas. Therefore, the management of BHC can now focus on a more reliable source of income and bigger market exposure.

- HE and DE should meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals by means of the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives. This should be one of the core visions or policies in managing a British HE institution with a mainly South African niche market. Enrolment at a foreign HE institution is not an escape from socio-economic pressures in South Africa, but should lead to the transformation of an individual and a nation. This can only be done through teaching, and courses of high quality. It is therefore recommended that structures should be in place for the proper recruitment, training and monitoring of part-time and permanent staff. Such staff should be enabled to present courses and provide a good quality service. This will make the institution competitive on an international level.

- Each educational institution in the UK must be able to demonstrate to the BAC that it has a quality management system in place that includes quality management policies and procedures, as well as review mechanisms, to ensure quality teaching and learning. Without accreditation by the BAC the institution is not seen as fit to operate in the HE and DE market. Two concepts are relevant to the underlying rationale for accreditation, namely 'accountability' and 'improvement'. These two concepts should be at the core of all managerial planning.

- Evaluation of the HE institution should be done externally and internally for quality assurance purposes. Externally collaborating universities should periodically evaluate their partners to assess their quality standards. BHC evaluates their own quality standards before they are visited by the other universities or the BAC. They should continue to do this, and other HE DE institutions should follow suit.

- It is of the utmost importance that a private HE and DE institution should collaborate with a UK university. Collaboration is a constant negotiation process. The agreement between collaborating partners is necessary for the legitimacy and credibility of the private institution. The private institution is dependent on the academic standing and accreditation of the UK university because the collaborative agreement will give the private institution the same status. The following factors influence the successful co-existence of institutions: experience, cooperative development, the establishment of credit-transfer systems, shared teaching arrangements, including the creation of new overarching structures or agencies to do some or all of the above.

- Securing collaboration agreements takes a lot of time and planning. It took BHC almost two years to settle collaboration agreements and to be accredited by the BAC. A private institution should, therefore, plan in advance and start discussions with HE institutions in their fields of specialisation. This collaboration strategy will smooth out the whole accreditation process.

- Maintaining a balanced collaborative relationship between institutions is influenced by communication. Thus, regular communication between the different managements and faculties is important and should be maintained throughout the collaboration agreement.

- In addition to collaboration with other institutions, there should also be collaboration between different sections/departments within an institution. BHC connects their lecturers and students in the different faculties. When different institutions are collaborating in their different faculties it leads to higher quality lecturing standards and that, in turn, motivates students. BHC should continue to do this even when they expand and it becomes more difficult. Other private HE institutions should follow their example.

- The one factor that influences the experience of South African students and the marketing of BHC, is the nurturing of a South African culture. The leadership team should progress towards a multi-cultural ideology, where critical elements of the students' home culture and identity are recognised by the institution. The institution should make it possible for the students to affirm their cultural identities, while acknowledging their need or desire for formal education. Managing a British institution where most students are Afrikaans-speaking, may, at times, cause communication and cultural problems. It is therefore important that the management team mediates these barriers with the utmost sensitivity.

6.3.2 Recommendations for further study

The study has identified a number of issues that need further investigation:

- Institutional and faculty collaboration is important for the survival and development of HE and DE institutions. Further study could be undertaken on the effects of collaboration agreements on the growth of HE and DE institutions.

- Everyone is willing to learn from others if the operation of an organisation is based on the ethos of sharing knowledge. A culture that encourages knowledge-sharing should have trust, systems thinking, teamwork and leadership as key elements to development in the knowledge-sharing process. What needs to be investigated is how differences in the cultures of the institution affect the partnership between different HE and DE institutions.

- In the changing educational environment, information and communication technologies are enabling more established providers to re-think and re-engineer the nature of their student services. BHC is busy developing an IT

system which is an interactive website-driven interface, similar to Wikipedia. The ways in which this interactive website will influence learning in an HE and DE environment should be researched.

6.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher used semi-structured interviews as a data collection method. According to Vital & Jansen (See section 4.4.3.3 on data collection) sufficient data supporting the research could be collected using this method. This was a very relaxed method to collect data, but at times the interview was too 'loose' and open-ended. The researcher may have gathered more data if there were more topic specific questions or if the questions where structured differently. At times the researcher could not get the essence of the questions across to the interviewees. This might have confused the interviewees. They did not always focus on the question at hand and at times drifted from what was asked of them. The interviews may also have been too long for some of the interviewees. On average the interviews lasted an hour and a half to two hours. This long period of time may have affected the concentration of the interviewees.

During the process of transcribing the interviews from the audio to the typed version the researcher was limited by the fact that some of the words or sentences could not be heard, due to the poor quality of the recording. The use of sentence fillers may, however, have made the researcher guilty of subjectivity.

The fact that the study was conducted at only one private HE DE institution in the UK also means that the findings may not be useful or applicable to many other HE institutions in the UK or elsewhere. This fact is recognised.

6.5 SUMMARY

Chapter six presented an overview of the whole dissertation. The main research questions were re-stated. Conclusions were made that focused on management, quality control, collaboration, communication and teaching methods. From the findings a number of recommendations were made on how to manage a British HE DE institution with a specific niche market such as BHC. Recommendations for further research were also listed. Finally, the limitations of the study were indicated.

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- *Chapter 2: Structure and growth.*
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APPENDIX A

The Director
Blake Hall College
10-11 Dock Offices
Surrey Quays
London
SE162XU

INTERVIEWING THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF BLAKE HALL COLLEGE

1ˢᵗ April 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a student at the University of South Africa and am presently enrolled to obtain my Masters in Education Management. My dissertation is focused on the management a Higher and Distance Education institution which has the following tile: *Managing a British Higher Education institution with a mainly South African market: A case study.*

In order to complete the requirements for the dissertation, I would appreciate if I could conduct interviews with staff at your college. I will share the results of this research with you and, if you wish, I will provide feedback on the interviews that I will do for the completion of this dissertation.

Thank you very much for taking the time to consider my request.
You are welcome to contact my research supervisor, Prof. S. Schulze at
(0027) 082 4472714 (mobile), (0027) 012 429 4922 (fax) if you require more information on the M.Ed degree.

Yours faithfully,

3674-864-1

....
Anthony Smith   Student number

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

UNISA

Dissertation title:
Managing a Higher and Distance Education Institution in the United Kingdom with a South African niche market

Chapter 4

Research design
[Interview Guide]

By
Mr. Anthony Smith
3674-864-1

Supervisor
Prof. Salome Schulze

CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

As a force contributing to social and economical development, open and distance learning (ODL) is fast becoming an accepted and indispensable part of the main stream of educational systems. The growth of distance education (DE) has been stimulated in part by the interest among educators and trainers in the use of Internet-based and multimedia technologies. It is generally recognized that traditional ways of organizing education need to be reinforced by innovative methods if the fundamental right of all people to an education is to be ensured (UNESCO 2002:3). DE was opted as a means of providing flexible and cost-effective education to people irrespective of location and time available (Keyter 2002:3).

In the light of the global trends in life-long learning and the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) there is a changing occurrence regarding the role and nature of access in DE (CHE 2004:23). Research done by Keyter (2002:4) supports this changing role of DE in stating that it will increasingly be an essential factor in making education accessible at all levels, in all forms, to all people at every stage of their life.

Dr. Theuns Eloff (2006), Vice-Chancellor of the North-West University (NWU) South Africa, discussed in his opening speech at the NWU Convocation Ceremony in London that we live in a 'flat world'. A world where there are no restrictions on time, culturally diverse communities or boundaries to travel between world countries. This flat-world-initiative has a direct influence on the academic enterprise as well as the whole perspective of Higher Education (HE) especially DE. According to him we might experience an era within five to 10 years where education institutions will not be capable of maintaining the magnitude of residential students because of the realization of life-long learning. It is therefore

imperative to invest in efficient HE and DE institutions to cater for this population growth of students. According to Preece (1998:79) one of the main HE challenges in South Africa is to reconcile itself to global trends, in which HE is changing to a mass system and to diversify its student population.

Dr. Eloff envisages an increase in high quality HE and DE institutions that should be value-driven to satisfy the needs of its clients. This need for skills, values and attitudes should be provided for within the content of the academic world, as well as learning experiences provided to students (Akinsolu 2005:64). Further more, for the HE institution to be value-driven, according to Akinsolu (2005: 64-67) as well as Blunt and Cunningham (2002:135), it should be accessible to all learners and foster critical outcomes such as problem solving, teamwork, communication, and providing support to learners through learning material being easy to navigate and reader-friendly.

In this research the researcher takes a deeper look at how a HE institute with a dominantly South African influence and niche market is managed in the United Kingdom (UK). Blake Hall College (BHC) is a private college, situated in Surrey Quays (London), with 400 full-time students. The Board of Directors who initially founded BHC in 2001 identified a global trend of South African citizens moving to the UK in search of better vocational and educational opportunities. Since the inception of the college, it primarily had a South African staff component and as niche market, South African citizens living and immigrating to the UK. BHC is an official British HE and DE institute as registered with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and was accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Further and Higher Education (BAC) in October 2004. As a provider of HE and DE, the college is a delivery and assessment site where it delivers learning programmes to students and manages the assessment thereof (SAQA 2001:9).

The college offers five different course fields of which courses are respectively awarded by various international HE institutions. These course fields are:

- Education [NWU & University of South Africa (UNISA)]
- Psychology [UNISA]
- Sociology [University of London (UoL) – London
  School of Economics (LSE)]
- Business [NCC Education, CIMA, UoL – LSE]
- ICT [NCC Education, Association for Computer Professionals (ACP) and Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)]

The research is aimed at recognising the perspectives of the management team at this HE institution (BHC) and integrating these perspectives with various managerial strategies. In this respect, the value of cross-institutional collaboration and quality control in HE will be highlighted as Gibson (1998:141) indicated that, 'collaboration enhances[s] the quality of learning and foster[s] the use of higher-order skills'.

2. AIM OF THE RESEARCH

There are an increasing number of South African students moving (immigrating) from abroad and within the UK to study at quality HE and DE institutions in the UK. The reason for this occurrence may vary from life-long learning to obtaining a study visa, to prolong the student's stay in the UK. Currently BHC is one of the only HE institute in the UK with such a rich South African influence. It primarily has a South African staff component and as niche market, South African citizens living and immigrating to the UK. This research is aimed at recognising the perspectives of the management team at this HE institution (BHC) and integrating these perspectives with various managerial strategies. In this respect, the value of cross-institutional collaboration and quality control in HE will be highlighted as Gibson (1998:141) indicated that, 'collaboration enhances[s] the quality of learning and foster[s] the use of higher-order skills'.

Change and development in the international HE scene calls for a more innovative approach in the methods of teaching and management of DE; these methods demand the design and management of specific organizational systems. In order to work effectively, these systems generally need to be institutionalized or at least be based in a DE unit within the institution (CHE 2004:149). Part of the research aim is, identifying the innovative approaches in the methods of teaching and management at BHC and what the implications are for surviving the UK HE market place, to understand to what extent the management team maintains and uplift this institution. BHC is undertaking groundbreaking work, in the HE arena, in order to maximize learning opportunities to a South African market in the UK. Data collected from this research may generate new insight and understanding how to manage a HE institution in the UK with a specific niche market.

The motivation to conduct this research as an ambassador for South Africa and of education is to broaden South African HE and DE in the UK. This then should form a basis to support South Africa students in the UK who in the future will return to South Africa.

3.   PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this research is to discover those managerial factors and/or strategies that are crucial for the effective management of a HE and DE institute. I will approach this research from a Postmodernist perspective. Postmodernism has a worldview that emphasizes the existence of different worldviews and concepts of reality (Wikipedia 2001). According to postmodernism reality is a social construction by a particular group, community, or class of persons. Postmodernism is also concerned with questions relating to the organization of knowledge, it is therefore that I want to explore the world of HE and DE, and how it is managed.

It is imperative for this research to explore the phenomenon from the perspectives of the people in control of the institution (BHC).   Modernism is the ideal of the

liberal arts education. In a post-modern society, however, knowledge becomes functional - you learn things, not to know them, but to use that knowledge (Klages 2003:1). It is my belief that this research can produce significant knowledge to any HE institution with international students and/or -campuses to uplift the quality of management and thus sustain benchmarks of academic excellence.

4.   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This research will have a qualitative design which will be characterised by the way in which this in-depth study is context bound, to understand and describe the educational phenomenon (Coolican 1999:450-451). A qualitative research includes phenomenology, where according to Henning (2004) the participant sketches his/her experience best when asked to do so in his/her own words by means of reflective interviews.

4.1   Ethical measures

The research ethics in this research will be put into practise in correlation with the ethical issues discussed by Coolican (1999:474-485) and Smit (2001:82):

a)   Informed Consent

The researcher cannot withhold information on procedures from participants. For example, all participants will be informed about all procedures of the interview prior to the interview and data will be used. It is equally important to convey that this research is for the completion of a Masters in Education dissertation.

b)   Publication and access to data

All alleged results of the research should not adversely affect the participant, therefore the researcher will also exercise integrity over where it is published. Researchers should be aware of the variety of views concerning human benefits and the complex relation of education to these

views and benefits. Educational research is an ethical matter and its purpose should be the development of humanity.

c)   Confidentiality and privacy

There is a pragmatic argument for guaranteeing anonymity to participants at all times. Where a procedure is potentially intimate, embarrassing or sensitive, the participants will be clearly reminded of their right to withhold information or participation. This will be submitted to all participants via a letter of informed consent.

d)   Deception

The withholding of information may seem fairly innocuous but it can have serious consequences. For this reason deception will not be part of this research.

e)   The right to non-participation

Participants should be given sufficient information as to the likely level of discomfort. They should be reminded of their right to withdraw at any point in the procedure for any reason. The procedure should also be terminated when discomfort levels become substantially higher than anticipated. This then is used to obtain the informed consent of research participants.

f)   Intervention

This research may have the potential to alter the participant's viewpoint and broaden their perspectives beyond the specific research setting. When intervention is applied it should be a positive life influencing event.

g)   Preconceived ideas

The role of the researcher in the qualitative analysis refers particularly to awareness of bias and preconceived ideas, since assumptions may blind the evidence of the data.

5.   THEMES AND QUESTIONS

5.1   Theme A: Management

A1.   How is your college, with a focus on a South African niche market, managed with regards to: Quality Control?

Institutional growth and progress?

A2.   What are the perspectives, of the management team, on various managerial strategies in managing a British college with a South African niche market?

- Implications for surviving the UK HE market place.

A3.   Which factors may influence the maintenance of BHC, and what are their affects?

A4.   According to your experience; what may influence quality management at a HE and DE institution?

5.2   Theme B: Teaching methodologies

B1.   Which methods of teaching are practised at BHC, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of these methods?

B2.   Are there any innovative approaches regarding teaching and learning that makes BHC unique in the HE and DE sector?

6.   LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Dear……………………………………….

I want to thank you for participating in this interview and sharing your thoughts and experience. I want to assure you that your input and knowledge will bring a deeper insight in this research topic.

You are more than welcome to refer back to your comments at any time. Please be assured your comments will be held confidential as stated in the beginning of this interview guide.

With a deep appreciation,

Anthony Smith

APPENDIX C

Interviewee: Mr. B G

Interviewer: Mr. Anthony Smith

Admin Staff: Miss. Nicolene Harms

Date: 17/04/2008

Place: Surrey Quays, London, UK

Start time: 07:45 am

End time: 08:30 am

THEMES AND QUESTIONS

This is the interview with Brink Gardner. The CEO of BHC. It's the 17th of April 7:48am at the premises of BHC. The first question Brink,

5.1 Theme A: Management

A1. How is your college, with a focus on a South African niche market, managed with regards

to: Quality Control?

I've put this in brackets, but mainly. How is your college managed, with regards to Quality Control?

B:

Well, I think. To start off with, we need to state that we do have an academic head at this point in time. Or a person, who's got the responsibility for the academic delivery and the quality assurance of BHC. It's mainly through her endeavours and efforts that we are continuously revisiting our levels of quality and, clearly when on speaks about quality and, clearly when one speaks about quality, also talk about the question of: Quality in what respect? Because it's quality of management, academic quality, and most probably also, quality in terms of PR and marketing and so quality would in fact encompass a wide range of aspects than any other college.	Quality Control: Academic head or a person, who's got the responsibility for the academic delivery and the quality assurance of BHC. We are continuously revisiting our levels of quality Quality Control: Quality in what respect? Quality of management, academic quality, quality in terms of Public Relations and marketing and so quality would in fact encompass a wide range of aspects	

A: If you can take those 3 and just elaborate on each of those.

First: Academics, regarding quality control, regarding the academics and

then,   management and then

lastly,   PR.

B:

Okay, Well, I think as far as academics are concerned, maybe I think you should be a bit more specific. You know, if I say, we have quality control, regarding academics, we have certain minimum requirements that we need to meet as set out by our various suppliers. For instance, quality assurance. We will, today have a visit from the university of Greenwich on, specifically quality assurance. And as you might know, we offer a final year in BAC Honrs, in computing and they will then do the various assessments and checks ones etc, etc, etc. And with in most other things entail them having a chat to the lecturers to the Head of IT and to the students to assess the level of our quality and whether they are happy with the method of delivery. And in the end the assessment have a potential for good outcomes based results. That is as far as the academics are concerned. As far as marketing is concerned, clearly the thrust of the marketing, any marketing that's done by BHC is to ensure that it is credible and whatever claims we make in terms of BHC, we try our very best to ensure that minimum requirements, or minimum standards of credibility is in fact attained or achieved. And then the last one is management. As far as management is concerned, we have very regular managements meetings. Not merely the management team as such, but also as far as the academics concerned, as far as enrolments are concerned, or marketing is concerned, then marketing specifically, in other words, we definitely draw a line or concern between marketing on the one hand and enrolments on the other one. Enrolments is basically as far as we are concerned the outcome of our marketing campaign. And these are continuously monitored and you know, I've got a philosophy which says: "you can't sell what you ain't got." In other words, if whatever we put out to the market place,	**Quality Control:** Quality control regarding **academics**, we have certain minimum requirements that we need to meet as set out by our various suppliers. We have visits from the university of Greenwich on, specifically quality assurance. We offer a final year in BAC Honours, in computing **Quality Control:** Chat to the lecturers to the Head of IT and to the students to assess the level of our quality and whether they are happy with the method of delivery. And in the end the assessment have a potential for good outcomes based results **Marketing**, clearly the thrust of the marketing at BHC is to ensure that it is credible and whatever claims we make in terms of BHC, we try our very best to ensure that minimum requirements, standards of credibility is in fact attained or achieved.	

in terms of what BHC offers, what BHC might be, it needs to be very credible. People will find you out very quickly. If you do make claims that is not relevant.	Management: We have very regular managements meetings. Not merely the management team as such, but also as far as the academics concerned, enrolments and marketing. Marketing specifically, we definitely draw a line or concern between marketing on the one hand and enrolments on the other one. Growth: Enrolments are the outcome of our marketing campaign Quality Control: I've got a philosophy which says: "you can't sell what you ain't got." whatever we put out to the market place, needs to be very credible.	

A: The minimum standards is, the minimum standards according to BHC itself or is that external minimum standards?

B:

No, no, no. All our exams are in fact external exams. We make use of providers. Maybe to make a brief list, starting off with UNISA, as you might well know we are in a collaboration agreement with UNISA. We have been for quite some time. So the exams are external exams, and by the way, our results by a large, are in fact very good. And I think, rather exceptional. We also make use of, we also provide courses of the North West, or the NWU, and then the following providers. NCC education; they in fact supply us with Business Degree pathways, which means that we will, maybe we shouldn't go on that one for the moment. Business degree pathways, and then there is also the University of Greenwich, and the University of Wales. Where we do the final year BAC Honnors in Business Administration, and then lastly we also offer through ICS. And ICS being international correspondence	Collaboration: All our exams are in fact external exams. We make use of providers. Maybe to make a brief list, starting off with UNISA, we are in a collaboration agreement with UNISA. We also provide courses of the North West University (NWU), NCC education; they in fact supply us with Business Degree pathways,	

schools. We offer the BA Educational Psychology from the University of East London. So all the exams are external. And hence the quality control is in fact, so to speak, regulated by their requirements.	Business degree pathways, University of Greenwich, and the University of Wales. We do the final year BAC Honours in Business Administration. ICS being international correspondence schools. The BA Educational Psychology from the University of East London. So all the exams are external. Quality Control: quality control is in fact, regulated by their requirements.	

A: Thank you.

Question A2. Theme, focusing on management and this is actually my main research question. Could be a bit longish. Bit it's just to sketch some background but, the statement of the question is

A2. What are the perspectives, of the management team, on various managerial strategies in managing a British college with a South African niche market?
- Implications for surviving the UK HE market place.

Basically what I want to focus on is, the implications of surviving with this British University and as we know BHC is ....

Management, South African and the niche market is South African. But not to focus on the niche market, but the management of which might seem as a small market place, to settle yourself. Prior knowledge, knowing that collaborate with South African Universities, NWU, and UNISA as you said. Universities in the UK, but what I'm interested in here is, Different strategies, managerial strategies, whatever it might be to settle yourself with your enrolments or your niche market.

B: Just want to make clear of what I understand, and that is
You are basically asking me: How or Why? Why?

A: How?

B:

How? Maybe we should start with the Why? Just as a precursor to the How? The Why? is that it just developed in that sense before I got involved in 2001. in other words, as a result of the VISA situation in South Africa, in the UK rather.	Management: I got involved in 2001. As a result of the VISA situation in the UK presented	

It presented an opportunity to a South African entrepreneur, to actually start BHC> Reason being, that at the time 2001, if a 2year working holiday person did an IT course, for which they paid roughly £500-£600, or less, they were allowed to stay on in the UK. Supposedly studying for 15 hours a week, which very few people did, but at least in doing so getting an opportunity or be it, not quite legal to stay on for at least another year. And some people stayed on for another 2, 3, 4 years, as things developed. When we got involved, when I got involved specifically at the end of 2004. I decided that BHC is to no longer be a VISA factory, quote, and unquote. Resulting in a seeking more firm academic relationship. And as a result, the relationship with the NWU and with UNISA, was established and firmed up during the course of 2005. Out of this followed the further relationships with amongst others: University of Greenwich, University of Wales. NCC education at the time had already been established prior to me joining at the end of 2004. So, the traditional market at the time for various reasons, and it seems that this is just a tendency if a private educational institute, institution in the UK or college is owned by a Pakistani, you'll find that by large his niche market tends to be Pakistani. Which if they are South Korean, in the case of a college in Wimbledon that I know of, the bulk of the students tend to be South Korean. So it's just a – you call it a natural development, in as much as you get, the same sort of trend or tendency with people congregating in certain areas to go and live there. For instance in Earl's Court traditionally you get a lot of Aussies and Kiwi's etc. In South Field you get a lot of South Africans etc. Okay, so what then transpired was that we looked at the market and we realised that with the current developments as they are in South Africa academically, and socio-politically that the college, or a UK qualification, and more specific a UK degree, offer south Africans a certain opportunity in terms of alternatives.

And maybe I should just explain a little bit further on that one, in today, exactly a year ago, as a matter of interest, 17th of April. Is it the 17th or the 16th today?

an opportunity to a South African entrepreneur, to actually start BHC. Reason being, that at the time 2001, if a 2year working holiday person did an IT course, for which they paid roughly £500-£600, or less, they were allowed to stay on in the UK.

Quality Control

Studying for 15 hours a week, in doing so getting an opportunity, not quite legal to stay on for at least another year. And some people stayed on for another 2, 3, 4 years, as things developed.

I got involved specifically at the end of 2004. I decided that BHC is to no longer be a VISA factory, quote, and unquote

Collaboration:

Seeking more firm academic relationship the relationship with the NWU and with UNISA, was established and firmed up during the course of 2005. Further relationships with amongst others: University of Greenwich, University of Wales. NCC education

| | Growth: Private educational institute, institution in the UK or college is owned by a Pakistani, by large the niche market tends to be Pakistani, South Korean college, in example a college in Wimbledon the bulk of the students tends to be South Korean. You call it a natural development

Progress: We looked at the market and we realised that with the current developments as they are in South Africa academically, and socio-politically. The college, or a UK qualification, and more specific a UK degree, offer South Africans a certain opportunity in terms of alternatives. | |

A: 17th.

B:

| Yes, exactly a year ago, new rules were in fact given out by home office on student visas. Which said, that if a student achieved a UK qualification or a degree, specifically a degree from a UK university in the UK, he or she will be allowed onto a 12 month work permit. And this is a scheme which replaced a previous scheme which is called "The engineering and something graduate scheme". Anyway – this certainly presented opportunities to young South Africans and not so young South Africans in the sense that they could now study at BHC, achieve a UK degree, and then immediately get a 12 month work permit. Which is due to be extended into a 24 month work permit. Having said that, that in turn will give them the potential of achieving a so called highly skilled migrant visa, which will then give them a 5 year work permit. Should they then make use of this, it would eventuate in a permanent residency and a passport. | Quality Control: new rules were in fact given out by home office on student visas. If a student achieved a UK qualification or a degree, specifically a degree from a UK university in the UK, he or she will be allowed onto a 12 month work permit.

Growth: The student visas presented opportunities to young and not so young South Africans in the sense that they could now study at BHC, achieve a UK degree, and then immediately get a 12 month work permit. Which is | |

So on the one hand, there is the : let's call it the "option driven growth" from the South African market. Okay, And clearly this is something which interests a lot of people throughout the world. So it's not specifically South Africans. However, I think due to the socio-political developments in SA, there are a substantial amount of people who are looking at alternatives. Either for themselves or for their children. To establish themselves in an alternative country. The UK is by far the most popular end destination for South Africans immigrating at this point in time, in terms of numbers. So having said that, that also in itself, would then present an opportunity which means that a ... That it's a marketing opportunity. Okay, can we just hold that for a moment? Did I answer your question to your satisfaction?	due to be extended into a 24 month work permit. Growth: The potential of achieving a so called highly skilled migrant visa, which will then give them a 5 year work permit. It would eventuate in a permanent residency and a passport. "option driven growth" from the South African market. Growth: The socio-political developments in SA, there are a substantial amount of people who are looking at alternatives. To establish themselves in an alternative country. The UK is by far the most popular end destination for South Africans	

A: Yes. I just want to go back to the previous question. These 2 questions link with each other. What I want to come back to is : you said 'BHC with, is not so much, okay is, focusing on a South African niche market, but it seems to me, more a international institution than only for a South African market. So, and you said it gives us optional growth, or the institution leans towards optional growth, and I want to go back to the previous question. On the management of institutional growth and progress.

B: What do you want to know about Institutional growth and progress?

A: Basically, the previous question we spoke about, quality control, but how you do then manage, and you said; the option driven growth'.

What I want to know is, how do you manage your institutional growth and progress in this while, you can say? The word situation is not the correct word, but this whole set-up of...?

B: in this market?

A: in this market!

B: In other words: 'Where do I get my students from?'

A: Yes.

Everything, either the students, your lecturing staff, the whole growth of academically managerial point of view of BHC itself and I don't want to go back into the history. Just on -----------------------

Institutional growth and progress at BHC with in this phenomena situation of BHC with its students.

B:

Well, I think there's a sort of a natural growth which takes place because of the fact that we operate in a niche market and I mean, by far your strongest form of marketing today is Word of Mouth. So if people will be inclined to refer friends to the college. And by the same token, should staff be required at any given moment in time, it's relevantly easy because of a number of South Africans in London, should we want to find South Africans for particular reasons. That we actually find them. So from that perspective, there's a natural growth potential inherit in operating in this niche market. Having said that, there's a serious risk as well. And that risk needs to be assessed, which we do from time to time.	Growth: Natural growth which takes place because of the fact that we operate in a niche market, by far your strongest form of marketing today is Word of Mouth People will be inclined to refer friends to the college.	
Then, basically take a view. The risk being the fact that we might be trading in a diminishing market and therefore we are looking at internationalising the college more and more. We are currently looking at 2 ways of doing this. The one is to literally go to other countries working through education agents, or educational agents. And we've now been talking to people in China, we've been talking to people in Columbia, we've been talking to people in India, in Nepal, and I think that's about it for the moment. Oh, and did I say India?	There's a natural growth potential inherit in operating in this niche market. A number of South Africans in London, should we want to find South Africans for particular reasons Growth: The risk being the fact that we might be trading in a diminishing market and therefore we are looking at internationalising the college more and more. The one is to literally go to other countries working through education agents, or educational agents, talking to people in India, Nepal, China, Columbia,	

A: No you didn't

B:

Oh Okay, India is certainly one of the. That's the one thing. So in other words to minimize the effect of a potentially declining market. Now there are reasons why the South African community in London is declining and will be declining even more in future. Second: Call it hedge against the declining market is the fact that we are now looking at seeking collaboration with other UK private educational institutions with bigger numbers, bigger numbers of international students outside of SA. We can actually achieve that, because BHC as it happens is only one out of about 40 private colleges out of the 3500 in the UK that actually offers a direct relationship with a UK university. Now this is really our unique selling proposition at the moment. This is really the essence of where we are and what could potentially give us the growth that we are looking to achieve. So, as results of this, BHC can in fact go into, call it articulation agreements, with various colleges. In the UK, outside the UK. We are currently busy marketing as part of our marketing strategy to UK colleges and also to Language schools, in the UK. Traditionally, the language school people came in. Did a short course or a course for a year, and left again. There's a tendency for a very substantial percentage of those students to actually remain in the UK and go on to another course. And that is a target market for us at this point in time. The other opportunity is clearly too proactively market and also once again, more specifically on the private education market in SA. We are currently negotiating with one of the biggest private college groups in SA, with 50 campuses throughout Southern Africa. And they have students doing the so-called International Advanced Diplomas in Business and IT which would basically with a little bit of maybe one or 2 additional modules, give them entrance into our final year Degree courses for computing, and business. This of course is of decisive interest to them for 2 reasons. First of all, they have an opportunity to go out in their marketing companies in SA, promoting the opportunity, which	Growth: The South African community in London is declining and will be declining even more in future. Collaboration: The declining market is the fact that we are now looking at seeking collaboration with other UK private educational institutions with bigger numbers of international students outside of SA. We can actually achieve that, because BHC is only one out of about 40 private colleges out of the 3500 in the UK that actually offers a direct relationship with a UK university. Collaboration: Articulation agreements, with various colleges. In the UK, outside the UK. Management: BHC marketing strategy, to UK colleges and also to Language schools, the language school people do a short course or a course for a year, and left again Management: Target market for us at this point in time has changed to students that actually remain in the UK and go on to another course.	

is a falter to their students through their association with BHC. And then 2ndly, there's referral fees involved. So if we get students referred by them to us, they will get a referral fee from us. So in other words, private colleges being 'businesses' any form of income is of interest. Because there are no subsidies. And therefore, instead of just losing the student after having them completed his or her 2nd year of Business or IT, they could then refer these students to BHC and upon successful enrolment we will then give them a referral fee. This could become substantial if you consider the exchange rate. Typically this would be around 10% of the tuition fees, for their first year.	Collaboration: We are currently negotiating with one of the biggest private college groups in SA, with 50 campuses throughout Southern Africa., International Advanced Diplomas in Business and IT Management: Private colleges being 'businesses' any form of income is of interest. First of all, they have an opportunity to go out in their marketing companies in SA, promoting the opportunity, which is a falter to their students through their association with BHC. And then 2ndly, there's referral fees involved. So if we get students referred by them to us, they will get a referral fee from us. Management: The exchange rate, will be around 10% of the tuition fees, for their first year.	

A: Two things that came out of our discussion so far, the word collaboration. Now, focusing on institutional growth and progress. Does collaboration have an effect on institutional growth and progress, and how much?

B:

Well, I think if it had not been for our collaborating partners, if I may call them that, or the institutions that we have collaboration agreements with, quite frankly, I don't think we would have achieved what we've achieved up to this point in time. Because they in fact represent our legitimacy and credibility, in other words, as a private education institution, we are dependent upon their academic standing, and their perceived, should we say value, or standing in the market place? In other words, the moment that I associate, or the moment we said that we are in fact in a collaboration agreement with the UNISA, it says something about BHC. If we say we are collaborating with the university of Greenwich, and we've got a direct agreement with them, it means that we've gone through all the quality assurance processes that is required by the university. Which means that, that in itself is virtually a guarantee to our prospective foreign or international students that the academic levels of BHC is acceptable at the standards of a UK university. And that means that our accredited standards are in fact acceptable to the QAA. The quality assurance agency, which is the governing or the quality assurance governing body to all UK universities.	Collaboration: Collaborating partners; they in fact represent our legitimacy and credibility, in other words, as a private education institution, we are dependent upon their academic standing, and their perceived, should we say value, or standing in the market place Quality Control: we've got a direct agreement with them, it means that we've gone through all the quality assurance processes that is required by the university. Quality Control: If the academic levels of BHC are acceptable at the standards of a UK university, it means that our accredited standards are in fact acceptable to the QAA (quality assurance agency) which is the governing or the quality assurance governing body to all UK universities.	

A: if I understand you correct now. You are saying that collaboration is not only a, between you and whichever university or institution. Not only on financial interest, marketing benefit, student exchange, but it also brings us a little bit back to quality control, in a sense that you are accredited by the various institutions. And then to see how credible you are, for them to collaborate with you. Yeah... that brings a lot of new insight. Thank you for that. But if you want to elaborate a little bit more on accreditation, between the various institutions and BHC, and quality control?

B:

Maybe one should just start off by saying that there's no ways, that you will get accreditation from a UK university for instance; if you haven't gone through a very robust and rigid and so, quality assessment. There are from the day, for instance, in the case of Greenwich, and just bear in mind this is our only direct relationship with a UK university. That's why this will serve as the prime example. But it took us the better part of 2 years from the day that we had our first and initial discussions with them up to the time that we eventually were given the permission to virtually carry their flag on a particular program. That's about 24 months. Now the mere fact that there is only 40 private colleges in the UK, our of 3500 that I think is a very significant number, which or a significant fact, which you sort of have to incorporate in that. The mere fact is that only 40 colleges out of 3500 that have a direct relationship with a UK university. I think is a definite endorsement of the fact that collaborations are not cheaper by the dozen. In other words, it's very difficult to achieve that. And we believe that we've been exceptional fortunate in achieving that. The mere fact that we've achieved that actually started opening new doors in a sense that other UK universities are saying, and even the same universities are saying, "Well okay, if you guys are doing the job on computing, we will seriously consider giving you the right to offer the final year in business." Or alternatively, and or, a Masters and MBA. So, it's a sort of a step by step thing. Originally our relationship with UNISA and with NWU was very important in the assessment of BHC in terms of other UK educational providers. Most others, also the British accreditation council which we haven't mentioned so far. Now, talking about quality we have gone through 2 very stringent inspections by the British accreditation council. And as of February 2009, if you are not a BAC registered institution or college, you will not be allowed to enrol any foreign students. In other words, the 3500 currently operating in the UK will most probably be whittled down to no more than about 400.	Quality Control: no ways, that you will get accreditation from a UK university; if you haven't gone through a very robust and rigid, quality assessment. Collaboration: But it took us the better part of 2 years from the day that we had our first and initial discussions with them up to the time that we eventually were given the permission to virtually carry their flag on a particular program. Collaboration: The mere fact is that only 40 colleges out of 3500 that have a direct relationship with a UK university. Collaborations are not cheaper by the dozen, in other words, it's very difficult to achieve that The mere fact that we've achieved that actually started opening new doors at other UK universities. Collaboration: Originally our relationship with UNISA and with NWU was very important in the assessment of BHC in terms of other UK educational providers. Quality Control: February 2009, if you are not a BAC registered institution or college, you will not be allowed to enrol any foreign students.	

A: Wow

B:

And fortunately we are there where we find ourselves amongst the 400. In fact we are one of the 10%. Which is 40 out of 400. So	Quality Control: We are there where we find ourselves amongst the 400. In fact we are one of the 10% which is 40 out of 400 accredited at BAC.	

A: ?

B: Grace!

A: Question 3, A3, on Management.

      A3.   Which factors may influence the maintenance of BHC, and what are their effects?

B: Maintenance in what respect?

A: Maintenance... I could also use another word, infrastructure. Maintenance on academical point of view.

B: Pop your question then again.

A: I'll just say again. Which factors may influence the maintenance of BHC and what are their effects? Maintaining BHC?! Or definitely very many different aspects, keeping business...

B: Are you talking about sustainability?

A: Sustainability, yes!

B:

More than maintenance?! Okay, well as far as sustainability is concerned, the key influence here is the question of enrolments. BHC is effectively a business; with our students being our clients. And therefore, if we can succeed in continuing the current upward trend of BHC, by getting positive feedbacks from our student body, the sustainability will grow of BHC. The reality is that if we don't enrol, there's no business, full stop. Therefore, if there is a hick-up or a further downturn in the question; you call it numbers for enrolments. It would, it could potentially lead to a cash flow situation. Where the college just cannot carry on. Fortunately at this point in time, we are not there. So the one is student perception; The second one is of course; statutory changes re: student visas. And other visas, because being a South African niche market focused college, any changes to visas, whether it be students' visas as such, or whether it's the 2 year holiday visas or whether it's...	Maintenance: Sustainability is concerned about the question of enrolments. BHC is effectively a business; with our students being our clients. Growth: Positive feedbacks from our student body, the sustainability will grow of BHC. The reality is that if we don't enrol, there's no business, full stop. Growth: No enrolments it could potentially lead to a cash flow situation. Where the college just cannot carry on. Another is student perception; the second one is of course; statutory changes re: student visas.	

Yeah, primarily those two would have a direct bearing or impact on the sustainability and the future of the college.		

A: What I've heard was, that BHC being a private college, maintains itself via the numbers of enrolments. Also the numbers of enrolments are affected by the governmental changes regarding the visas. Are there any other factors influencing the ...?

B:

Well, of course yes. The fact is, an more specifically the current world economic climate has got to have an effect. Thus far it seems as if it is not going to affect us directly. But to a certain extend we are preparing ourselves for that in a sense that we need to become even leaner in turns of overhead structures. So, cost management is a very critical factor of our sustainability and maintaining the current college and not even just maintaining but actually growing the college under these circumstances. In order to do that, we need to ensure that whatever we offer, first of all in terms of the quality of academic lecturing, tuition, delivery – is above average. And secondly, we need to look at possibility of... We need to ensure that the so called 'menu' of courses that are offered at BHC represents something slightly out of the ordinary. In other words, once again, a unique selling proposition.	Maintenance: We need to become even leaner in turns of overhead structures. Cost management is a very critical factor of sustainability and maintaining the college and actually growing the college under these circumstances. Quality Control: The quality of academic lecturing, tuition, delivery – is above average. Ensure that the so called 'menu' of courses that are offered at BHC represents something slightly out of the ordinary, a unique selling proposition.	

A: Thank you.

Okay, this last question could be a little bit more – question A4 – a little bit more personal.

And this is regarding your experience and I know that you have many different ventures and many different experiences.

A4. *According to your experience; what may influence quality management at a HE and DE institution?*

A: this is not so much focused on BHC itself, but in general, what may influence quality management in the Higher Education?

B: What may influence it?

Are you talking about internal or external factors?

A: Either two. Which ever one you want to discuss.

B:

Well, I think Internal. First of all, the whole sort of Ethos on management, in other words, when I originally joined BHC and I addressed the students for the first time ever, I said to them: "At BHC we have set ourselves these goals One – to establish a tradition of academic excellence and lifelong learning, and Secondly – to develop the full potential of our students, and Thirdly – in doing so, we will create an academic institution of note." This you will find on our website on our homepage. And that in short is the Ethos and the philosophy behind BHC. Have we achieved it? Definitely not yet. Are we on our way? Certainly yes! Is it better today? Have we met these three sort of yard sticks in a more sort of acceptable way today that when I joined in 2004? Yes I certainly believed so. And the reason for that is just being borne out by the numbers of students that have actually achieved high academic recognition from the various institutions. In fact, last week, we had one of our students again, being awarded 'Global best achiever' in the second year. This is the international advanced diploma in Business Administration. That's internationally and she's only one in about 5 of our students that's actually achieved something similar. And by the way, she's 60 years old.	Management: Internal. First of all, the whole sort of Ethos on management i.e. tradition of academic excellence and lifelong learning, secondly to develop the full potential of our students. Management: Have we achieved the Ethos and the philosophy behind BHC? Definitely not yet. Are we on our way? Certainly yes! Progress: Being borne out by the numbers of students that have actually achieved high academic recognition from the various institutions. Progress: Students being awarded 'Global best achiever'. This is the international advanced diploma in Business Administration. And by the way, she's 60 years old.	

A: Sjoe...

B:

So, that is really something very, very special. And as you also know Elzette Markotter and other having studied through the university of North West, have achieved similar distinctions and I think that sort of shows you... Because when we joined in 2004, there was nothing like this. And at this particular point in time, we counted the other day, we've had about 6 very high achievers internationally on their particular on their specific courses.	Progress: Elzette Markotter and others having studied through the University of North West (NWU), have achieved similar distinctions. Because when we joined in 2004, there was nothing like this. We've had about 6 very high achievers internationally.	

A: Right, that was internal structure, regarding the influence of quality on HE and you also mentioned external structures?!

B:

Yes, well, I think as far as external is concerned – we are guided to a large extend by the requirements once again of the institutions that we use as service providers or that we collaborate with. There is no ways that we will be able to maintain that relationship if we do not meet their quality standards. So those are external standards, or external quality qualifications or control or assessments or whatever you want to call it. That has a direct bearing on our quality control in general.	Management: Externally we are guided to a large extend by the requirements of the institutions that we use as service providers or we collaborate with. Maintenance: no ways that we will be able to maintain that relationship if we do not meet their quality standards Quality Control: External standards, quality qualifications or control or assessments, that has a direct bearing on our quality control in general.

A: Right, for the last few questions, is it, could maybe be influenced by management, but it's more focused on teaching methodologies.

5.2   Theme B: Teaching methodologies
B1.   Which methods of teaching are practised at BHC, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of these methods?

B:

We've got a good mixed bag. But by large, we are working towards achieving a blended learning model as such. Which will then be in fact, utilised or then used in all the various schools that we have at this stage. The blended learning module is what typically consisted roughly 50 – 60% lecturing, and then approximately 20% of the, will be online research by the students themselves and then the last percentage will in fact acute for one on one situations with a lecturing staff and tutors. So that would be blended learning module that we striving towards. And the reason for that is clearly that it was	Teaching Methodology: The **blended learning** module is what typically consisted roughly 50 – 60% lecturing, and then approximately 20% of the, will be online research by the students themselves and then the last percentage will in fact acute for one on one situations with a lecturing staff and tutors.

found that if a blended learning model is in fact used in a particular faculty or area of study that the retention rate is roughly 80% of the material that's been studied. If it is a pure lecturing module, the retention rate is lower than 20%. In fact, I've got a sneaky feeling that it is around about 10%. Might I just add this is really in line with the UK educational system as it stands at the moment? So we are conforming to, not for the sake of conforming, but because we believe they are right. And I think scientifically it has been proved.	Retention rate is roughly 80% for the Blended learning model. If it is a pure lecturing module, the retention rate is lower than 20%.	

A: The blended learning model what you are discussing now, blended meaning, it's a mix of? And you're talking about lecturing, online research and the tutoring itself? Boiling over to B2, the last question...

B2.   Are there any innovative approaches regarding teaching and learning that makes BHC unique in the HE and DE sector?

B:

I think it would be totally unwise to say that there is something unique about us. What we do, we do imply, for instance, yesterday we had a session for over an hour with one of our Business lecturers on writing – what do you call this stuff? Assignments! Writing assignments, because we found that a lot of our South African students have been battling with it for quite some time. And that is sort of guidelines we have also in the past presented, and will very shortly in future again offer a learn to learn program to support our students. And of course, we've got a very interesting online tool, which is called MOODLE and MOODLE is a brilliant tool in a sense that lecturers post their notes on to that platform, and it could be accessed by students after the lecture. Once they have listened, so for whatever reason they've missed something during the course of that lecture they will have the opportunity to pick it up on MOODLE> We also put anything pertaining to students Business onto MODLE and that is the first thing that opens up once a student, with his specific pin number gets access	Teaching Methodology: Shortly in future again offer a learn-to-learn-program to support our students. **MOODLE** is a brilliant tool in a sense that lecturers post their notes on to that platform, and it could be accessed by students. If students missed something during the course of that lecture they will have the opportunity to pick it up on MOODLE.	

to the PC. And immediately he or she can take up on that and see what's happening. Okay, which has become a very valuable, an invaluable tool in order to support our students on a blended learning model. And I think that's really what the question is all about.		

A: Yes.

Can you elaborate a little bit more? We have discussed the benefits, but are there any negatives or disadvantages to the blended learning moodle?

B:

I'm not really an academic, so I can't tell you off hand. But up to this particular point in time, we haven't sort of, identified any specific negatives. What we have tend to try and secure is that we appoint lecturers and I might just add there's something that did not come up in terms of quality. But as a result of having made a shift from Full time academic staff to contract academic staff, we've in fact been able to secure services of very highly qualified and competent lecturers. Especially in business and IT. For instance, our senior lecturer in IT holds an identical position in Portsmouth. He is a guy that qualified at the University of Harvard in America. He did his Masters at Cambridge, and we would never be able to afford that person Full Time, but because of the opportunities offered by FT academic situations in the UK he has the time available and he is allowed legally to spend his time at a college as BHC. So that has also a very positive effect, because he brings all his university experience into BHC and likewise we have a situation with the person who is responsible for most of the business lecturing and the head of IT was a lecturer at the university of Stellenbosch for the better part of 7 years. So she comes out of the academic world. So she's qualified and trained and previously we had a situation where we took people with Degrees who'd not necessarily had the right, should we say approach, for academia. In other words, they were qualified and they were competent, but they did not have the right sort of; they were not passionate academics. Let's put it that way. And as a result of that shift in the approach, we were able	Management: But as a result of having made a shift from Full time academic staff to contract academic staff, we've in fact been able to secure services of very highly qualified and competent lecturers. Especially in business and IT. The IT lecturer is qualified at the University of Harvard in America. He did his Masters at Cambridge, and we would never be able to afford that person Full Time, Quality Control: he brings all his university experience into BHC Management: Full time lecturers were qualified and they were competent, but they were not passionate academics. As a result of that shift in the approach full time staff to part time staff, we were able to secure the service of very, very high quality academic staff which again had a spin-off on our students.	

| to secure the service of very, very high quality academic staff which again had a spin-off on our students. An instance that come to mind, is where we had a particular course where we had very highly qualified lecturer in place with a Masters Degree and when the results came out, it was absolutely disastrous. And when we took the same group of people and we had them do research on the subjects they did not achieved a pass on, they all came out with anything between a very good pass and a first class. | | |

A: thank you Brink.

The interview ended at 8:30am. Which concludes the interview on the whole research issue of Managing a HE and DE institution in the UK with a SA niche market with Brink Gardner.