

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Preamble

This study was concerned with determining the impact of educational transformation on higher education institutions (HEIs) with specific reference to the Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA), and the consequential implications for the enhancement of the quality of the academe, through the lens of management, at various levels, as well as academic staff. The MEDUNSA was chosen as the focus for this investigation since the researcher is employed there. Also, never before in the history of the institution has a study been conducted on academic staff development with a view to the future design and development of programmes. Further, MEDUNSA is unique in that it is a medical university and the researcher wanted to determine how educational transformation would affect the development of academic staff within a specific context like medicine.

One of the issues central to this project is that the transformation in higher education in this information age has culminated in novel teaching and learning methods to enable educators and learners to cope with the information explosion. The role of the educator will no longer be to disseminate data but to facilitate learning if the quality of education is to be assumed. Indeed, the role of the educator, as we know it, is being redefined. Most educators have never had formal training in teaching/learning which could mitigate against them when it comes to implementing novel methods of educating. Also, the South African Government has introduced major curricula reform in which educators have to become well versed. These are some of the factors that have provided the impetus for this research.

In this chapter, a background to the problem is discussed to orientate the reader towards the rationale for such a study. The problem statement is then elucidated and sub-problems sifted out. Thereafter, the goals and objectives are outlined to give some idea as to what was hoped to be achieved in this research. The methodology of the research is another component of this chapter. For greater clarity, a definition of terms commonly used in this thesis, is given. Finally, a programme of study is outlined reflecting what can be expected in the following chapters.

## **1.2 Background to the problem and problem statement**

In this subsection, educational transformation and the impact this has on the professional functions of the academe, is explicated. The problem around which this investigation gravitated is also highlighted.

### **1.2.1 Socio-political change and transformation in education in a knowledge-based society**

We are now living in a technocratic society. Technological and scientific advances are occurring at a phenomenal rate. Change has taken root in every sphere of our lives-so much so, that the only thing that is certain is change. This is also the information age, with new information being generated daily and much of that rapidly becoming obsolete. Educators will have to modify their methods of teaching and learning if learners are to handle this vast amount of information and keep pace with new discoveries so as not to be overcome by the complexities of change. The emergence of a paradigm shift from teaching to learning has, therefore, become necessary and this is given greater coverage in subsection 2.4.1.

On the political front, we even have a (relatively) new government in this country with democratic views and outlook on socio-economic, political and educational issues. Educational reform is very much a political process. Education has often been used as an instrument to serve the ideologies of the government of the day and it is now being used as a tool to ensure that democratic policies are implemented. This quotation by the ANC Education Department (1995:135) verifies this:

"We stand at the verge of a new era in education and training in South Africa. We are presented with a unique opportunity to start anew- to do things differently. The nature of the education and training system we construct, and its style of operation, must reflect the democratic values being shaped in society".

This is probably why the old, traditional, school curriculum is in the process of being nullified. The rigid, hierarchical, teacher-dominated, content-based traditional curriculum is perceived to be no longer serving the needs of a changing, modern society.

Further, the previous, illegitimate, apartheid government engineered the isolation of our country so that we were "unaffected" by globalisation. Even the curriculum was designed to perpetuate and reaffirm apartheid policies and indoctrinate learners. Gray (1998:132) asserts that the paranoid urge to

control by the apartheid authorities had undermined the professionalism of educators and discouraged initiative in curriculum development. The top-down approach to introducing what little curriculum change there has been was limiting and stultifying. "Curriculum development, in the true sense of the term has, by and large, never been practised in South Africa".

Much has changed. Meerkotter (1998:56), points out that it is not difficult to understand why the new government would want to introduce something that is totally different from the curricula used by the apartheid regime. Curriculum reform mainly in the form of outcomes-based education (OBE), is being introduced in this country. This shift to OBE is significant and challenging enough to be considered a "paradigm shift" and will have a strong influence on the nature of teaching in South Africa (Gultig, Lubisi, Parker and Wedekind 1999: v and 4). Gray (1998:133) also observes that for educators this requires a change towards more complex and demanding teaching and learning methodologies, away from the traditional, transmission-orientated teaching, based on content-laden textbooks. For example, lifelong learning has become a dimension of life making it paramount that students should learn how to learn and not simply be given information (Kaufman 1985:17 and Spady 1993:2).

### **1.2.2 Transition to Outcomes-based Education (OBE)**

The key question is why OBE? An answer offered by Gultig et al.(1999:30) is that our complex technologically dominated, multicultural, constantly changing world demands for higher learning results than was ever previously produced. Unlike the traditional, industrialised education system, OBE has inherent potential to meet those demands. Olivier (1998:21) explains that since OBE focuses on the process of achieving outcomes during the learning process, this can be extrapolated to the achievement of outcomes in the world of work.

Outcomes-based education implies organising the education system around what is essential for all students to be able to succeed at the end of the learning experience. The intended learning results (outcomes) are the starting points in defining the system and the curriculum is built and designed to attain those outcomes (Spady 1993:2 and Gultig et al. 1999:24). Outcomes are what learners can actually do with what they know and have learnt (Gultig et al., 1999:24). Ultimately, the goal of OBE is to produce students who are self-directed learners, collaborative workers, complex thinkers, community contributors and quality producers (Spady 1993:26-27). This would highlight the need for accountability on the part of academics and result in methodological shifts in teaching and learning.

The implementation of OBE will lead to major changes with respect to the way in which educators view and design curricula, instructional processes, assessment and evaluation tools, appropriate

contexts for learning, when learning should occur and who should be involved in the teaching-learning process (Spady 1993:26). Therefore, the emergence of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) should be perceived as an opportunity not just to implement the system of OBE but as a catalyst for addressing the issues of curriculum in its broader context (Wood 1998:91).

What must be noted though is that the implementation of a new curriculum does not inevitably lead to transformation of teaching methodology and of learning (Gravett and Petersen 2000:31). This issue will be clarified by discussion of under-preparedness of tertiary educators, which follows in paragraph 1.2.3. The underpinnings of the argument is the notion that failure to prepare is tantamount to preparing to fail.

### **1.2.3 The under-preparedness of tertiary educators for implementing educational transformation and innovation**

Educational transformation is not just occurring in South Africa alone but internationally as well. In Britain, the Dearing Report has drawn attention to the need to make greater and more systematic use of innovative teaching methods. The Dearing Report has also suggested that all educators undergo initial and subsequent training with teaching quality being assumed through membership of a professional body (Bak and Entwistle, in Morrow and King 1998:178). Indeed, the literature shows that the impact of educational reform on educators is that they will need to become more reflective, engage in greater collaboration, become more involved in continuous learning and enhance their novel teaching and learning skills. According to Spady (1999:31), when authentically implemented, OBE lives up to its inherent potential, fostering major improvements not only in student learning but staff effectiveness as well.

While the political desire to improve the educational system is very high, this writer notes that many government papers on higher education reflect a theoretical plan for educational change and only mention is made of staff development. For example, in the Education White Paper 3 (Department of Education 1997a:5), it is outlined that high level, globally equivalent skills training is needed to strengthen the country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. The White paper on Higher Education (Department of Education 1997b:10) suggests that academic development structures at all higher education institutions be established with a view to promoting quality teaching and learning through staff, curriculum and materials development. It is arguable that while this acknowledgement is laudable, what is lacking are not only the practicalities of how that change is to be implemented but also an elucidation of educator training programmes.

Motala's publication (2001:63) reinforces this viewpoint when she purports that educational transformation and change in South Africa have emphasised form and structure and the use of legislation and regulatory frameworks to put systems in place, while neglecting the actual principles and processes of teaching and learning. Indeed, the reluctance of government to "micro-manage" institutions of higher learning is stipulated in the Green Paper on Higher Education (Department of Education 1996:37) wherein it is stated that the Ministry of Education prefers to adopt a non-prescriptive, flexible stance with respect to regulatory frameworks it establishes.

Nevertheless, what is important is that the government does recognise that proactive staff development programmes are needed in tertiary institutions to develop human resources (ANC Education Department 1995:131). It has become clear that staff development programmes unique to the needs of each institution will have to be planned and implemented as this task cannot be ceded to government.

That the development of the educator is crucial, especially in this era of technology and information explosion, is undeniable. Shouse, quoted in Mitchell and Boyd (2001:69), attests to this: "Teacher quality is more powerful than curriculum content or pedagogical technique". The assertion by Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991:309) that "Nothing calls into question the reputation of the entire teaching profession as emphatically as the suggestion that anyone with good content knowledge can be prepared for teaching", highlights the shortcomings and criticism levelled at most tertiary institutions which assume that anyone with a degree (Masters or PhD), can teach. That many tertiary educators have never been trained formally to educate and yet are expected to adapt to the paradigm shift occurring in education is a great paradox indeed. Furthermore, Motala (2001:76) complains that the most important but neglected resource in education is the educator and suggests that a staff development programme which shows coherence and flexibility of the South African experience, needs to be developed and implemented if quality in education is to be ensured.

Merely informing someone of an innovation, however, does not guarantee that they will have the expertise to implement it. This is an argument put forward by Nicholls (1983:50), when implementation of an innovation revealed that educators lacked relevant knowledge and abilities, such as an inability to articulate certain fundamental principles related to the innovation and to identify the practical implications of these in terms of classroom practices. Also, educators had limited knowledge of curriculum planning and were confused about aims, objectives, the order of their planning activities and assessment. Interestingly and of much significance, Nicholls (1983:55), also found that there existed an inability of educators to recognise their own shortcomings and to identify problems so that they would not have known where or when they needed help.

Continuing in a similar vein, in a study conducted by Nakabugo and Sieborger (2001:55-59), relating to assessment strategies used by certain South African school teachers in the context of OBE, it was found that most of the formative assessment strategies were limiting. For example, some teachers did not ask learners to explain or give reasons for their answers. Thus, they would have missed the opportunity to examine the prior knowledge of the learners. In another scenario, teachers simply supplied the correct information in response to the learners' incorrect answers. This negated the opportunity for independent learner thinking.

Nakabugo and Sieborger (2001:59), explain that their study demonstrated that it is unlikely that change could result by simply informing teachers of the need for a new style of teaching. For instance, a change to the use of formative assessment would require identification of appropriate and desirable assessment strategies and a means to instil the confidence which educators need to develop them in an independent way. Although this study was conducted among school educators, parallels can be drawn with what can be expected at higher institutions when OBE is fully implemented. Moreover, the results of the aforementioned study pose larger questions for the transformation of the South African curriculum. Is it wise to expect educators to implement curriculum changes effectively before preparing them for the principles and practices of educational and curricula reform?

The results of a study described in a report by the Professional Committee of NAPTOSA (1998:11-15) partially answers this question. The report gives an account of an investigation that was done to ascertain the perceptions of Grade 1 teachers in South Africa towards the initial implementation of OBE. The aim was to determine what problems were experienced and whether the implementation was successful or not. Respondents reported that although they were positive about OBE, they felt they were not yet confident as the training they received was inadequate and confusing. They were uncertain about how to implement OBE successfully and they had not yet made the paradigm shift in novel methods of teaching and learning. This led to uncertainty, stress and lack of motivation. Unfortunately, this could have a negative impact on job satisfaction. Once again, although this study focussed on schoolteachers, it serves to illustrate the possibility of a similar pattern emerging in higher education.

In fact, when one considers the situation at tertiary institutions, Entwistle (1998:191) complains that not only is change being demanded without additional resources, it is being required of staff who lack any strong educational background. Different methods can be required of staff but unless they understand what these new approaches can achieve, any implementation is likely to be ineffective. Entwistle (1998:181) reminds us that many academics have only a rudimentary grasp of the basic principles of teaching and few have studied andragogical aspects of their profession. This lack of professional knowledge in the domain of didactics inevitably impedes change. His viewpoint is

further asserted in this quotation: "In a situation where radical change is essential, traditional attitudes have to be modified to allow new methods even to gain a foothold" (Entwistle 1998:181).

Educational transformation and the factors driving it, innovation and curricula reform at national and international level as well as their impact on the professional tasks of educators is discussed in greater detail in chapter 2. In the next paragraph the problem statement which provided the point of departure for this investigation, is outlined.

#### **1.2.4 Problem statement**

The knowledge explosion, advances in technology and globalisation have a major influence on educational transformation and innovation in higher education. Consequently, the past ten years have seen a wide variety of variables impacting on the tasks and functions of educators in HEIs. They are the following:

- Curriculum development, particularly in terms of an OBE format
- Innovations in teaching and learning
- A paradigm shift in the teaching/learning process
- Quality assurance (QA)
- Equity and redress
- Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- The scholarship of research and teaching

The literature is reflective of the notion that most academics are under-prepared in coping with the demands of educational transformation especially as regards implementation of novel curricula, adjusting to the paradigm shift in teaching and learning as well as adopting QA measures. Many academics are also resistant to educational change. The problems at MEDUNSA might not differ significantly from the aforementioned.

The aforementioned imperatives of educational transformation have influenced academic staff development and will need to be taken into account when enhancing the excellence of the academe. What should also be taken cognisance of in the improvement of academic excellence is that the role of the educator has changed from that of dispenser of information to facilitator of learning. This is in keeping with preparing graduates to cope in a complex, knowledge-based society.

Although MEDUNSA has taken cognizance of educational transformation policies, little has been done in practice to address issues relating to educational transformation. For example, this institution has paid scant attention to providing resources to support e-learning and computer-based education. Like many higher education institutions worldwide, MEDUNSA has not done much to develop staff in terms of ICT. On another note, little training for academic staff is being provided in the use of technology in the teaching/learning context. Although the National School of Public Health (NSPH) at MEDUNSA adopts e-learning, very little training is being provided in this novel mode of teaching and learning, especially in terms of applying the principles of distance education.

Neither does the university offer adequate training in novel curricula, notwithstanding that the majority of academics have had no formal training in education. Most educators lack a thorough understanding of the terminology and principles of OBE nor are they *au fait* in programme design and development. In short, academics are not adequately prepared to implement OBE and are perplexed by the complexities of a curriculum that appears nebulous to them. Despite this, there appears to be little assistance from the university to alleviate these problems.

Similarly, many educators have had no prior experience in the implementation of innovative methods of teaching and learning, for example problem-based learning (PBL), and yet MEDUNSA does not offer staff development programmes that would enable them to enrich themselves in this area. Despite the fact that PBL has been successfully adopted by many other medical schools globally, MEDUNSA fails to acknowledge the advantages that PBL might offer, and chooses not to offer training in PBL.

More generally, academics possess limited knowledge of exactly what the educational transformation process entails. This knowledge is usually the exclusive domain of top management who might not be doing a very effective job of disseminating this information to academics who are required to implement the policies of educational transformation. This has manifested in ignorance amongst the academe who perceive their role in the transformation process in a hazy light. They lack an understanding of the implications of educational transformation on their professional tasks and functions and consequently feel insecure and uncertain. This lack of knowledge has contributed to a manifestation in resistance towards change and a leaning towards wanting to maintain the status quo.

Additionally, educational transformation policies also encompass equity and redress. Women and blacks are employed at the lowest levels in the academic hierarchy mainly because they are under-qualified and have fewer research outputs. MEDUNSA is not adequately attending to the issue of developing women and blacks. For example, limited support is available to these individuals in



establishing themselves as researchers, hence they are seldom considered for promotion to higher positions. Also, MEDUNSA is not being attentive enough in addressing employment equity issues .

Moreover, it has become increasingly imperative that higher education institutions be accountable to society and stakeholders, making it necessary to quality assure outputs. Thus, there is pressure on tertiary educators to improve their professional performance. Arguably, MEDUNSA is not doing enough to enhance the quality of the academe. Academics have only a vague idea of the concept of QA and what it is specifically that they should be doing to incorporate QA into their daily work.

More specifically, the Centre for Academic Development Services (CADS) at MEDUNSA was only established in 2001 and is therefore relatively new with just one person involved in academic staff development. Mostly, outside consultants are brought in to run workshops for brief periods and then leave. This type of staff development practice is ineffective as staff have a one shot opportunity to learn about important issues related to their professional development. Usually these facilitators are not natural scientists or medically qualified people and are unable to transfer what they "teach" to a medical or scientific context. This makes it difficult for staff to apply what they have learnt in staff development programmes, to their daily professional tasks. On another point, staff development programmes at MEDUNSA emphasise teaching and learning and not enough programmes are being run on the enhancement of research skills. This is a contradiction considering that MEDUNSA rewards research outputs more than it does achievements in teaching and learning.

Furthermore, educationally relevant topics like curriculum development, OBE and QA are run as "closed" workshops which means that attendance is by invitation only. This excludes the rest of the academics who obviously all need exposure to those topics. The rationale of CADS is to train a small group of academics who should then go back to their departments to train other people; but this does not always happen. Thus, the training and development of academic staff at MEDUNSA is inadequate to help the institution undergo transformation

To summarise, in response to a knowledge-based, technocratic society, educational transformation is occurring on a macro scale, both nationally and internationally. There are several imperatives that drive educational transformation, notably, curriculum development, QA, the paradigm shift in teaching and learning, the application of technology in teaching and learning, employment equity and scholarship. The literature shows that most academics are under-prepared to adequately cope with these new demands on their professional functions. At MEDUNSA, staff do not have adequate skills and are not being trained and developed to be able to implement the imperatives of educational transformation. That staff development is essential and should be given more attention cannot be disputed. The challenge lies in deciding on the nature and character of staff development that would

achieve academic excellence while accommodating the demands of educational transformation. That was the main departure point for this study.

Arising from the literature search and personal observations at MEDUNSA, were numerous research questions that were designed to guide this research and these are elucidated in the following subsection (1.3).

### **1.3 Research questions**

The research questions for this study were categorised into the main and sub research questions as shown below.

#### **1.3.1 Main research questions**

What is the impact of educational transformation and innovation on the dynamics of academic staff development and why do management and staff find it difficult to respond to transformation and innovation against the parameters of academic excellence?

#### **1.3.2 Sub research questions**

- 1.3.2.1 What are the key elements driving educational transformation nationally and internationally? What impact do these elements have on the professional role of academics? What is the link between educational transformation and academic excellence?
- 1.3.2.2 What is the involvement of management at MEDUNSA in assisting with the development of academics within the context of educational transformation? What are the perceptions, expectations and role of management regarding the nature and character of academic staff development in an era of educational transformation?
- 1.3.2.3 Why is there a lack of preparedness among academics at MEDUNSA in dealing with the imperatives of educational transformation? To what extent are the needs and aspirations of staff being addressed by the institution in general and by CADS in particular? What are the perceptions and expectations of academic staff regarding staff development in the context of educational transformation?
- 1.3.2.4 Why has MEDUNSA not put sufficient mechanisms in place to develop academic staff in the use of technology in the teaching/learning situation.
- 1.3.2.5 Why is there a lack of commitment at management level and amongst academics to come to terms with a new paradigm of thinking such as OBE?

- 1.3.2.6 What are the perceptions of academic staff regarding training in innovative strategies such as PBL and OBE at MEDUNSA?
- 1.3.2.7 What is MEDUNSA doing to promote the scholastic development of previously disadvantaged people in terms of equity and redress?

The main aim and objectives which were also employed to guide the study, are displayed in the following subsection (1.4).

## **1.4 Aim and objectives**

The aim and objectives were applicable to the literature study as well as to the qualitative and quantitative study of the empirical part of this project.

### **1.4.1 Main aims**

To investigate the impact of educational transformation and innovation on the dynamics of academic staff development at MEDUNSA as a HEI and to determine why staff and management find it difficult to respond to transformation and innovation against the parameters of academic excellence.

### **1.4.2 General objectives**

The objectives of this study have been categorised under general objectives and specific objectives. The general objectives are stated below and encompass the global intentions for the collection of primary and secondary data.

- 1.4.2.1 To identify factors as contributing towards the national and international transformation of higher education and to assess the impact of these factors on the achievement of academic excellence and professional scholarship.
- 1.4.2.2 To establish the role played by management (including CADS) in the development of excellence in teaching and research among academic staff, in an era of educational transformation and innovation.
- 1.4.2.3 To determine empirically the needs and perceptions of academics regarding the dynamics of academic staff development at MEDUNSA, that would be in alignment with educational transformation demands while concomitantly achieving academic excellence.

### **1.4.3 Specific objectives**

It was also decided to state the specific objectives of this investigation which served as a more detailed guideline for the collection of data. These specific objectives were useful in deciding what specific issues, related to the research topic, needed to be included in the survey instruments.

#### **1.4.3.1 Specific objectives of the literature search**

A literature search was undertaken to determine the influence of educational transformation on HEIs with specific reference towards:

- Examining the factors that are contributing towards educational change at tertiary institutions from an international and national perspective.
- Determining the effect of educational transformation on achieving academic excellence.
- Investigating the influence of educational transformation on the professional tasks of academics.
- Exploring the impact of educational transformation on the nature and character of staff development.
- Identifying research variables and themes related to educational transformation and staff development, for inclusion in the research instruments.

#### **1.4.3.2 Specific objectives of the qualitative study**

A qualitative study was conducted among Executive Management, Deans, HODs and the Management of CADS to determine their involvement in the development of academics, with specific reference towards:

- Comparing educational transformation policies made at macro (national) level with staff development policies made at meso (institutional) and micro (faculty and departmental) level.
- Exploring the involvement and role of the Management of CADS, Deans and Heads of Departments (HODs) at micro level, in implementing the staff development policies made at meso level.
- Investigating the general perceptions (concerns, attitudes and feelings) of Executive Management, Deans, HODs and CADS Management regarding staff development at MEDUNSA.
- Ascertaining the visions and mission of Executive Management, the Management of CADS, Deans and HODs for staff development initiatives at MEDUNSA.

- Obtaining additional items for the needs analysis and perception survey, from Executive Management, Deans, HODs and CADS Management.
- Determining if there is congruence between MEDUNSA's mission statement and staff development policies and practices.
- Establishing how staff development programmes at MEDUNSA can be further improved.
- Identifying the reasons why MEDUNSA has not adequately promoted and incorporated ICT in the andragogical situation.
- Detecting the reason (s) for a lack of preparedness of academic staff in the implementation of OBE.
- Investigating why MEDUNSA does not offer training in PBL.
- Analyzing the reason for MEDUNSA not adequately addressing employment equity issues.
- Identifying the steps that have been taken to develop black and female academic staff at MEDUNSA.
- Determining the role of management in improving the quality of academics.
- Identifying possible barriers in the implementation of QA at MEDUNSA.

#### **1.4.3.3 Specific objectives of the quantitative study**

A needs analysis and perception survey was conducted among academic staff to establish their preferences and opinions regarding staff development initiatives and programmes in the context of educational transformation, with specific reference towards:

- Obtaining information about the current levels of staff knowledge and skills regarding educational transformation issues.
- Investigating the feelings, attitudes and readiness of respondents towards educational transformation.
- Investigating the training and development requirements of academic staff to enable them to become more effective and efficient in the areas of teaching and learning.
- Determining the nature of staff development programmes that would help achieve academic excellence while addressing the elements of educational transformation.
- Involving academic staff in the planning of the content and process of future staff development programmes.
- Determining if academic staff are willing to learn about the use of technology in the classroom.
- Ascertaining if academics are willing to acquire skills relating to the implementation of OBE and PBL.
- Investigating if academics would like to know more about QA

- Cross validating some of the responses obtained during the interviews with Executive Management, CADS Management and the Deans.

## 1.5 Hypotheses

A hypothesis can be defined as “a testable proposition about the relationship between two or more events or concepts”. Hypotheses can form part of all forms of enquiry. This hypothesis is a tentative guess, or intuitive hunch as to what is going on in a situation. Such tentative hypotheses can provide a useful bridge between the research question and the design of the study (Robson, 1997:19).

The hypotheses for this investigation are shown in table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Hypotheses for this study**

Hypothesis	Description
Hypothesis 1	The factors that play a role in driving educational transformation in higher education influence the achievement of excellence and professional scholarship among academics.
Hypothesis 2	The efficiency of the implementation of educational transformation at institutions of higher learning depends on management’s commitment to respond to the demands of transformation.
Hypothesis 3	The accommodation of transformative and innovative personalisation practices are prerequisites towards the achievement of academic excellence and professional scholarship in higher education
Hypothesis 4	External variables such as financial resources will have a direct influence on the achievement of academic excellence and professional scholarship.

## 1.6 Research methodology

This subsection describes the research approaches that were employed as well as the methodology that was applied in testing the hypotheses and achieving the main aim and objectives of the study. Besides that, an explanation is provided as to why Executive Management, Deans, HODs, the Management of CADS and academic staff were selected to be involved as the target group, in this investigation.

### **1.6.1 Research approach**

The epistemological positions that were taken in this research were both interpretative (qualitative approach) and positivist (quantitative approach). The application of face-to-face interviews (qualitative research) was more inductive and at the phenomenological end of the continuum while the use of self-administered questionnaires (quantitative research) was more towards the deductive, positivist end (Hussy and Hussey, in Lomas and Tomlinson 2000:134).

These approaches were intended to be complimentary to the discourse of educational research. The qualitative approach was more open and broader in the way it tackled problems (Mouton and Marais 1991:163) allowing for the local context or “real life” setting to be taken into account (Miles and Huberman 1994:10). The quantitative research was based on empirical grounds or evidence, the determination of facts and demonstrating relationships between variables. This researcher was able to study phenomena (that is perceptions and needs pertaining to academic staff development) as an outsider, allowing for a high level of objectivity (Van der Merwe 1996:27 and Waghid 2000b:28).

This two-dimensional approach allowed for different perspectives of the research problem. It enabled the researcher to: 1) Confirm or corroborate the findings via data triangulation, 2) Elaborate and develop analyses, providing new detail and 3) Initiate new lines of thinking, providing fresh insight (Miles and Huberman 1994:41). The quantitative study helped avoid “elite bias”, that is, talking only to high status respondents. The analysis of the quantitative data also helped correct the “holistic fallacy” and verified or shed new insight on the findings of the qualitative investigation. On the other hand, qualitative data assisted with the quantitative aspect of the study during design by aiding with the conceptual development and instrumentation. During analysis it helped validate, interpret and clarify the findings of the quantitative results (Miles and Huberman 1994:41).

### **1.6.2 Methods of data collection**

The different methods of research that were used in the collection of primary and secondary data, to test the aforementioned hypotheses, are tabulated below in table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Methods of research employed**

Type of Research	Chapter location	Method of and rationale for research
Literature investigation	1, 2 and 3	The parameters that drive educational transformation in higher education and their influence on academic staff development were explored.
Qualitative study	5 and 6	Semi-structured interviews were applied to determine the perceptions, involvement and expectations of Executive Management, Deans, HODs and the Management of CADS regarding academic staff development.
Quantitative study	4 and 7	A survey was conducted using self-administered questionnaires to determine the needs and perceptions regarding academic staff development, among academic staff.

### 1.6.3 Rationale for choice of the target group

In order to answer the research question, achieve the aim and objectives and test the hypotheses of this study (see subsections 1.3.1, 1.4 and 1.5), it was decided to involve both management and academic staff in this research.

People in management (that is, Executive Management, Deans, HODs and the Management of CADS) were chosen because their position in the institutional hierarchy means that they have more influence than other staff in the development of internal management systems and structures concerning the development of staff (Lomas and Tomlinson 2000:134).

To add to that, awareness and commitment towards quality must come from the highest ranking staff members before it permeates the department (Abruzzese 1996:315). Furthermore, senior staff, such as Deans, provide the environment for the promotion of excellence in teaching, research and professional service. Deans and even HODs act as liaisons between the university and departments and are in an ideal position to demonstrate the department's role in the university's broader mission (Young, Petersen and Short 2002:162).

Academic staff were selected to be participants in this investigation owing to their direct involvement in the implementation of educational transformation issues. Therefore, it follows that, of necessity, the needs and perceptions of academics should be assessed, analysed and paid attention to for the purposes of future design and development of staff development programmes at MEDUNSA.



## 1.7 Need and justification for the study

In this subsection a justification is offered in support of the necessity for staff development in an era of educational change and innovation.

### 1.7.1 Towards a justification for staff development

Why staff development anyway? Camblin and Steger (2000:2) answer this question by citing that the high demands of accountability, high quality performance by the consumers of education, the knowledge explosion, technology and the manner in which academic work is being conducted means that tertiary institutions must redefine themselves.

Faced with this threat, what are colleges and universities doing to keep their faculty from becoming obsolete? It could well be said that previously, faculty could easily self-educate to keep abreast of new developments and to maintain high skill levels. To make this presumption in this millennium is to ignore the rapidity at which knowledge and understanding are advancing (Camblin and Steger 2000:2). In fact, no one can dispute the necessity and importance of developing a sustained long-term faculty development strategy for educators to keep abreast of modern trends in higher education (Camblin and Steger 2000:2, and Kapp and Cilliers 1998:118).

From a critique of the literature it is apparent that the reasons for staff development being more important today than in previous decades are manifold and tend to be related to macro-educational reform, our knowledge-based technocratic society and socio-political and economic change. Taking this point further, Millis (as cited by Boyden 2000:110) identifies five reasons for staff development being important:

- 1) Changes in expectations about the quality of undergraduate education.
- 2) Changing student populations.
- 3) Societal needs.
- 4) Decreasing resources.
- 5) The widespread use of technology in education, business and industry.

The above-mentioned parameters will have a major impact on higher education because of the renewed societal concern for the quality of teaching and learning. Additionally, multiculturalism, curriculum reform, increased use of technology in education and demands for enhanced faculty

productivity (Boyden 2000:110) and the increased demand for educational provision in the wake of continuously decreasing budgets (Holthauzen 1998:33) are other examples of the complex changes occurring in higher education.

These crucial factors necessitates new perspectives on teaching and learning and places new demands on educators who will need to be exposed to new skills and techniques in order to become internationally competent. Warren (1998:76) emphasises this point by stating that new curricula and modes of teaching and learning need to be generated in order to accommodate a larger and more diverse student body and to equip them with the skills and knowledge that would enable them to be successful in their studies and future working life. This is probably why in a transforming higher education environment, training in curriculum development has asserted itself as a kingpin for the professional enhancement of academics.

To reiterate, for any curricula or macro-educational change, the development of staff is indispensable, as they are the ones directly involved in implementation thereof. Commenting on the need for staff development in lieu of societal trends, Warren (1998:76), argues that the quality and professionalism of academics as educators have become matters of public interest due to questions about access to higher education, economic needs for skilled employable graduates and increasing research on student learning. Expanding on this, Badley (2000:245), explains that in addition to "knowing that" (their subject area) they also have to "know how" (andragogical approach) as well having the competence to function in various socio-cultural settings.

Taking a critical stance, one must take cognisance of the fact that most tertiary educators have never received formal training in education and, as Gravett and Petersen (2000:32) complain, are likely to mirror their views on knowledge and learning on the way they teach. Also, besides being under-prepared for the actual process of teaching itself, most tertiary educators are somewhat "unreflective about their own approaches to teaching", finding it easier to adopt strategies relating to how they were taught as students which is more in line with a "functionalist model of education" (Badley 2000:245). In this connection, Gravett and Petersen (2000:32) contend that when teachers view knowledge as being fixed, stable facts to be acquired by learners, they will teach to transfer these facts. This would mitigate against helping students learn how to learn and for keeping up to date with information in a rapidly changing technological global age.

According to Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991:318), educators would be attracted to the idea that professional development would expand knowledge and skills and contribute to growth and enhance student learning. That such development should be a continuous process is summed up in this quotation: "Continuous development of all educators is the cornerstone for meaning, improvement

and reform" (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991:315). Kapp and Cilliers (1998:118) explain the importance of staff development in terms of economic principles, citing that human resources remain one of the most valuable and costly assets of the university, absorbing about 75% of the operating budget. It would be obvious therefore, that universities should be willing to invest in the development of their most valuable assets. Similarly, Saunders (1999:118) laments that it has always been something of a paradox that educational institutions, dealing in the highest qualifications and enjoying the best resources, have been instrumental in the least amount of staff development and formally supported lifelong learning for its educators.

Hence, an appraisal of the literature has established that staff development is indeed necessary, given the changing context of higher education. An expanded justification for staff development can be found in chapter 3 (read subsection 3.2). What empirical evidence, however, is there that once implemented, staff development would be successful in improving the professional capabilities of academics? This question is addressed in the next paragraph (1.7.2).

### **1.7.2 Does training and development of staff make any difference?**

If staff development is implemented, what evidence is there that it will be successful? An answer based on empirical evidence extracted from the literature will be provided since the literature has some substantiation that staff development activities have a positive impact on the improvement of teaching and learning (Camblin and Steger 2000:7-16, Kapp and Cilliers 1998:117-121 and Rust 2000:254-262).

Camblin and Steger (2000:7-8) report on staff development initiatives undertaken at the University of Cincinnati. Individual grants were awarded for enhancing skills, knowledge and techniques in teaching and other professional needs. Collaborative grants were made available to teams to enable them to enhance skills to do research or improve andragogy at the institution. Subsequent to a survey being carried out to investigate whether individuals and groups benefited, Camblin and Steger (2000:11) found that the entire staff in the Nursing Department who attended workshops on how to develop skills to implement active learning and effective teaching in the classroom, had all changed their approach to teaching by the end of the academic year.

Additionally, educators from Business and Engineering were exposed to training that demonstrated the need for integrated ways of doing business. It is now used as an innovative andragogical tool in the classroom and has given faculty ideas that can be used in research. The use of technology was also successful as a staff development strategy allowing for greater collaboration to exist between different disciplines (Mathematics, Science and Engineering) to enhance faculty technical skills which

could be used in the classroom and in research. Camblin and Steger (2000:16) concluded from their study that staff development is an important contribution to the continued success of higher education and that the staff development model initiated at their university has changed the way the university functions.

In another study undertaken at the University of Stellenbosch and documented by Kapp and Cilliers (1998:117), the continuing personal professional growth of one of their academic staff members is described. The staff member had been through a staff development programme over a period of two years and during this time had participated in various workshops relating to activities such as the use of portfolios in teaching and learning, the study of self-study packages on lecturing skills for active learning including the cognitive enrichment and facilitation of student-centred learning. Performance appraisals were conducted through student feedback, alumni feedback, peer assessment, assessment by a staff development consultant and submission of a teaching portfolio (Kapp and Cilliers 1998:120).

The whole process had a positive effect on the educator concerned. His overall teaching skills as evaluated by students improved by 3,15% and his course content evaluation improved by 6,22%. His reflection on the whole process was that he had a clearer, deeper commitment to continual improvement, a growth in overall work satisfaction and a desire to help colleagues experience the same positive growth experience and results (Kapp and Cilliers 1998:121).

By the same token, a project described by Rust (2000:254) involved initial training for new teaching staff at Oxford Brookes University in the United Kingdom. Overall, respondents (n=34) claimed that the training course had a positive effect on their teaching abilities. The majority of participants reported feeling more confident and having a wider range of teaching and learning methods, more capable of conveying enthusiasm for their subject, better assessment and course design, including having undergone a significant personal change. Only three claimed to have undergone no change at all (Rust 2000:256).

Hence, it is clear from the literature that different institutions adopt different approaches as far as the development of their academic staff is concerned. That staff development should be relevant to successfully promote academic excellence, can never be underestimated. This is why it is important to investigate what the nature and character of staff development at MEDUNSA ought to be. The following subsection (1.7.3) focuses on this issue.

### **1.7.3 The rationale for determining the nature and character of staff development for the achievement of academic excellence at MEDUNSA**

While the literature abounds with staff development programmes that are being developed and implemented at higher educational institutions in other countries, there is sparse information relating to staff development at tertiary institutions in South Africa, especially as it relates to current educational transformation and innovation. To this end, Badley (2000:246) warns that successful approaches to teaching in one context may not necessarily work in another context where the students and educational settings are different.

Therefore, this study has made a much needed contribution in this regard and the beneficiaries are not only academic staff at MEDUNSA, but other institutions as well. Ultimately, it is hoped, it would be our students who would benefit the most through improved practices in teaching and learning, notwithstanding the fact that the institution will also stand to gain by having the professionalism of its educators enhanced. An improvement in student learning would imply that graduates from MEDUNSA will be competent enough to fulfil the needs of South African society. Most students at MEDUNSA are from "historically disadvantaged" settings and whom Warren (1998:77) refers to as "non-traditional". These students, owing to their disadvantaged educational backgrounds might lack learning and academic skills. Such students, reports Warren (1998:77), are likely to be overwhelmed by the academic culture at university and the demands of study, and will require special attention, for which staff will need to be trained.

Furthermore, Ballenger (in Wickham and Bailey 2000:30) is of the opinion that an important part of the research project is examining where a particular research question comes from in one's own life. Therefore, another important reason for embarking on this project was to render assistance to and share knowledge and experience with fellow colleagues in innovative educational matters since most academics have been using traditional methods of educating. The demand for such training was made abundantly evident when this researcher's help was solicited by the School of Pharmacy at MEDUNSA to assist in curriculum development issues as regards the implementation of PBL. This researcher was also invited by the Dental Faculty at MEDUNSA to facilitate a workshop on educational transformation, facilitation of student learning and self-directed learning. She has also presented talks and facilitated workshops on curriculum development, QA and outcomes-based assessment in addition to assisting with programme evaluation at faculty level. Therefore, academic staff at MEDUNSA seek development with respect to curriculum innovations and novel methods of teaching and learning.

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Additionally, it has been argued that academic development units generally have little expertise in most of the disciplines and their personnel are often stigmatised as "armchair critics of the ordinary hardworking academic" (Wood, 1998:91). This limitation is unlikely to be applicable to the study in question as this researcher has experience in the teaching of Physiology, Chemistry and Biochemistry at tertiary institutions throughout South Africa. This could be interpreted to mean that she is in a better position to have empathy and understanding for whatever challenges academics might be facing.

Also, a problem which this researcher has observed at the institutions she has taught is that of "loneliness" of academic staff. In fact, that many faculty work in relative isolation from their peers and are often unaware of each other is well documented (Surry and Land 2000:150; Nixon 1996:13 and Boyden 2000:106). For example, in an interview study conducted by Nixon (1996:13) involving tertiary institution educators, at two different institutions, it was reported that interviewees had expressed the importance of collegiality and the need for mutually supportive relationships with colleagues. They also spoke of their own sense of professional isolation and of the competitive atmosphere that exists within and across certain departments. Social and intellectual isolation by new and established faculty have also been reported (Boyden 2000:106). Arguably, staff at MEDUNSA might not be immune to this type of phenomenon. In an effort to alleviate this problem of isolation, it is hoped that a staff development programme will provide opportunities for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and ideas and to build professional relationships among staff, within departments and faculties, irrespective of gender, race, age, rank or discipline.

#### **1.7.4 The changing nature of staff development**

Assuming that this tentative analysis of staff development shows that it has some merit, what should be taken cognisance of to ensure that staff at MEDUNSA benefit maximally? A brief description of the changing trends in staff development practices is outlined here but chapters 2 and 3 cover this area in more depth.

In our ever changing society, even staff development is justifiably in a constant state of flux and never static. From a critique of the literature, it is clear that staff development programmes nowadays, in keeping with the paradigm shift in education and educational transformation, are focussing on reflective practice (Licklider, Schnelder and Fulton 1997:122 and Burrows 1993:32-34), collaboration (Hitchcock, Bland, Hekelman and Blumenthal 1995:1108-1116; Sclesinger 1999:91-96 and Scott and Weeks 1996:101-111), collegiality (Austin 1998:12-18), peer-observation of teaching (Blackwell 1996:156-171), training of facilitators (Holthausen 1998:33), action research (Kember and Gow 1992:297-310), experiential learning (Gravett and Petersen 2000:32), compiling teaching

portfolios (Kapp and Cilliers 1998:120), continuous and self-directed learning (Licklider et al. 1997:122), increased use of technology (Surry and Land 2000:145-153 and Ryan, Carlton and Ali 1999:272-277), as well as mentoring (Lemel and Sullivan-Catlin 2000:51-55 and Buchner and Hay, 1998:19-25), in order to manage the challenges of the transformation era.

These new strategies are being applied to improve the quality of education by enabling educators to engage in critical reflection on dialogue and about their teaching practice, especially on the affective level. Holthauzen (1998:34) argues that transformation in education will have a psychological impact on educators whose roles would become redefined to that of facilitator in the context of teaching and learning. The implications of this commentary for staff development is that one would also need to acknowledge the affective domain of human experience regarding change so as to help staff adapt to and cope with the subtleties of the change process, for example by implementing personal developmental strategies.

What is more, when Badley (2000:250) says that many university educators still regard the lecture as their most effective teaching strategy, he could very well have been talking about the scenario at MEDUNSA. It is this researcher's intention then, that staff at MEDUNSA be made aware of the novel possibilities in education for their own personal and andragogical development and that a staff development programme be used as an instrument to realise the goal of adopting a transformatory and democratic approach to education.

In the interest of consistency and to enhance understanding, the next subsection (1.8) offers an explanation of common terms used in this dissertation.

## **1.8 Clarification of terms**

A brief definition and explanation of certain frequently used terms is given in order to facilitate an understanding as to how they have been applied in the context of this study.

### **1.8.1 Staff/faculty development**

It was concluded after reviewing the literature that any attempt at a concise definition of staff development is a daunting task for many reasons. Firstly, staff development means different things to different people. Next, staff development continues to evolve and is ever changing. Nevertheless, a summary of the definitions staff development as outlined in the literature will be given since they are

considered to have implications for the way in which a meaning for staff can be constructed for this study.

Riegel (referred to by Camblin and Steger 2000:2-3), notes from his study that several descriptors are used interchangeably with "faculty development" and these are shown in table 1.3

**Table 1.3: Descriptors that are used interchangeable with the term “faculty development”**

Descriptor of “faculty development”	Explanation of descriptor
Instructional development	Relates to development of faculty in terms of instructional technology, micro-teaching, media courses and curricula.
Professional development	Emphasises the growth and development of individual faculty in their professional roles.
Organisational development	Emphasises the needs, priorities and organisation of the institution.
Career development	Emphasises preparation for career advancement.
Personal development	Relates to life planning, interpersonal skills and the growth of faculty as individuals

To be truly effective in contemporary society, however, faculty development is required to be broad and to integrate all aspects of development: personal, professional and organisational and should not simply relate to individual fields of expertise or teaching skills (Schuster and co-workers quoted by Camblin and Steger 2000:3).

Furthermore, Wright and Ashton (1992:50) subscribe to the idea that staff development is concerned with the quality of managing situations and is about enabling staff to develop more effective management of themselves, their interactions, their relationships and their learning in the workplace. It also involves the examination of personal values, beliefs and attitudes enabling people to see themselves in terms of:

- 1) Realism, respect, responsibility and responsiveness about themselves and of others.
- 2) Resourcefulness in managing themselves and relationships.
- 3) A review of personal development.

For Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991:319), staff development is a strategy for specific instructional change as well as a strategy for basic organisational change in the way educators work and learn together. They define staff development as the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences



throughout one's career. Similarly, Tobin, Yoder-wise and Hull (1979:9) also define staff development as both formal and informal learning activities that relate to the employee's role expectations and which take place within or outside the institution. Wilkerson and Irby (1998:388) in focussing on teaching and learning, define staff development as:

“A tool for improving the educational vitality of our institutions through attention to the competencies needed by individual teachers and to the institutional policies required to promote academic excellence”.

With good reason, recently there has been an emphasis on educators as reflective professionals and facilitators of learning, rather than transmitters of information in a didactic setting. The definition of staff development offered by the ANC Education Department (1995:51) attests to this when they state that staff development pertains to processes of education that enable educators to "reflect on their work and roles, deepen their specialised knowledge and improve their effectiveness as facilitators of their students' learning, while preparing themselves for greater leadership". Expanding on the essence of active learning, Collinson (2000:125) explains that staff development itself has become synonymous with the "inquiry model", moving away from individual, passive learning in workshops, to an active process of individual or collective learning.

Thus, these divergent expositions of staff development offers guidance for constructing a meaning of staff or faculty development (used interchangeably in this study), in terms of:

- 1) The affective domain, for example interpersonal relationships with colleagues and personal development.
- 2) The cognitive domain, for example knowledge and skills in andragogical methods, knowledge and expertise in one's field, including scholarship.

In order to promote clarity, this investigation explores staff development as a synergy of the aforementioned affective and cognitive factors. Also emanating from a critique of the literature is the notion that staff development is concerned with the empowerment of individuals and groups through enhancement of personal and professional development, while fulfilling the goals and mission of the institution.

This explanation of staff development is by no means complete or exhaustive. A more thorough exposition of the concept (and description of staff development models) can be found in chapter 3 (see subsections 3.3 and 3.4).

## 1.8.2 Development

Development is referred to as the process of cultivating talents to ensure that people are orientated, trained, cross-trained, upgraded and prepared for advancement (Craig 1996:70). Camblin and Steger (2000:1) define development in an organisational context, namely the "targeted enhancement of an individual (s) to better serve the mission of the organisation". Wright and Ashton (1992:50) postulate that development concerns the "quality of managing situations" and in this respect can be distinguishable from the term training which focuses on the "quality of skills". Therefore, staff developers need to understand the basis of staff development as being distinct from training (Wright and Ashton 1992:51).

In this regard, Jalling (in Main 1985:2) advocates that:

"Staff training signifies activities on the part of educational authorities to implement educational policy as defined by the authority in question. Staff development, on the other hand is a term used to signify activities aiming at increasing the readiness to accept and promote innovation".

Every individual has an inherent tendency to develop as fully as possible. This could be achieved by confronting and mastering challenges and problems, learning from these experiences and seeing things differently as a result. People who face challenges grow in confidence and competence and become more independent, realistic, responsible and self-respecting. Helping staff to achieve this within a working environment is an important goal for staff development.

## 1.8.3 Staff/faculty

In the literature published by the Americans and Canadians, academic employees are referred to as "faculty" while in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, the term "staff" is used. In this study the terms faculty and staff will be used interchangeably to mean academic employees. Academic staff are those employees who are involved in teaching/learning, research and community service.

From a study of the literature, it would seem that the terms "change", "transformation" and "innovation" have the same meaning and are closely related. Although they might be semantically similar, they differ in the context in which they are used in this study, which is why it is necessary to

define and explain these terms (see subsections 1.8.4; 1.8.5 and 1.8.6). A further exposition of these terms are given in chapter 2 (peruse subsections 2.2; 2.4; 2.5 and 2.7).

#### **1.8.4 Change**

To illustrate how much society at present differs from a period when the pace of change was slow and life more predictable, the following excerpt was taken from a communication by Dillon-Peterson (1981:1):

"There was a time when society seemed to change very little. Institutions and value systems were relatively stable, clearly understood and commonly supported throughout communities. Authority was respected. Individuals seldom questioned, probed or criticised".

Now, society as a whole is changing and is demanding new skills from graduates as they enter the labour market. As the world is changing around us, curriculum and instruction methods cannot remain the same. Most of the skills and much of the knowledge educators acquired in their training are no longer adequate for helping students succeed in the workplace (Brodinsky 1986:30). If society is changing so significantly, then it can be expected that educational institutions should also change in tandem, since they have been established by society (Nicholls 1983:6). A case in point is that as South Africa continues restructuring on socio-political, legal and other fronts, educational change has come to be regarded as integral to the formation of a democratic society (Gilmour 2001:5).

What must be taken into account is that change for the sake of change is of no help because change is not always progress (Fullan and Stiegelbauer 1991:15). New programmes can either make no difference, help improve the situation or can even make matters worse. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991:15) draw the distinction between change and progress by asking: "What if educational change introduced at educational institutions actually made matters worse than if nothing had been done?" This is a valid argument as change is not necessarily positive and could have the opposite effect to what was intended in the first place. It also helps to draw a distinction between change and innovation; the latter being considered to have positive connotations while change is not always beneficial.

For further clarification on the concept of change, Waghid (2000a:101) explains that in the context of higher education, change can be understood as a shift in the level of knowledge acquired, produced, implemented and questioned by educators and learners.

From a study of the literature (Moran and Brightman 2001:112, Loucks-Horsely 1989:115, Fullan and Stiegelbauer 1991:17 and Fullan 2001:6) the following points about the nature of change were noted:

- 1) Change is non-linear. There is often no clearly defined beginning or end. This is why change can often seem confusing and endless.
- 2) Effective change involves multiple improvement efforts. There is no right answer but multiple efforts are required to achieve the change organisations desire to make them competitive.
- 3) Change is top-down and bottom-up. Change should be top-down to provide vision and create structure; and bottom-up to encourage participation.
- 4) Organisational change has an important personal dimension. Unless people can accept change on a personal level, they would be unable to sustain it organisationally.
- 5) Measurement is key to successful and sustainable change. If the process of change can be quantified, it is more likely to be successful.
- 6) Change takes time and attention.
- 7) Pressures for educational change increase as society becomes more complex.
- 8) Change is a journey, not a blueprint.
- 9) Every person is a change agent.

Additionally, according to Schlechty (in Zepeda 1999:121) change can occur at various levels as illustrated in table 1.4. The type of change that is occurring in higher education can be referred to as systemic change since it requires a total “metamorphosis” of organizational culture and norms.

Therefore, the world as it exists naturally (ecologically, geographically and biologically) is relatively unchangeable. It is humans who affect change and in turn are affected by it. The way in which change permeates society can be described as the domino effect. That is to say that change in one milieu of society will cause changes in other avenues and so forth. The process of change is usually kindled by new circumstances such as technological, political, social and economic developments. This would have an impact on people involved in the change processes in that they would need to redefine and improve their modus operandi of performing professional tasks to accommodate the change process. Further, a change in practice would need to be preceded by a change in attitudes and beliefs. Change is also labour intensive, time consuming and resource dependent.

**Table 1.4: Types and mechanism of change**

Types of change	Mechanism/process of change
Procedural	Refers to an alteration in the order in which events occur or the pace at which they occur.
Technological	Occurs because of advancement in technology. The job has not yet changed, only the tools needed to do the job, have. For example, computers, new materials to be mastered and the internet.
Systemic	Refers to a modification in the nature of the work being undertaken and involves changes in beliefs, values, rules, relationships and orientation. This often requires a metamorphosis of the culture of the organization.

The concept of change and its implications for staff development receives greater coverage in subsection 2.6.

### **1.8.5 Educational transformation**

According to Gourley (in Van der Merwe 2000:82):

“Transformation as a direct result of transition implies change, but change in the sense of a total metamorphosis which manifests in the introduction of an altogether new form”.

Thus, using a non-technical analogy, transformation is not about resetting the furniture but building a totally different room.

On another point, the transformation of higher education has been catalysed by a number of external factors, some of which are shown below:

- 1) There is increasing international recognition that the transition from the world of higher education into the world of work is not straightforward. Only a minority of graduates are able to gain employment that directly utilises the academic content of their higher education.
- 2) The world of employment is changing rapidly; traditional career paths have disappeared. As the pace of change accelerates, new jobs will emerge while old jobs will inevitably disappear.

Hence, higher education must provide its graduates with the skills to be able to operate professionally for the “learning age” or “learning society”.

In the estimation of Verda (quoted by Polyzoi and Cerna 2001:83), the transformation process is not uni-dimensional but one that is affected by multiple factors occurring simultaneously. To lend support to this assumption, the following definitions of transformation are provided by Blunt (1998:102), Camblin and Steger (2001:12) and Waghid (2000a:102) which give different perspectives of the same term.

For Blunt (1998:102), transformation “is considered to be a fundamental cultural change: a process of identifying and evaluating the assumptions, values, structures, concepts and principles of the institution in relation to whether they promote its intended mission”. Clearly, Blunt's definition of transformation pertains very much to the institution, as does the explanation given by Camblin and Steger (2001:12) who state that educational transformation can also refer to the replacing of the “ivory tower” of educational institutions with structures that have higher levels of accountability, greater practical credibility and which can offer an education that is a good investment.

On the other hand, according to Waghid (2000a:102), transformation is focussed largely on the individual, as indicated by this statement: “Transformation in higher education involves a process of new knowledge production, reflective action, which means seeking new problems and imagining new ways of approaching old problems and deconstruction and reconstruction or constant exploring beneath surface appearances”. What this translates to is that , transformation is about empowering individuals in education to become self-determined and reflective. In reviewing the work of Quinn, Sparks (2001:1) informs us that Quinn’s argument is that deep change must first take place at a personal level before organisational transformation can begin.

On another level, in South Africa the meaning of educational transformation is not only manifold, but also influenced by politics in the sense that educational policy in the post-apartheid era is on a path of major change, reform and towards a more equitable dispensation, away from the apartheid education of the past. This is influenced by enlightenment with the global trend to achieve universal education (Motala 2001:68 and Van der Merwe 2000:82). Indeed, transforming education in South Africa requires a “shift in mentality, from being racist, undemocratic and authoritarian, to being non-racial, democratic and enabling” (Waghid 2000a:101).

Continuing in the same vein, Waghid (2000a:109) stresses the importance of initiating equality and development while enhancing accountability and quality, in higher education transformation in South Africa. In this regard, Waghid (2000a:109), outlines a number a factors needed to reinforce the

transformation process. Firstly, equality through equal access and development opportunities for disadvantaged students. Secondly, the higher education policy has to be accountable and relevant to national policy goals. Thirdly, quality assurance measures need to be put in place.

Concurring with the above sentiments of Waghid, the ANC Education Department (1995:11), further explains that reconstruction of the curriculum will be essential in order to rid the education and training system of the legacy of racism, dogmatism and outmoded teaching practices. This will be vital for progressive transformation to occur. The management, development and approval of new curricula is the responsibility of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the NQF.

Additionally, the Education White Paper 3 (Department of Education 1997a:4) further describes transformation of higher education in this country as part of a process taking place whereby political, social and economic transitions are occurring in the wake of the pressures and demands effected by globalisation. Globalisation is the interlocking nature of world politics, political, social, technological, cultural and scholarly relations. For example, information technology has led to the concept of the "knowledge society" and has changed the way in which people work and consume. At the same time, of course, the challenge is to eliminate and redress social and economic inequalities shaped by apartheid. Thus, the emphasis is on national development as well as participation in the global economy.

At the international level, higher education has witnessed many transformations of which certain aspects have stood out (Mendivil 2002:353):

- 1) Growth in enrolments.
- 2) Diversification in the types of institutions, functions and sources of funding.
- 3) A growing presence of private investments "supplying" higher education.
- 4) Tools to ensure academic quality.
- 5) Curricula flexibility and curricula models to enhance knowledge and competencies.
- 6) Strategic alliances between universities, corporations and the public sector.
- 7) Distance forms of learning.

Most notably, in many countries, the present demand for higher education exceeds the capacity of governments to supply. Another important observation is that the traditional providers of educational services (public and private higher education institutions) and the "new providers" (business and corporate) compete for or complement the supply (Mendivil 2002:354).

Therefore, in the context of this study, not only does educational transformation pertain to the transformation of an apartheid education but also to curricula transformation in line with the demands of a technocratic, knowledge-based, globalised society so as to enable learners to become more globally competent and competitive. Educational transformation can be further defined and shaped by the imperatives that drive it namely, QA, ICT, innovative practices in teaching and learning, equity and redress as well as scholarship. This is made explicit in chapter 2 where educational transformation at national and international level is explained at greater length.

### **1.8.6 Educational innovation**

Mungazi (1991:103) explains rather succinctly, what educational innovation is, in terms of what should be intended when he asserts that: "Educational innovation is meaningless unless one of its main goals is to transform the curriculum so that it is in accord with the demands of the time". To this end, one needs to remember that radical educational innovation is being introduced by the South African Government, "in accord with the demands of the time". The main hallmark of this development is an integrated approach to education and training based on a National Qualifications Framework (Motala 2001:63 and Blunt 1998:102).

It is the task of SAQA to oversee the workings of the NQF and the implementation of a new curriculum, namely OBE. This system of change impacts heavily on the way in which educational institutions are to operate. In fact, they will be forced to initiate reform since there is national pressure on universities to conform to the requirements of SAQA. Also, educators will need to be made aware of these changes and use them for the benefit of students in the transition process. (Blunt 1998:102).

When SAQA was established, it was determined that unit standards and whole qualifications be presented for registration on the NQF and that learning should be outcomes-based. This is a major attempt to build the country into becoming an international role player (Olivier 1998:20). Phillips (1997:2-3) maintains that the NQF was designed to support the shift to quality (reform) in higher education. The SAQA and the NQF will allow learners to earn credits towards national qualifications, set against certain standards, thus maintaining a high quality education that will allow them to be globally competent.

For the purpose of this research, educational innovation will apply mainly to the initiatives of the South African Government in implementing OBE under the direction of SAQA and the NQF. Notwithstanding that educational innovation can also relate to the implementation of any novel curriculum, for example PBL, that leads to improved methods of teaching and learning. Problem-



based learning is discussed in more detail in chapter 2 (see subsection 2.5.2). Also, an international perspective of educational innovation is given in chapter 2 (see subsections 2.5 and 2.7).

### 1.8.1 The Medical University of Southern Africa

Geographically, the main campus of MEDUNSA is situated in Ga-Rankuwa, North of Pretoria and approximately 3 km from the city centre. A smaller campus also exists in Polokwane in the Limpopo Province where roughly 400 academics are employed. Figure 1.1 below shows part of the MEDUNSA campus where this study was conducted.



**Figure 1.1: The MEDUNSA campus situated in Ga-Rankuwa (Pretoria)**

As the name suggests, MEDUNSA is a predominantly medical institution. Since its inception in 1976, MEDUNSA has produced more than five thousand health professionals in the field of Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and the Natural Sciences. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was amalgamated with the University of Pretoria in 1999 (Dyasi 2001:1). Presently there are four faculties, namely the Faculties of Science, Dentistry, Medicine and the NSPH. There are approximately 1800 academic staff in the four faculties; 350 are in full-time, permanent employment.

On a larger scale, the institution is to merge with the University of the North (UNIN), as is suggested in the Government Gazette (2002). In a communiqué from the Vice-Chancellor, the MEDUNSA community was informed that the date for the establishment of the new institution is 01 January 2005. As to whether programmes and infrastructure would be relocated to Limpopo Province is yet to be finalised (Office of the Vice-Principal 2002).

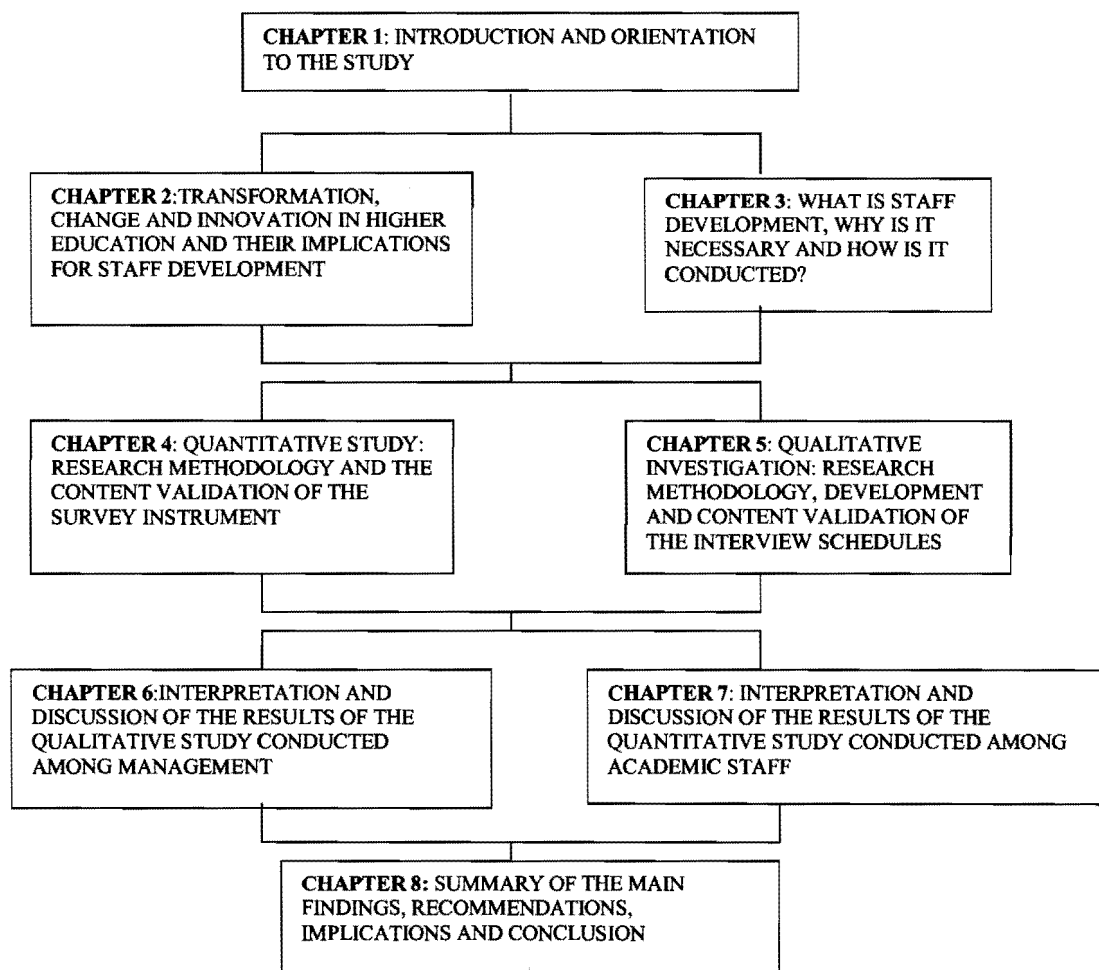
In the past, MEDUNSA's admission policy gave preference to Black students (but that has changed now). Hence, MEDUNSA can be regarded as a historically black university (HBU). Presently, the majority of students are African with a few Coloured, Asian and White students (Matlala 1999:5). Therefore, most of the students can be perceived to come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. This is one of the reasons that MEDUNSA's mission statement reflects the determination to empower those who have been disadvantaged by apartheid while uplifting the health care of the community through quality education:

"We empower the educationally disadvantaged community of Southern Africa by providing excellent community-orientated tertiary education, training and research in the health and related sciences and we promote services at all levels of health care in our community".

Concerning staff development, in recognising the need for continuous improvement of its staff, the university has a staff development division. In 2001, CADS was established to deal with the academic development of staff and students. This researcher is the only staff developer who is involved in the development of academics, at the unit. Staff development has focussed on the training of HODs who have received training in SAQA issues, management, budget preparations and employment equity planning (Dyasi 2001:11). In addition, training of academics in curriculum development, QA, the New Academic Policy (NAP), teaching portfolios and induction programmes for new staff, have been conducted. Also, the Evaluation Assistant, a computerised system for the evaluation of teaching and courses, was recently implemented by this researcher as a tool to quality assure the teaching/learning process (Hassan 2003).

## **1.9 Programme of study**

This subsection gives an overview and brief summary of the chapters contained in this dissertation. Chapters 2 and 3 are concerned with relevant data from the literature to enhance an understanding of the background to the problem and to explain why the study was deemed necessary. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the quantitative and qualitative part of the empirical investigation, respectively, and descriptions are given of the research methodologies employed in this research project. Chapter 6 contains an exposition of the results of the qualitative study while chapter 7 reports on the findings of the quantitative investigation. Chapter 8 concludes with a synthesis, synopsis and discussion of the research. Figure 1.2 illustrates an overview of these chapters, while a summary of the contents of each chapter is reflected in table 1.5, to facilitate easy navigation through the document.



**Figure 1.2: An overview of chapters contained in this dissertation**

**Table 1.5: A brief summary of the contents of the chapters in this dissertation**

Chapter number	Summary of chapter
1	A brief background to the study is offered together with a discussion of the problem statement. The research questions, aim, objectives, hypotheses including the research design and methodologies employed, are outlined. Explanations of commonly used terms are also provided.
2	An overview is given of the imperatives of educational transformation and innovation and their influence on the development of academic staff. Transformation and change is discussed at national and international level.
3	A more expansive explanation is offered for the term staff development and a justification for its implementation is provided. Various models of staff development are explained to give an idea of the myriad of methods that can be adopted in the design and implementation of programmes.
4	The research methodology employed in the quantitative investigation, using self-administered questionnaires, is explained. The content validation of the instrument is also outlined to demonstrate the synergy between the literature review and the empirical investigation.
5	The research methodology that was applied for the qualitative investigation is discussed, as is the content validation of the interview schedules.
6	The results of the qualitative study are interpreted and discussed.
7	The findings of the quantitative study are interpreted and discussed.
8	A synthesis and synopsis of the main findings from the literature review and empirical investigations are given. Recommendations are made for the enhancement of academic staff development at MEDUNSA and conclusions from the study are drawn.

### 1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has advanced a background to the problem to give some insight as to why the topic was considered in the first place and to initiate a theoretical framework for the study. The aim, objectives and hypotheses helped pave a path while embarking on the project and also provided a starting point for the research. The significance and justification of the study elucidated reasons for undertaking this study and highlighted the importance of staff development in a postmodern, knowledge-based society. The explanations of certain important concepts and keywords in this chapter are intended to provide some guidance while adding to a better understanding of the research.

The next chapter is concerned with educational transformation, change and innovation, and the implications for staff development. The intention is to highlight that the educational process cannot occur in a vacuum but needs to succumb to the forces of societal change, both nationally and internationally. This not only influences the way in which educators should carry out their

professional tasks but also how staff development programmes should be moulded to fit the changing educational scenario.

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