

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION, AIMS OF RESEARCH, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH PROGRAMME

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The problem of investing in human resources development is a challenge facing South Africa. The researcher is of the opinion that the promotion of lifelong learning is the solution to the problem. Human resources can be improved through lifelong learning, which will increase and improve the skills of the employees.

Owing to globalisation, 'the criteria by which political elites judge the 'strength' of the states and their institutions are changing with breathtaking speed. Powerful military and civilian bureaucracies only yesterday seemed crucial, capacity to adjust production and distribution mechanisms to the rapidly changing technologies and knowledge bases are being increasingly viewed as more significant indicators of strengths or weaknesses'. (Heidenheimer (1990:1) as quoted by Hussen & Postlethwaite (1994:1835).

The researcher not only views lifelong learning as the best way to improve skills with the aim of improving production, but also sees it as the (NQF) way to facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths, because technology and career changes put a lot of strain on employees. They need to be prepared and flexible in order to adapt to these changes.

Lifelong learning enables a rapid and innovative response to the demands of a growing economy and a changing country. It focuses on continuous improvement in productivity. To cope with changing technology and knowledge, the future of the country depends on the quality of person power supplied by the education system which it makes available to the labour

market. Comparatively speaking, South Africa is performing badly on the economic front.

Since institutions of higher learning feed the labour market, it would be proper to restructure academics' training and development. The idea of lifelong learning should be encouraged and inculcated in order to provide the labour market with quality human resources.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

According to the World Competitiveness Report of 1997, South Africa is number 46 on the people factor list and number 37 on the management factor list out of 48 countries. South Africa's weakest points were its lack of skilled labour and motivated people.

Since education provides the general basis of knowledge, the researcher decided to look at how education institutions respond to change. An institution that adapts to change, embraces lifelong learning. Education consists of different bands, the researcher chose to conduct research on the higher education and training band.

In view of the above overview of the problem, the problem that will direct this research can be formulated by way of a number of questions:

1.2.1 Will a thoroughly conducted needs determination for academics at academic institutions (that is colleges of education and technikons in the Gauteng Province) contribute to their commitment to lifelong learning and ultimately to their improved performance as academics?

Subquestions are:

1.2.1.1 are academics receptive to and making use of lifelong learning through training and development opportunities available at their institutions?

- 1.2.1.2 are management teams at academic institutions really committed to create learning opportunities for the active participation of academics to support them in lifelong learning?
- 1.2.1.3 do differences and similarities exist between the needs of academics at colleges of education and technikons for lifelong training and development?
- 1.2.1.4 how can management teams at academic institutions create lifelong learning opportunities for the active and motivated participation of academics at their institutions?

### **1.3 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

It is postulated in this study that:

If the needs of academics at academic institutions for lifelong learning and staff development programmes can be accurately and precisely determined (including their active participation), then academics at these institutions will have a more positive attitude to be more motivated and will actively participate in staff development programmes as part and parcel of lifelong learning process.

### **1.4 LIFELONG LEARNING AND PRODUCTIVITY**

Institutions of higher learning, especially universities, accomplish much through their research, but it should not be forgotten that "knowledge, learning, information and skilled intelligence are the new raw materials of international commerce and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs, synthetic fertilisers and blue jeans did earlier". (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983:7).

To ensure that the reputation of their profession as a whole is enhanced and remains high, academics have to keep on learning and improving their skills so that they are not overtaken by events. Improving productivity is critically dependent on the right kind of human resources development and training. It

is indisputable that lifelong learning will equip academics for the present and the future.

Change requires people to be capable of adapting to change. Such adaptation and job changes involve learning throughout a person's life. Lifelong learning will prepare and keep on preparing people for change whether the change is political or economic or work-related. Lifelong learning will increase job opportunities and mobility.

Academics should be motivated and made aware that an era of lifelong employment is a thing of the past. The number of educated people is increasing, employment is a scarce commodity and, once obtained, the challenge of keeping it is just as important. Continuous personal growth will ensure continued employment.

Academics should take the lead in the process of reconstruction, and lend it weight in order to rescue the country. They should also be aware that they are accountable to their clients, for example parents and students who want value for money and to other interested parties like the government and business. This is a huge responsibility.

### **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The modern economy needs modern workers. The most important characteristic of a country with a winning economy is its education system. In South Africa there is a growing recognition of education as a strategic factor in the growth of the economy. Although it took South Africa so many decades to realise the importance of education for all, this is now receiving high priority. The establishment of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a sign that education is being restructured.

The aim of this study is:

- to investigate the process of lifelong learning for the development of academics at colleges of education and technikons situated in the Gauteng Province.

The objectives of this study are:

- to conduct a comparative study to compare lifelong learning in the two types of academic institutions in the Gauteng Province.
- to identify the needs of academics, and possible reasons for the lack of interest in staff development and training programmes.
- to investigate an acceptable way of effective staff development and training programmes for academics at the two institutions of higher learning.

Everybody is looking to education to provide the solutions to problems brought about by the social changes and economic challenges that face South Africa today. Heavy expectations and demands are being placed on higher education.

## **1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE AREA OF STUDY**

The research is confined to academics who are permanently employed in institutions of higher learning, namely technikons and colleges of education in the Gauteng Province. The institutions that will be involved in this research are: Northern Gauteng Technikon, Pretoria Technikon, Technikon South Africa, Witwatersrand Technikon, Vaal Triangle Technikon, College of Education of South Africa, Johannesburg College of Education, East Rand College, Pretoria College and Sebokeng College.

A representative sample will be selected from each of the above institutions and questionnaires will be sent to full-time lecturers. The method of research will be fully explained in Chapter 4.

During the initial stages of the research the researcher was aware that the department of education is closing down some of the Colleges of Education due to lack of enough students to warrant the colleges' existence. By the end of the research some colleges of education mentioned above might have ceased to exist.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODS**

The researcher utilised the following research methods in the investigation of the research problem.

## **1.8 LITERATURE STUDY**

### **1.8.1 Primary and secondary sources**

A thorough study was made of relevant publications, articles and research reports, as well as official reports and discussion documents of the Department of Education in order to include the necessary information on lifelong learning.

### **1.8.2 Empirical Research**

The following methods of empirical investigation were utilised:

#### **1.8.2.1 *The questionnaire method***

For the most part, closed-ended questions were used in this research. A list of answers was provided and the respondents were asked to select the answer. The researcher chose this type of research method and questioning as it is "very popular" and because it provides greater uniformity of responses and are more easily processed" (Babbie, 1992:147).

There were a few open-ended questions, where respondents were asked to provide their own answers to the questions.

A covering letter explaining the purpose and value of the study was sent to all the rectors of all the institutions concerned and requesting the total number of permanent academic staff. Then questionnaires were sent to a contact person at each institution to distribute to the randomly chosen lecturers.

#### **1.8.2.2 Participant observation**

The researcher gained personal experience as a teaching advisor at Pretoria Technikon (Bureau for Staff Development), where her job involved training academics, and also as a member of SAAAD (South African Association for Academic Development). Being in such excellent positions she could use the participant observation method first handed.

### **1.9 TITLE AND CONCEPTS CLARIFICATION**

To gain a broad perspective with regard to lifelong learning for the development of academics it is important to clarify and define certain related concepts.

#### **1.9.1 Training**

Erasmus & Van Dyk (2001:2) defines education as "a systematic and planned process to change the knowledge, skills and behaviour of employees in such a way that organisational objectives are achieved".

#### **1.9.2 Education**

Education "can generally be defined as the activities directed at providing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in the normal course of life". (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2001:2).



Education and training are both important elements of human resource development. An integrated approach to these two concepts will profit the country's human resources development. The aim is to integrate the theory with the practice, and the academic with the vocational.

### **1.9.3 Development**

From a human resources point of view, Pace, Smith & Mills (1991:3) define development as "the integration of individual development, career development and organisation development roles to achieve maximum productivity, quality, opportunity, and fulfilment for organisation members as they work to accomplish the goals of the organisation".

Development concerns the preparation of employees to make maximum use of their skills and abilities, to achieve satisfaction in their work and to become experts in a spirit of competitiveness. It is also linked to career paths in an organisation. For instance, a lecturer could further his studies and end up as a senior lecturer or even the dean of a faculty.

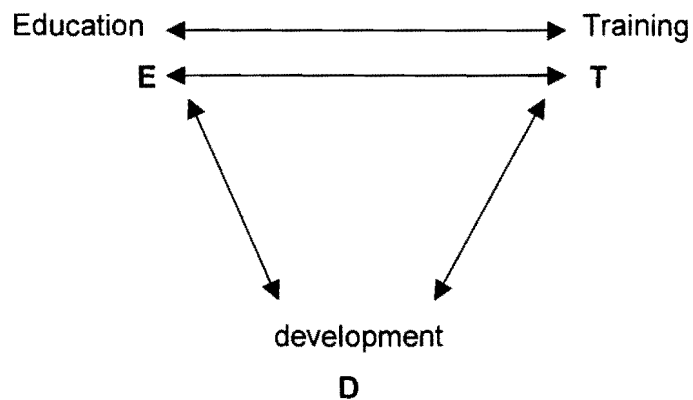
There is a link between education, training and development. They all involve "learning", but at different stages or levels. Nadler (1990) differentiates between these three terms as follows:

- (i) Education is "learning to prepare the individual for a different job".
- (ii) Training is "learning related to the present job".
- (iii) Development is "learning for growth of the individual but not related to a specific present or future" (Nadler, 1990:20-24).

Education prepares a person for general knowledge, to be used throughout life, whilst training is based on specific activities of the job or based on the job description. Employee development creates a learning environment within organisations.



Education, development and training should not be seen as separate but in relation to each other.



Source: Jerling (1999:3)

#### 1.9.4 Self-development

"Self-development is a conscious response on the part of individuals to deal with what they recognise as their development needs" (Katz, 1996:3).

Sometimes individuals recognise their lack of expertise and take a decision to develop themselves in order to be able to perform the job well. Self-development might be in the form of training or an individual enrolls at an institution to further his/her studies.

#### 1.9.5 Self-empowerment

Muller, as quoted by Tshenye (1996:11), states that self-empowerment is "the ability for individuals to equip themselves with achievement, motivation tools that they can apply for the rest of their lives. They must develop the attitudes and behaviour of self-empowerment, high achievement-motivated persons and adapt these as their own".

### **1.9.6 Adult continuing education**

"Instruction designed to meet the unique needs of adults and youths beyond the age of compulsory school attendance who have either completed or interrupted their formal education. This may be provided by a school system, college, or other agency or institution (including a technical institute or area vocational school) through activities and media such as formal classes, correspondence study, radio, television, lectures, concerts, demonstrations, and counselling" (Shafritz, Koeppe & Soper, 1988:17).

Both definitions of lifelong learning and adult continuing education share the following aspects:

- Education throughout a person's life.
- Availability of education throughout a person's life.

### **1.9.7 Motivation**

Robbins (2001:155) defines motivation as "the process that account for an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal". An individual should be willing to work hard towards a direction that will benefit both himself/herself and the organisation.

Two kinds of motivation can be clearly distinguished, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is "the need to do challenging, interesting and meaningful work, to execute it successfully, to receive recognition for this and to be able to develop in the process". Extrinsic motivation is defined as "needs for pleasant working conditions, a good salary, security at work, and so forth (Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk, 1996:328).

### **1.9.8 Organisational development**

"A collection of planned change interventions, built on humanistic-democratic values, that seeks to improve organisational effectiveness and employee well-being" (Robbins, 2000:553).

Organisational development is not only based on development but to improve organisational effectiveness and productivity. The involved participants need to discuss their training needs in a free and open environment. Organisations should not dictate to employees about their training needs, but should involve them in identifying their training needs. The objectives of development should be clearly stated.

Higher education institutions have established units such as academic development, staff development, curriculum development and student development. These units operate on different levels, some may be responsible for policy development while others are focused exclusively on academic issues. The researcher is interested in staff development.

### **1.9.9 Information literacy**

Information literacy is "an essential element in defining an educated person living and working in the information age" (Farmer & Mech, 1992:1-2). In their opinion, the characteristics of the information age are the following:

"... rapid exponential growth of new information readily accessible in a diverse mixture of old and new prints and electronic formats. The implications of information technology affect institutions of higher learning as well". By this the researcher does not imply that leaders of institutions ignore the information age. The researcher is looking at ways in which the acquisition of information through a bureau for staff development can be promoted to academics in order to avoid information illiteracy. Institutions are flooded with so much information that a formal centre is needed to control and direct

information flow. Lecturers can participate by helping with the planning and sharing of expertise.

#### **1.9.10 Lifelong learning**

Longworth & Davies (1996:21) define lifelong learning as "the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environment".

Lifelong learning is like recharging a battery. Lifelong learning is a process that improves knowledge, skills, productivity and personal development. This simply means that learning continue throughout life. The National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) states that lifelong learning "entail the incremental skilling of workers" (Behrens, 1997:215).

#### **1.9.11 Learning organisation**

Garvin (2000:11) defines a learning organisation as "an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, interpreting, transferring, and retaining knowledge, and at purposefully modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge".

A learning organisation is capable of interpreting the signs of change and creates an environment that is conducive to learning. A learning organisation easily adapts to change.

#### **1.9.12 Changing organisations**

Evans & Schaefer (2001:1) states that "changing is what organizations do, not what you do to them. Changing is the continuous process of an organization attempting to align itself with shifts in its market place and with the realities of its external financial, physical, social, political and technological environment".

Changing organisations are flexible and accept change.

### **1.9.13 Higher education institutions**

To provide higher education means –

- (a) the registering of students for –
  - (i) complete qualifications at or above level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995); or
  - (ii) such part of a qualification which meets the requirements of a unit standard as recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority at or above the level referred to in subparagraph (i);
- (b) the taking of responsibility for the provision and delivery of the curricula;
- (c) the assessment of students regarding their learning programmes; and
- (d) the conferring of qualifications,

in the name of the higher education institution concerned”.

**Source: Higher Education Act 1997 as amended in 2000**

### **1.9.14 South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)**

"SAQA" stands for South African Qualifications Authority, which was established in terms of section 3 of the South African Authority Act, 1995 (Act No 58 of 1995). (Government Gazette, 19 December 1997).

### **1.9.15 Guidelines**

A guideline is a "principle or criterion guiding or directing actions". (Thompson, 1995:604).

### **1.9.16 Skills Development Act**

Skills Development Act means the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998). The act is meant to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African Workforce.

### **1.9.17 Skills Development Levies Act**

Skills Development Levies Act means the skills development levies payable in terms of Skills Development Levies Act 1999.

The concepts clear the misunderstanding of concepts, especially those that are so close to each other in meaning, e.g. education, training and development. It would be wrong not to clearly clarify them. It is important to understand the exact meaning of concepts in order to have a clear picture when reading this research.

## **1.10 STRUCTURING OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

The research programme was structured according to the following chapter outline:

### **CHAPTER 1**

- Introduction
- Research problem
- Aims of the research
- Research methods
- Research programme

The first chapter identifies the problems which led to this research and is followed by a section that describes the research methods.

Chapter 1 contains the research problems, the aims of the investigation, the research methodology and, lastly, the research programme. The problem is stated. The aims and objectives of the study are also stated, the methods of research are explained, the field of study is demarcated and, lastly, a description and definition of terms are provided.

## **CHAPTER 2**

- Introduction
- What is lifelong learning?
- The impact of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- The objectives of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- The objectives of the National Qualifications Framework
- The new approach towards learning
- Conclusion

Chapter 2 explores in detail what is meant by lifelong learning. The researcher provides a general background to the research problem.

Chapter 2 investigates lifelong learning in its totality. The researcher looks at other terms that are related to lifelong learning, for example continuing education and adult education. The concept of lifelong learning is clearly defined and its implications are considered. The question of who should be involved in lifelong learning is also addressed.





### **CHAPTER 3**

- Introduction
- Institutions of higher learning as learning organisations
- The relationship between staff development and lifelong learning
- Delivery modes of staff development
- The functions of the staff developer
- Learning challenges for a learning age for academics
- Implications for providers
- Developing human potential: the aim of capacity building
- Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher looks at means of promoting lifelong learning in institutions of higher learning.

Chapter 3 considers institutions of higher learning as learning organisations. Concepts like motivation, self-empowerment, participation and democratisation are looked at as ways of promoting lifelong learning. The researcher describes the models of staff development and chooses the one that, in her opinion, is the best, and explains the reason for the choice.



#### **CHAPTER 4**

- Introduction
- Aims of the empirical research
- Methodology
- Selection of the measuring instruments
- Target population and sample
- Results
- Biographical data
- Conclusions from the empirical research
- Summary

Chapter 4 is an exposition and an analysis of the data and an interpretation of one point of view. It also compares staff development between technikons and colleges of education.

#### **CHAPTER 5**

- Introduction
- Institutions of higher education as learning organisations
- Characteristics of a learning organisation
- Model of participation of lecturers in determining their training and development process
- Participation
- Opportunity
- Motivation
- Conclusion

Chapter 5 provides guidelines for the encouragement of lifelong learning in institutions of higher learning.

## **CHAPTER 6**

- Introduction
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Limitations of the research project
- Further research

The researcher draws conclusions from her findings during the research. Finally, motivated recommendations will be made on how to promote lifelong learning in institutions of higher learning in the RSA.

Chapter 6, in short, deals with the study by means of an overview of the research and by stating findings and conclusions and motivated recommendations.

### **1.11 CONCLUSION**

Today's changing technology and working environment prescribe larger doses of continuing education and training. High demands, expectations and competition also play a major role in institutions for higher education.

Institutions of higher learning as providers of education and training will continue to be affected by the changes taking place locally and internationally, and they are expected to drive this process. Lifelong learning will promote and address the poorly skilled and the stale labour force. Through the Skills Development Act, learning will also take place at work. A wider scope will be covered because provision is also made for people who are unemployed.

Should everything go as planned, this will be the best gift to the majority of South Africans who never had a chance to be educated. The researcher believes that lifelong learning will take the country to its desired destination, that of being competitive and information literate. Lifelong learning is seen as a very important factor for economic growth. Education is seen as a weapon to alleviate unskilled labour and encourage innovation, and brings about positive economic change.

Without vision there is no destination. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the research. The last chapters provide an analysis of institutions of higher learning as learning organisations.