AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SPECIFIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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“It was the best of times. It was the worst of times” (Dickens, C.).
“Assessment for these times” (adapted from a title of a professorial inaugural speech by Bellis, I.).

SINOPSIS

Hoër onderwys in SA ondergaan tans ingrypende veranderinge. Groter toeganklikheid, veranderinge in die demografiese profiel van leerders en diversiteit asook die samesmeltings tussen verskeie hoër onderwysinstellings het die landskap van hoër onderwys beïnvloed. Die proses van transformasie en die gepaardgaande paradigmaskuif na uitkomsgebaseerde onderwys hou verskeie implikasies vir die assessering van leer in.

Die doel van die studie is om ‘n assesseringsraamwerk vir die vakgebied Menslike Hulpbronbestuur aan universiteite van tegnologie (voorheen technikons) wat kontakonderrig verskaf, te ontwikkel. Met hierdie doel voor oë, is ‘n omvattende literatuurstudie oor assessering gedoen. Dit het gedien as ‘n teoretiese grondslag vir die assesseringsraamwerk.

‘n Kwalitatiewe benadering tot die studie is gevolg. Fokusgroeponderhoude met die leerders en dosente aan verskillende universiteite van tegnologie is gevoer. Dit is opgevolg met individuele onderhoude met die departementshoofde en beleidsmakers (dekane en vise-rektore). Deelnemers in die industrie wat direk werk met die leerders gedurende hulle tydperk van ervaringsleer as deel van koöperatiewe onderwys in die werkomgewing, is ook genader.

Temas oor die verskillende datastelle is ontwikkel waaruit verskeie implikasies en bevindinge na vore getree het en geïnterpreteer is. Van die vernaamste bevindinge dui op die strategiese en oppervlakkige leerbenadering van die leerders; oorbeklemtoning van praktiese bevoegdheid ten koste van toegepaste bevoegdheid asook die onderbeklemtoning van kontinue assessering en die onderbeklemtoning van formatiewe assesseringsmetodes. Groot klasse lei daartoe dat die dosente en departementshoofde assesseringsmetodes kies wat maklik toegepas kan word en wat in die verlede sukses getoon het. Wanneer groepassessering toegepas word, verkies die dosente dit dat die leerders die

punte toeken. ‘n Gebrek aan assesseringskriteria lei tot onsekerheid oor wat gedoen moet word in take en in die industrie tydens ervaringsleer. Volgens die data is die industrie ten gunste van betrokkenheid by die assessering van ervaringsleer. Hulle benodig uitkomsgebaseerde riglyne vir die assessering daarvan.

Na die eksplisitering en integrasie van al die datastelle, is die assesseringsraamwerk vir Menslike Hulpbronbestuur ontwikkel. Dit sluit ‘n doel en omvang, rasionaal, begripsverklaring, rigtinggewende beginsels en die praktiese implementering daarvan en aanbevelings of voorvereistes waaronder die raamwerk geïmplementeer kan word, in. Die raamwerk gee erkenning aan toegepaste bevoegdheid, assessering wat ‘n integrale deel van leer vorm en praktiese metodes soos oopboekassessering, gevalstudies en aanbiedings. Metodes van assessering wat tot dusver nagelaat is soos joernale, portefeuljes, uitstallings en plakkaataanbiedings is ingesluit in die raamwerk. Variasie in die toepassing van spesifieke assesseringsmetodes word aanbeveel. Die industrie dien as ‘n vennoot in die assessering van die leerders. Die studie eindig met voorstelle rakende verdere navorsing.

Dedicated to the learner and assessor in all of us

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South African higher education institutions (HEIs) are in considerable flux. The inherited higher education (HE) system of the apartheid era was fragmented and separated along racial and ethnic lines. The White Paper of 1997 (Department of Education, 1997a: 1.1) introduced a transformation agenda in order for HE to overcome social inequalities and contribute to the needs of a democratic South Africa as solidified in the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994. The National Plan for HE or NPHE (Ministry of Education, 2001: 5) provided the framework and mechanisms to restructure the HE system to achieve the vision and goals for the transformation of HE as outlined in the White Paper (Department of Education, 1997a: 1.1). The overall goal is a single, national, integrated, co-ordinated and diverse system for HE that is characterised by equity, quality, responsiveness to the socio-economic needs of the country and excellence (CHE, 1998/1999: 1).

The transition is occurring during the emanation of a global economy. HE is called upon to produce the knowledge and person power that will enable this country to participate in a competitive global economy. A major thrust in meeting these demands is the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), legalised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act Number 58 of 1995 (South Africa, 1995: 1).

A further development is the Higher Education Qualifications Framework or HEQF (Ministry of Education, 2004: 6-7) which is an integral part of the NQF and a fundamental complement to the NPHE. Although it has not yet been released, the policy serves as a basis for integrating all HE qualifications into the NQF and

its structures for standards generation and quality assurance. The HEQF works within the context of a single, diverse and differentiated HE system. HEIs must correspond over time with the requirements of this policy.

The NQF and the introduction of outcomes-based education and training (OBET) necessitate a paradigm shift from content to competence in assessment practice in education, training and development in South Africa (SA). Within OBET, assessment forms an integral part of the learning process and more questions are being raised about the role and effectiveness of assessment. Furthermore, the increased demand for lifelong learners and reflective practitioners world-wide has led to a re-appraisal of the relationship between learning and its assessment. It has influenced, largely, the development of peer and self-assessments. Assessment needs to leave the learners better equipped to take on their own self-assessment. Unless assessment nurtures this, Boud, Cohen and Sampson (1999: 419) declare, it undermines the goal of lifelong learning. Given this view, assessment needs to be designed carefully so as to avoid unintended consequences. Sound teaching and learning are to be informed by good practices in assessment. HE needs to find alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation in an outcomes-based education (OBE) system. The changing learner profile in HE also poses challenges to meaningful assessment.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Boud (1990: 103) and Sutherland and Peckham (1998: 98) are of the opinion that HEIs increasingly resort to assessment for accreditation, while neglecting assessment for learning. Consequently, large numbers of ill-prepared learners, who lack the basic entry skills or required competencies to progress with their courses at the required rates, are accepted. Brown, Bull and Pendlebury (1997: 6) argue that “If you want to change student learning, then change the methods of assessment”.

Assessment drives learning (Biggs, 1996: 9). Brown and Knight (1994: 12) are of the opinion that the importance of assessment does not lie in the "…curriculum that shapes assessment, but assessment which shapes the curriculum and embodies the purposes of HE". According to Sutherland and Peckham (1998: 98) the greater part of the curricula in HE, is assessment driven. The assessment tasks define the curricula in such a way, that the learners often focus on topics that are to be assessed, in order to obtain good marks (Sutherland, n.d.: 2). In this way, assessment influences the learning process and the lecturers in HE are encouraged to use assessment as a way to promote effective teaching and learning.

HEIs cannot continue with their conventional teaching and assessment practices, but need to deal with alternative teaching and assessment methods to address the rising numbers of ill-equipped learners. In future, the lecturers will have to balance summative and formative assessments (Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 99). According to Gravett (1996: 76), attempts to transform HE will not succeed if assessment practices do not feature prominently. Therefore, the lecturers need to review and approach their assessment practices seriously and responsibly and ensure that these practices are compatible with the goals for HE and with the critical cross-field outcomes specified by SAQA.

The rationale for this study lies further in several developments in the national context and the institutional context. The national context is discussed as the macro level and the institutional context represents the meso and micro levels for the purposes of this study. The meso level concerns the nature of technikons (now universities of technologies) and assessment-related issues of a faculty at a technikon in Gauteng. Due to the experiences of the researcher at one specific technikon in Gauteng, references to other technikons at this stage are not made. By conducting research, the situation at other institutions will emerge. The micro level covers the programme group Human Resource Management (HRM) and the departmental level (School of Administration and, later, School of Operations

Management) within which the programme group HRM is situated at this technikon.

1.3 NATIONAL CONTEXT

The national context consists of the changing landscape of South African HE and OBET. Outcomes-based assessment (OBA) has implications for the HE landscape and OBET.

1.3.1 Higher education landscape

Influenced by international trends, South African HE systems and institutions are undergoing major changes due to the influence of globalisation, massification, and diversity (CHE, 1998/1999: 1, 6; Sadlak, 1998: 101; Scott, 1998: 108; Ministry of Education, 2001:6; CHE, 2002: 11). In addition, various HEIs merged and several technikons became universities of technologies (Naidoo, 2003: 1).

- **Globalisation**

Lingard and Rizvi (1998: 258) describe globalisation as a set of economic, cultural and political processes that make supranational connections in various ways. The rapid development of information and communication technologies has placed immediately productive knowledge at the core of the new economy and led to the emergence of the "knowledge society". Apart from the production of new knowledge, the reproduction, application and contextualisation of the existing scientific and technological knowledge have become important to a "class of knowledge workers" (Gibbons, 1997: 2; CHE, 2002: 10). These are skilled experts who are able to apply knowledge to local settings and problems. Against this backdrop HE needs to provide society with future knowledge workers who can respond to the demands of knowledge-based occupations and compete in a global economy. Also on the agenda is the preparation of people for work environments which value team work, self-employment and contract

work which in turn require more flexibility, adaptability and risk-taking by the workers. Globally, HE needs to concentrate on the employability of its learners and to contribute, at least partially, to national economic development (CHE, 2002: 11).

SAQA has responded to global trends by developing the NQF, emphasising lifelong learning and requiring that all qualifications at all levels of the NQF develop critical cross-field outcomes, for instance problem-solving, communication, and critical thinking in learners. The NQF as a transformation mechanism needs to link varied areas of provision across education, training and development; across basic, further and higher levels as well as in formal, non-formal and informal contexts (Department of Education, 1996: 56).

Erasmus and Van Dyk (1999: 2) describe training as a “systematic and planned process to change the knowledge, skills and behaviour of employees in such a way that organisational objectives are achieved”. They view education, broadly speaking, as those “activities directed at providing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding required in the normal course of life”. The integration principle of the NQF aims at a unifying approach to education and training. If a modified HE system has to deliver graduates who are problem-solvers, critical thinkers and effective communicators, these outcomes must be assessed. The learners should demonstrate the critical cross-field outcomes in integrated assessment tasks (CHE, 2002: 11). In addition, applied competence needs to be assessed.

Apart from globalisation, the HE landscape is affected by the phenomenon of massification.

- **Massification**

HE systems in developing, as well as developed, countries now have mass learner populations (Sadlak, 1998: 101).

In SA, the concept of lifelong learning as captured in the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1997a: 1.1) has influenced wider access to HE. The different growth rates have changed the learner profile at universities and technikons considerably. Between 1993 and 1998 the number of technikon learners increased by 41% in comparison with a growth of 56% in head count enrolments, while university learners showed an increase of 19% compared with a growth in head count enrolments of 17% (Ministry of Education, 2001: 23). One factor to explain this shift is the perception that technikon qualifications were more likely than university qualifications to contribute to employment prospects (Ministry of Education, 2001: 36). The period 1995 to 1999 showed an increase in the enrolments in the contact technikons from 18% to 23% compared to an increase in contact university enrolments by only 1%. Contact tuition refers to the conventional face-to-face instruction and the learner and instructor are not separated throughout the length of the learning process (Verduin & Clark, 1991: 10). The number of all technikon graduates indicated an increase of 363.4% from 1991 to 2001 (SAQA, 2004: 18).

The NPHE and the White Paper's (Department of Education, 1997a: 1.1) call for an expansion of career-oriented programmes which is the focus of the technikons, influenced the enrolments in programmes in business and commerce. The latter increased by 62% between 1995 and 1999, while the total learner numbers enrolled in humanities have decreased by 16% (CHE, 1998/1999: 2). Considering the joint output of all institutions (universities and technikons) the highest overall increase from 1991 to 2001 is detected in the Business and Management Sciences as 149.0% (SAQA, 2004: 18). This will

influence assessment in terms of learner numbers and an increasing workload for the lecturers.

- **Diversity**

The emergence of a more diverse and differentiated HE landscape is evident in the erosion of previously rigid boundaries between different types of institutions (CHE, 1998/1999: 1, 6). The differences between institutions classified as historically advantaged and disadvantaged, historically white and black, university and technikon, contact and distance as well as Afrikaans-medium and English-medium are becoming blurred. To illustrate, while only 25% of the African learners in contact HE institutions were enrolled in 1993 in the historically white institutions, this had risen to 57% by 1999. The huge growth of numbers of African learners has been in the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities and the historically white technikons as set out in the NPHE (Saunders, 1992: 67; Taylor, 1992: 36; Wade, Hodgkinson, Smith & Arfield, 1994: 12; Anon., 1996: 1; Ministry of Education, 2001: 14, 36).

In line with the goals and strategic objectives of the NPHE (Ministry of Education, 2001: 5 - 9) and the White Paper (Department of Education, 1997a: 1.1), participation in HE has also broadened and become more representative which signals equity improvements. The change in the racial composition of the learner body has been prevalent. In 1999, 59% of all learners at universities and technikons were African and only 29% white, compared to 40% African learners and 47% white learners in 1993 (CHE, 1998/1999: 2; Ministry of Education, 2001: 36). While African learner enrolments showed an increase of 74%, white learner enrolments decreased by 27%.

Different kinds of learners with different learning styles need a different approach to assessment. Since some assessment methods advantage some learners and

disadvantage others, Race (1995: 1) argues that the greater the diversity in the methods of assessment, the fairer the assessment is to the learners.

- **Mergers**

Following a decision to restructure the HE system in order to ensure its responsiveness to the demands of the 21st century, a series of mergers between technikons and universities have reduced the number of existing HEIs from 36 to 21 (Ho, 2003: 1; Jongbloed, 2003: 4; Lewis, 2003: 14; Ryan, 2003: 2). By implication the merging institutions will add more numbers and diversity to their learner profile that need to be addressed in the assessment of those learners.

1.3.2 Resulting assessment challenges

In respect of the preceding discussion, HE is characterised by the following challenges:

The shift from elite to mass HE implies that a diverse, larger learner body must be taught and assessed more efficiently. Papo (1997: 4) as well as Sutherland and Peckham (1998: 98 - 99) conclude that the staff-learner ratio is unfortunately unlikely to improve in the current economic-political situation. The lecturers are not facing a temporary crisis, but a long-term phenomenon. This, in turn, forces HEIs to adopt large-class instruction. The lecturers find themselves in situations for which their training and education have left them ill equipped (Papo, 1997: 15). They may deliver the subject matter as quickly as possible and the learners may not receive enough time to ask questions. Research is necessary to investigate how large classes can be rapidly assessed within OBA.

Marking papers of large classes takes a long time and with long gaps between the submission of work and the receipt thereof, the learners are less likely to be interested in the feedback. Any feedback which is non-existent, insufficient or too

late, leaves the learners without direction on how to work to achieve an acceptable standard (Papo, 1997: 50). With fewer opportunities to discuss assessor comments, the learners are unlikely to improve their future performance. With a likely decline in formative assessment opportunities, the summative piece of work receiving the feedback, is likely to have been done less well initially (Rust, 2001: 4). Since communication is mostly one way, the learners also infer the response of the lecturers to specific answers in a paper (Papo, 1997: 25). It should be established how feedback, including that in large classes, in OBA can be expedited.

Disadvantaged learning backgrounds pose a further problem. Many learners in HE have developed receptive versus productive learning skills. Consequently, rote learning is applied in a cognitively demanding situation which encourages surface learning (Biggs, 1996: 10). Teaching methods or assessment procedures in large classes may inhibit the application of the deep approach. Papo (1997: 38) concludes that the lecturers with large classes overload the learners with content with the result that the learning material is not treated in depth and the learners' understanding remains superficial. Thus, an overload of content leads to superficial learning. In large classes, the need to interact with the content, relate new ideas to previous knowledge and relate concepts to everyday experiences becomes problematic (Ramsden, 1992: 151; Papo, 1997: 38). The question remains as to how OBA methods can promote deep learning in large classes.

In conclusion, HE is grappling with change. In order to produce graduates with the desired outcomes, revisiting assessment to ensure that the required skills are assessed is necessary. While the goal of lifelong learning is being proclaimed, there have been huge increases in learner numbers and concurring reductions in academic staff. In the face of these challenges, HEIs may resort to the kind of assessment that may negatively affect the quality of learning. Research about the OBA of learners, including those in large classes, is required.

1.3.3 Implications of outcomes-based education

Against the background of inequalities, high drop-out (about 20% of all graduates and post graduates drop out of the HE system each year) and failure rates, relatively poorly qualified lecturers, an examination orientation with the major focus on rote learning and a lack of innovative teaching methods, the new democratic government chose the outcomes-based education (OBE) model to address these problems (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998: 203; Ministry of Education, 2001: 6). OBE is "a learner-centered, results-oriented approach to education, premised on the expectation that all learners can learn and succeed" (Department of Education, 1998: 9, 43). While this study does not attempt to be a complete treatise on OBE, the latter leads to a consideration of problematic assessment issues.

Bitzer, Kapp and Engelbrecht (1999: 10) argue that OBE relies too much on behaviourism. While behaviourism and pragmatism focus on the measurable, visible, practical and useful outcomes, the artificial demonstration of several intrinsic values in the implementation of OBE should be considered (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998: 206-207). Behaviourism and pragmatism further are in essence product-oriented approaches, while social reconstructionism and critical theory follow a process-oriented approach. The lecturers need retraining specifically to balance the two approaches in order to control worthless time-consuming activities.

The basic tenet of assessment in OBE is that the learner must demonstrate achievement of outcomes before being declared competent. Although this seems to be an objective way to assess learners, any human performance cannot be judged completely in the sense that a natural phenomenon can be measured objectively. Kissack (1996: 259) contends that human performance, especially

when it entails language (oral or written), can be judged only subjectively, since the assessors making the judgement, have to interpret what they see or hear.

The creation of conducive and transformative learning environments requires skillful transformative education, training and development practitioners or lecturers that are not easily found against the backdrop of South African education (Gericke & Smit, 1999: 29). Facilitators will need training particularly to balance individual and group activities (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998: 207) and to assess those activities. The lecturers and the learners that have become used to a system of being instructed what to do, will need assistance to adjust to a new way of thinking about teaching and learning (Gericke & Smit, 1999: 29).

In conclusion, the limitations of OBE deal with concerns about the role of behaviourism and pragmatism, the training of facilitators and the accurate assessment of human behaviour. While not everybody will agree with these debates on OBE, the relationship between assessment and learning has implications for the lecturers in order to apply assessment appropriately.

This study will focus the investigation and the formulation of the research problem on assessment in the contexts of technikons and industry. While the study was in progress, the mergers between some technikons and universities were announced.

1.4 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

This section provides background information about the general nature of technikons and the assessment-related problems experienced at one institution, to orientate the reader.

1.4.1 Nature of technikons

According to the NPHE (Ministry of Education, 2001: 54) the primary function of technikons is to provide career-oriented programmes. The first educational objective makes provision for the support and guidance of HE learners towards greater maturity. The second educational objective is to prepare the learners for the practice, promotion and transfer of technology within a specific vocation or industry (Department of Education, 1997b: 4, 7-8). This orientation was illustrated when all technikons set aside a period as a Technikon Week with the slogan or motto “Technikons: Education for the world of work” (Du Pré, 2000: 1).

Sufficient liaison mechanisms should be maintained with industry and where possible, with the vocational councils/bodies for every programme. Against this backdrop, advisory committees consist of representatives from industry and professional bodies that meet regularly to audit the course relevance in order to ensure their responsiveness to industry needs (Anon., 2003: 1).

Co-operative education is an educational philosophy. For Cates and Jones (1999: 1) it forms an integral part of the educational process. In practice co-operative education can include areas such as experiential learning, advisory committees, short courses, off-campus contact education, preparation of the learners for experiential learning, development of experiential learning programmes and co-ordination between the formal sectors education providers (Engelbrecht, 1993: 2, 66). A co-operative department or unit may be established to co-ordinate co-operative education (SASCE, 2000: 19). Experiential learning *may* be included as part of an instructional programme through the use of co-operative education, although the difficulty to involve suitable employers and the rising costs of education may prevent this inclusion (Department of Education, 1997b: 12-13). Although experiential learning is regarded as a vital component, it is not prescribed/compulsory in HRM (Department of Education, 1999: 107). While industry seems to be viewed as a partner in education and training, the

position with regard to the assessment of the learners is not clear. Since the technikon sector uses the terms co-operative education and experiential learning to define the integration of 'productive work' into the career-focused curriculum (CHE, 2002: 110), the two terms will be used interchangeably in this study.

After the mergers the Committee of Technikon Principals or CTP (2004: 4, 5, 8) has described the functions and components of universities of technologies. The focus has remained in essence the same with regard to some aspects. For instance, universities of technologies strive to liaise constantly with employers to ensure that prospective employees receive a relevant education. Experiential learning is and should always be considered an integral part of the education programmes. Technological capabilities are as important as cognitive skills.

1.4.2 Technikon and faculty

The programme group HRM resides in the Faculty of Business Management (FBM), the largest faculty of a technikon in Gauteng with approximately 50% of the total learner body and of the qualifications provided by the technikon (Matlhape & McLaren, 2001: 1). A proposed marketing plan of the FBM, a strategic plan as well as other marketing documents revealed several problems which impact on assessment (Matlhape & McLaren, 2001: 2-13, 23, 31-32; Mokoena & Bonyane, 2001: 2; Van den Berg, 2001: 7).

Quality assurance: SERTEC, the former Certification Council for Technikon Education, subsequently superseded by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), assures quality in technikon education. Feedback in the SERTEC report (2000: 1) commented on the neglect of quality assurance. This is evident in the curricula of some courses that have not been updated and revised in as many as ten years. The curriculum in HE is driven by assessment and the latter tends to influence what is learned as well as the way in which it is learned (Brown & Knight, 1994: 12; Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 98). In the absence of updated

curricula, outdated assessment practices may be applied which will be to the disadvantage of the learning process.

Profile: Although the learner profile has changed dramatically and rapidly over the past seven years from predominantly white to almost entirely black within two years due to diversification, the teaching process has not been adapted to effectively satisfy the learners' needs. With respect to the massification and diversity phenomena in HE, the learners' needs originate from their disadvantaged backgrounds, inadequate mastering of English as the medium of instruction, a lack of life skills and general knowledge assumed in the past and cultural diversity which is neither accommodated satisfactorily nor adequately managed. In cognitively challenging situations, learners rely on rote learning and adopt a surface learning strategy during assessment (Biggs, 1996: 10). This counteracts the requirement for knowledge workers in a global economy. This raises the question how OBA can promote deep learning.

Throughput rate: In view of the poor quality of the learners and the massification phenomenon in HE, the FBM has a throughput rate well below that required by the NPHE. In a meeting in 1998, the ideal to push the throughput rate up to 70% in a strive for excellence was set which puts further pressure on the lecturers. The temptation to improve throughput at the cost of academic standards may occur, since surface learning may be encouraged rather than deep learning which will not fulfil the need for knowledge-based workers to compete globally.

Large classes: Overall statistics reveal that the number of undergraduate learners in the FBM at this technikon in Gauteng exceeds those in comparison with other faculties. For example, in 2002 the FBM had 5677 undergraduates in comparison with the Faculty of Health Sciences with 1355 and the Faculty of Engineering with 3454 (Division of Management Information Services, 2002: 1, 3). Due to massification, working with large classes is a daunting aspect of HE. In

large conventional classrooms the quality of learning and assessment will be affected. As class sizes go up, assessment is likely to be undertaken less rigorously and, with superficial feedback, the learners find it difficult to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Rust, 2001: 3). The lecturers find it difficult to assess the oral or written work and often tend to focus on a narrow curriculum (Papo, 1997: 5, 43, 45, 50, 159). For Papo, a single teaching or assessment method cannot be effective in a large, diverse classroom. Research on dealing with the assessment of large classes is required.

OBET implementation: Academic staff lack training with respect to the compilation of learning guides and methods of assessment to assist with the development of courses in order to meet the requirements of the NQF and SAQA (Metcalfe-Sher, 1999: 6). OBA cannot be understood and implemented if the concept has not become part and parcel of the technikon.

Industry liaison: Although they may be well qualified, many lecturers in the FBM do not possess relevant hands-on industrial or practical experience. The foundation of the whole technikon philosophy is practical application of theory and skills transfer. The question arises as to who should assess the learners during experiential learning when the lecturers lack suitable industry experience. By implication, the manner in which the learners in the FBM are taught and assessed on the campus, as well as during their experiential learning period, will not enable them to acquire practical competence.

Industry liaison is not well established in some courses. The teaching and assessment workloads inhibit the lecturers from visiting industries. This prevents partnerships being forged for the purpose of co-operative education. Difficult economic conditions may also make experiential learning opportunities harder to find. A lack of close contact with industry may result in the learners not becoming proficient in the skills required by industry. Contextual assessment will be difficult to achieve in the absence of experiential learning.

In conclusion, the FBM is the largest faculty on the campus. This faculty is characterised by several assessment-related problems. For instance, OBET has not become part of the culture of this technikon. Although assessment plays an influential role within the curricula (Sutherland & Peckham, 1999: 98), some courses have outdated curricula that are detrimental to the learning process. In addition, the lecturers lack the knowledge and expertise to assess the large numbers of learners and compile learning guides. Insufficient interventions have been introduced to address the needs of the diverse learner body who, in many cases, come from non-English speaking backgrounds. Finally, a lack of industry liaison is evident in some courses. Many lecturers also lack industry experience and experiential learning opportunities are becoming harder to find.

1.4.3 Programme group and School of Operations Management

The programme group of HRM at this technikon in Gauteng resided in the School of Administration at first and moved to the School of Operations Management in 2001. From the researcher's experience, informal discussions with colleagues, a strategic planning workshop (School of Administration, 2000: 1) and a SERTEC report (2000: 1), several issues, which influence assessment, need to be addressed in the programme group of HRM and the relevant School at one particular technikon in Gauteng.

Assessment methods: From informal observations and discussions with colleagues it seems HRM lecturers avoided assignments as an assessment method mostly on an undergraduate level. This was the case due to a lack of library support and the learners finding it difficult to obtain sources before assignments are due. Theft of sources at times caused frustration to all the parties concerned.

It was decided that lecturers should apply Bloom's taxonomy as a guide to set

questions for tests and examination papers in 2001 and later that year in the School of Administration. However, the minutes of an HRM meeting of 18 October 2001 (HRM, 2001:1) reflected that not all lecturers abided by this rule. Consequently, in several cases the majority of questions in papers required lower level thinking skills and reproduction from the learners which leads to a surface learning strategy.

Assessment criteria: SERTEC (2000: 1) praised the uniform learning guide format in HRM as excellent. However, the absence of assessment criteria in all learning guides in HRM and by implication in the School means that the learners and lecturers were not aware of the level and quality of performance that was required. Constructive feedback is not possible when assessment criteria are covert.

Assessment criteria for presentations, as set out in the mark sheet, were not, in essence, assessment criteria, but vague aspects or statements to be considered. For example, the items "tone of voice" "media" or "body language" did not contain an indication of how those aspects should be employed. Although these "criteria" may have been discussed with the learners, it was not explicit or transparent in the learning guide or mark sheet. From discussions with colleagues, it appears that few lecturers negotiate the assessment criteria beforehand with the learners and the rest merely hand them the assessment sheet.

Formative assessment: In the period 1996 – 2002, the numbers for HRM undergraduates varied: 308, 365, 401, 402, 514, 462, 479 (FBM, 2001: 1). This reflects the massification issue in HE (Division of Management Information Services, 2002: 1, 3). The lecturers at the workshop of the School of Administration also noted the pressure to increase the intake of learners in the School. Large numbers of learners imply a heavy lecture (Mokoena & Bonyane, 2001: 1) and assessment load as well as deteriorating lecturer-learner ratios. The

large classes leave little time for questions, discussions, active involvement or participation of the learners and feedback that make continuous assessment (CASS) problematic. Since the learners' progress is problematic to establish, follow-up and support with regard to their improvement in learning are absent. Assessment is carried out in a rush and the lecturers have barely completed marking one paper when the next one is due. The lecturers, as a rule and not the exception, complete marking of papers during their official leave, to catch up on backlog or to manage the assessment load. This often causes delays in giving the results to the learners. The lecturers who want to apply other assessment methods can only do so in addition to the prescribed number of tests which results in assessment overload and, consequently, their idea to use other assessment methods, has been ditched.

From informal observations and discussions with colleagues, it appears that the lecturers in HRM do not apply alternative assessment methods as envisaged in OBA, but rely on presentations, short and long essay questions and case studies in tests and examination papers. The SERTEC (2000: 1) report for the programme group of HRM recommended open book tests, which were not widely or frequently used, as one possible method to apply.

Feedback: When commenting on presentations informally, the learners do not know how to provide and receive feedback. They take the remarks from the lecturer personally and will not give negative feedback if their friends are involved. In the absence of overt assessment criteria the learners do not provide specific feedback on presentations, but make vague statements like: "It was good." When prompted, they are unable to provide reasons or substance for their opinion.

Profile: SERTEC (2000: 2) expressed concern about a lack of learning culture on the campus. The strategic planning workshop (School of Administration, 2000: 1) also pointed out the poor quality of learners in the School. It appears the

learners lack self-discipline, maturity and do not know how to work independently. Since learning and assessment are related, the latter will be influenced by the quality of the learners. The implications for teaching and the assessment of these learners in HRM were not explored.

The learners interviewed by SERTEC (2000: 1) commented on tests being "sometimes difficult". Informal observations and discussions with colleagues revealed that the learners have become so focused on marks, that they inquire about the previous year's pass rate at the beginning of the new year and constantly demand that the content be demarcated for tests and examinations or expect tips for these assessment situations. Their first question usually is: "Will this be in the exam/test?". This results in assessment rather than learning being the focus of the learners.

A memorandum (HRM, 1998: 2) revealed that the learners rely often on previous examination or test papers, circulate those and learn only those questions ("spot") they contained as revealed that leads to gaps in their knowledge. In the absence of overt assessment criteria they concentrate their learning on what they perceive as important for assessment purposes.

Industry liaison: Although the programme group mission statement refers to interaction with industry with a view to forge partnerships (HRM, 2000a: 1), this does not always reflect in practice. For instance, in 2000 the advisory committee members for HRM did not provide feedback about the learning guides of HRM and further meetings were not held (HRM, 2000b: 1). Consequently, the absence of a link between theory and practice may lead to an inability to deliver much sought after learners to industry.

Although SERTEC does not require compulsory experiential training in HRM according to the formal technikon instructional programmes (Department of Education, 1999: 107), a small group of second year learners participated in

1996 in an 18-month “Training Internship Programme” devised by the Furniture Industry Training Board (1996: 4). Conversations with colleagues revealed problems like absenteeism, expectations of payment from the learners and the absence of a centralised structure within the technikon for experiential training. In view of a lack of formal assessment, the relevant parties were uncertain as to whether skills had been mastered and expertise achieved.

The strategic planning workshop (School of Administration, 2000: 1) also indicated a lack of experiential learning although employers were approached from time to time in this regard. SERTEC (2000: 1) viewed experiential learning for third year learners in HRM as essential. The question remains how assessment of experiential training should be conducted within an outcomes-based approach and what the role of industry should be.

In conclusion, large class conditions in HRM make teaching and assessment difficult for lecturers. It leaves less time for interaction and active learner participation. The lecturers experience difficulties in completing marking due to the assessment overload and do not always provide the learners with meaningful feedback in time. A failure to make assessment criteria transparent in learning guides and mark sheets leads to uncertainty about the level and quality of the performance required. Other problems constitute a lack of knowledge and implementation of OBET and OBA methods from the lecturers’ side and finally, a lack of industry liaison. The latter leaves the learners with few, if any, opportunities for experiential learning in the work place. In the absence of the assessment of experiential learning, uncertainty exists about whether learning took place.

The assessment-related problems on the meso level support and supplement those on the micro level. Both levels address the issues of large and diverse classes, and a lack of contact with industry. These issues have stimulated an interest in the assessment practices at technikons and the questions arise as to

whether other technikons experience the same or similar assessment problems and how these large numbers of learners should be assessed. Links with industry with regard to the assessment of learners at technikons need to be investigated. With respect to the preceding discussion, the research questions for this study will be formulated.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In view of the aforementioned discussion, several questions can be raised. The main question is the following:

- What is a relevant assessment framework for the programme group HRM at technikons?

To answer the main question, the following secondary or sub-questions in this study will be addressed:

- What is the relevant underpinning conceptual assessment framework for the programme group HRM at technikons?

- What are the needs and problems with regard to the assessment of the learners in the programme group HRM at technikons as perceived by the learners, lecturers and departmental heads?

- What is the role of industry with regard to the assessment of the learners in the programme group HRM at technikons?

In view of the problem statement and the sub-questions, the aim and objectives of the study are determined.

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To answer the main question, the aim of this study is the following:

- To develop a relevant assessment framework for the programme group HRM at technikons.

The sub-questions will be addressed in the following objectives pertaining to the study:

- To develop the relevant underpinning conceptual assessment framework for the programme group HRM at technikons based on a theoretical discussion and literature study.

- To explore and describe the needs and problems with regard to the assessment of the learners in the programme group HRM at technikons, by means of individual interviews with the departmental heads and focus group interviews with the learners and lecturers.

- To explore and describe the role of industry with regard to the assessment of the learners in the programme group HRM at technikons, by means of individual interviews with relevant representatives from industry, individual interviews with the departmental heads and policy makers at technikons and focus group interviews with the learners and lecturers at technikons.

A description of the appropriate research design, to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, is provided in the next section.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

Welman and Kruger (1999: 46) explain a research design as the plan according to which researchers use research participants and collect information from them. A qualitative study, which is explorative, descriptive and contextual in nature, will be conducted. These aspects are briefly discussed.

1.7.1 Qualitative

Creswell (1994: 1-2) describes a qualitative study as "… an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting".

Given the foregoing, the researcher needs to explore the perceptions, views, opinions and experiences of the learners, lecturers, departmental heads, policy makers and industry representatives. To give a true and sound report thereof, interaction will take place by means of qualitative data collection methods like individual interviews and focus group interviews. Pilot interviews will give an indication whether the researcher is conversant with interviewing and has asked the right questions. A protocol for the data explicitation as set out in section 3.7 will be followed.

1.7.2 Explorative

Exploratory studies aim to explore a relatively unknown research area in order to obtain new insights into the relevant phenomena. The purpose is to establish the "facts", to collect new data and to determine whether interesting patterns in the data exist (Mouton & Marais, 1990: 103).

The researcher in this study endeavours to conduct a relevant literature study. The assessment needs and problems as well as the role of industry with regard to the assessment of the learners from technikons, will be explored. The primary aim is to achieve new insights and an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of assessment in order to compile a relevant assessment framework. The exploration aims to generate meanings with regard to industry's and the academic community's views and perceptions. This study intends to lead to an improvement in practice with regard to assessment.

1.7.3 Descriptive

Anderson (1990: 8) contends that many contemporary and part educational phenomena have not been well understood, due to an insufficient description of these phenomena. Researchers aim to describe the domain phenomenon under investigation (Wilson, 1987: 9; Merriam, 1991: 27; Mouton & Marais, 1990: 44;). Descriptive research may be conducted analytically, in which new categories or classes will be formulated in the inspection and coding process of the data (Wilson, 1987: 268-269).

The researcher in this study will use a descriptive method of data collection to draw out the perceptions, opinions, viewpoints and experiences of the participants. The framework will contain a description of the purpose and scope, rationale, guiding key concepts, assessment principles, broad practical implications or procedures and parameters with regard to the assessment of learners in HRM at technikons. The explicitation of the collected data will be provided in a descriptive form and thick descriptions of the data will be given. The researcher will formulate new categories when coding the data and present rich accounts of findings.

1.7.4 Contextual

The main aim of the researcher is to describe extensively the phenomenon, event or group within the context of the unique background of the domain phenomenon (Mouton & Marais, 1990: 50). A contextual study thus enables researchers to come to an understanding of the framework of reference within which people interpret their ideas, emotions and actions which is not possible in quantitative research (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984: 6, 15; Lancy, 1993: 24-27; Cassell & Symon, 1995: 7; Mason, 1998: 4).

In this study, the views and perceptions of the learners, lecturers, departmental heads, policy makers and industry representatives are investigated within specific contexts, namely industry and technikons that offer contact tuition. By means of the identified assessment needs and problems and the role of industry in the assessment process, the researcher will be able to formulate an assessment framework.

1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The following layout of chapters describes the sequence according to which the research will be planned and executed:

Chapter 1 deals with the context of the study, as well as the rationale, the statement of the research problem and the aim and objectives of the study. A description of the research design and a clarification of key concepts, are presented in order to obtain an overview of the study.

Chapter 2 covers a literature study of the assessment of learners within an outcomes-based context. It serves as a theoretical point of departure for the development of a conceptual or theoretical assessment framework for HRM at technikons.

Chapter 3 contains a literature study of relevant literature on qualitative research in order to select a suitable research design for data collection in this study. The empirical data will be explicitated according to a protocol.

Chapter 4 concerns the explicitation of the transcribed verbatim data which will be obtained from individual interviews with the departmental heads (Data Set 1) and policy makers (Data Set 2) as well as focus group interviews with the learners (Data Set 1) and the lecturers (Data Set 1) at technikons. The data will be interpreted to form categories of information from the findings.

Chapter 5 presents the explicitation of the transcribed verbatim data of interviews with participants from industry (Data Set 3) which provides experiential learning as part of co-operative education to the learners at technikons. The categories formulated in this explicitation will be outlined.

Chapter 6 encompasses the development of an assessment framework for HRM which will be designed from an integration of the conceptual framework as developed in chapter 2 and the empirical data in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 6 further comprises the conclusions, limitations and recommendations, based on the findings in this research. Finally, indications of future possible research areas relating to the area of assessment will be indicated.

Figure 1.1 on the next page is a graphic representation of the course of this research.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

In any research, concepts take on a specific meaning within a certain context. Brief clarifications of the following concepts that are crucial to an understanding

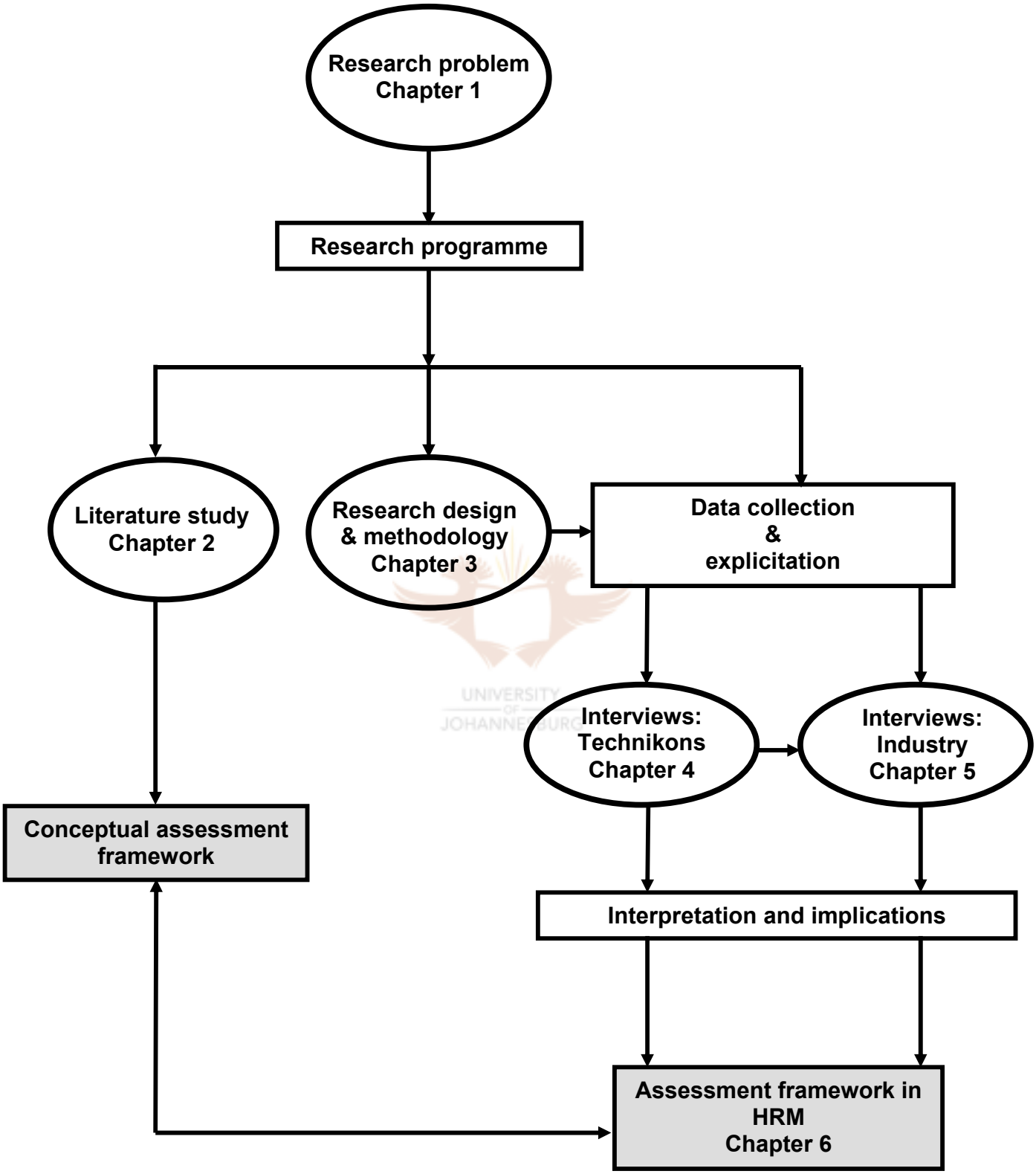


Figure 1.1: Course of the research

of the study, are provided. Concepts that deal with assessment will be described in chapter 2.

1.9.1 Framework

Marsh (1996: 73) defines a curriculum framework as a group of related subjects that fit together according to a pre-determined set of criteria to appropriately cover an area of study. The framework document generally includes a rationale or platform, scope and parameters of the curriculum area, broad goals and purposes of subjects within the curriculum area, guidelines for course design, content and teaching and learning principles.

Adapted from this definition, an assessment framework in this study will consist of a structure of parts that fit together: the purpose and scope, rationale, clarification of the key concepts, overarching and guiding principles, practical implications or procedures as well as the prerequisites or parameters, for effective assessment. A parameter or condition in this study is a limiting factor that restricts how assessment is done or can be done. The framework can be implemented under certain parameters or conditions that must be fulfilled in order for assessment to take place. It will be refined within the context of the programme group HRM for undergraduate learners. The idea is for the different technikons and relevant faculties to develop their own strategies.

1.9.2 Technikon

Technikons form part of the Higher Education and Training Band (HETB) in the NQF which includes degrees, diplomas and certificates (Human Sciences Research Council, 1995: 20). In the Government Gazette (Republic of South Africa, 1993: 4) technikon education is defined as “education provided partly or in full at or by a technikon with a view to obtaining a technikon certificate and aimed at the preparation of the learners of the technikon with a view to the

advancement, application, development and transfer of technology, and to undertake research and to render community service, and includes the support and guidance of the learners towards their human development in totality." The HE Act number 101 of 1997 (South Africa, 1997) has replaced this Technikon Act number 125 of 1993 (South Africa, 1993) but the former does not contain a definition of technikon education. After the mergers, the remaining technikons will now be known as universities of technology in order to define the basic function and focus of technikons and to distinguish them from "traditional universities" (Naidoo, 2003:1).

1.9.3 Human Resource Management

HRM is simply a way of grouping together the range of activities associated with managing people that are variously categorised under employee relations, industrial relations, personnel management and organisational behaviour (Heery & Noon, 2001: 162). It is an applied behavioural and management science (Nel, Gerber, Van Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono & Werner, 2001: 8).

1.9.4 Industry

"Industry" in this study refers to business, commerce or any formal organisation. Industry and organisation are used interchangeably, but denote the same meaning in this study. According to Nel et al. (2001: 540) a formal organisation displays a "rationally structured system of interrelated activities, processes and technologies within which human efforts are co-ordinated to achieve specific objectives."

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter serves as an orientation to the research project, by outlining the national and institutional contexts and the research problem to be investigated,

according to which the aim and objectives of this study have been formulated. In addition, brief explanations of the qualitative research design and methods to achieve the aim and objectives, have been included. Chapter 2 will be devoted to a literature study about assessment in order to develop an assessment framework that will be compared with the empirical data. A more detailed description of the research design and methodology will be provided in chapter 3. The rest of the thesis will be devoted to the explicitation of the data and the presentation and interpretation of the research findings.

CHAPTER 2

A CONCEPTUAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of the chapter is to provide an overview of perspectives on assessment in an outcomes-based context which will serve as a theoretical foundation for the assessment framework. The chapter will highlight the framework that reflects an ideal or the best that assessment can be or do. Implications emanating from the theoretical discussion will be outlined. Since this study focuses on the process of assessment, aspects like moderation and the assessment as part of Recognition of Prior Learning, which falls outside of the scope of this study, will not be included in the framework.

2.2 ASSESSMENT PARADIGMS

One way to understand OBA is to look at the paradigm shift from the traditional or conventional practice to an alternative or constructive assessment philosophy. The focus of assessment shifts from occurring at the end of the learning event to CASS, formative and summative assessment, self and peer assessment, criterion-referenced and integrated assessment (Janse van Rensburg, 1998: 82-83). Several assessors, including work place assessors conduct the assessment. The move is away from measurement and summative assessment as a single event to developmental assessment as an ongoing process (Janse van Rensburg, 1998: 83). Other components of OBA include learner-paced assessment, explicit assessment criteria, requirement of evidence for achievement, accessible appeal procedures and the use of a variety of assessment methods (Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 100; Wolfson & Lancaster, 1999: 419-420). The focus is on learning for and from assessment. Table 2.1 summarises the two paradigms as extreme poles on the assessment continuum:

Table 2.1: Assessment paradigms (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 127-129)

	Traditional testing	Alternative assessment
Theoretical assumptions.	Psychometric measurement, a 'scientific' paradigm, intelligence is fixed, measurable, entity that develops in a predictable way; test instruments should measure human intelligence accurately, objectively and reliably; testing should be context-free; norm-referenced assessment; knowledge is 'out there', given.	Assessment based on human interaction and professional judgement based on evidence, a 'legal' paradigm; 'capability' is a shifting social construct and contextually dependent; there are multiple intelligences; context should be built into assessment; concern for validity and comparability; criterion-referenced assessment knowledge is socially constructed.
Purpose (why).	Summative - grading, ranking, selection, prediction.	Formative, diagnostic and summative - provision of feedback for teaching and learning.
Focus (what).	A limited range of competences that are easy to test, e.g. content knowledge, discrete facts and skills - the products of learning in familiar educational contexts.	Integrated knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, the products and processes of learning; the use and application of knowledge and skills in real-world contexts.
Methods (how).	Formal, added-on after learning, separate from teaching, external, once off, convergent, design for mass delivery, e.g. tests, exams.	Continuous; internal and external; integral part of teaching-learning process; opportunities for divergence; authentic, meaningful contexts, e.g. case studies, projects, portfolios, and self and peer-assessment.
Interpretation.	Quantitative; concern for generalisability, objectivity, reliability; norm-referenced, criteria often implicit; statistical summative moderation.	Qualitative and quantitative; criterion-referenced; use of graded assessment criteria (level descriptors); possibilities for formative, qualitative moderation-based on peer review.
Response to learners.	Does not necessarily take learner needs into account; minimal response, results quantified, usually a score; unhelpful for further learning.	Respect learner needs; detailed, individualised and relevant feedback; helpful for further learning.
Effects on learners.	Disempowering, 'victims' of assessment, high levels of anxiety; encourages competition and surface or strategic approaches to learning, learners learn to test; emphasises a limited range of competences; exams drive the curriculum; secrecy surrounds the assessment process.	Empowering, active participants in the assessment process, encourages self-assessment, self-reflection, learner autonomy and deep approaches to learning; may encourage learner co-operation; emphasises higher order educational outcomes, encourages learner choice and therefore motivation; greater transparency in the assessment process.

In summary, the new paradigm involves a shift away from testing as the sole way of assessment to a variety of assessment methods being used to assess learner competence. In addition, assessment is viewed as a tool for learning. Well-constructed assessment has the potential to improve learning, while poorly designed assessment will have the opposite effect. By implication, well-prepared assessment practices can include traditional and alternative or innovative assessment as an integral part of learning.

2.3 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The relevant concepts as guided by the theoretical perspectives, need to be clarified and defined in order to distinguish between them. The following are key concepts that support the framework and that form boundaries and provide dimensions of the framework to be developed.

2.3.1 Assessment

SAQA (2001: 16) views assessment as a "structured process for gathering evidence and making judgements about an individual's performance in relation to registered national standards and qualifications". This definition reflects only the process of assessment. Cizek (1997: 8-9) highlights four other aspects of the concept. For example, assessment pertains to new *formats* to gather information about the learners' achievements. A second aspect is that assessment encompasses a new *attitude* to gather information on learner progress. Assessment further provides a new *ethos* of empowerment in which assessments are planned and executed. Finally, assessment involves a new *process* to gather and synthesise information about the learners.

2.3.2 Quantitative assessment

Mehrens and Lehmann (1991: 4) and Scriven (1991: 226) agree on measurement as a process in which one quantifies and analyses the performance of the learner. Additionally, for Mehrens and Lehmann (1991:4), measurement involves the use of observations, rating scales, or any other device that will enable one to gather information in a quantitative form.

In a quantitative approach, learning performances are unitised, for example, a word or an idea. A performance that is not expressed in a quantifiable unit, is made by allocating marks subjectively if not arbitrarily. These units may be correct or incorrect. The correct units may be approached in an additive way in which case the sum thereof will fulfil an index of learning that lies along a single scale. It follows that any one correct unit should have the same worth as any other (Biggs, 1996: 6-7; Biggs, 2000: 149, 161). It is then unimportant what is correct, as long as there are enough correct units to determine learner progress. The assessors can also estimate the worth of learning without having to measure the quantity of any individual element (Dake & Weinkein, 1997: 422).

2.3.3 Qualitative assessment

A qualitative way of learning has different implications for assessment. In qualitative assessment, learning builds upon previous knowledge and develops a complex structure. Assessment thus should inform on the current complex state, on how that meets the outcomes and not how it compares across the learners. The assessment grade does not represent a quantitative sum; rather a category or statement describing how good the match is for a learner. Learning outcomes should be assessed in a holistic manner, since the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Each learner is assessed independently of any other learner (Biggs, 1996: 7-8; Biggs, 2000: 151). Qualitative assessment does not concern itself with how much the final score is, but whether the final grade informs lecturers how

well the performance fits the outcomes. The ultimate grade enables lecturers to form an idea of how well the performance matches the outcomes. This approach demands higher levels of judgement from assessors (Biggs, 2000: 161). Reporting and recording assessment will be problematic if certain modules in a programme follow a quantitative approach while others are qualitative. Brown and Knight (1994: 40) further speculate that qualitative and formative assessment has scope that is denied in quantitative and summative assessment methods. The implication is that both qualitative and quantitative assessment will be incorporated in the framework.

2.3.4 Integrated assessment

Integrated assessment is a form of assessment that allows the learner to demonstrate applied competence and that uses a range of formative and summative assessment methods (CHE, 2003b: 56; SAQA, 2005: 12). The main purpose is to support learning. Integrated assessment should extend an opportunity to demonstrate the depth and breadth of learning at all stages and by means of various ways throughout the learning programme (SAQA, 2005: 13). Moreover, integrated assessment means:

- Assessing the achievement of a number of outcomes together.
- Assessing a number of assessment criteria together.
- Assessing a number of unit standards together.
- Using a combination of assessment methods and instruments for an outcome/ outcomes.
- Gathering naturally occurring evidence, for example, in a work place setting.
- Procuring evidence from other sources like logbooks, journals and portfolios, testimonials and supervisors' reports (SAQA, 2001: 55; SAQA, 2005: 13-14).

Integrated assessment should also assess the achievement of outcomes across different modules in the same subject or different modules in different subjects. It

focuses on cognitive and practical skills, and not on learning content only. Learners ought to obtain a holistic perspective by integrating the various disciplines, information, skills and attitudes that they have developed across a programme as a whole (Luckett, 2000: 3-4). Specific learning outcomes are achieved holistically and are not simply ticked off one-by-one in isolation. The implication is that integrated assessment within a module as well as across modules should be applied (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 110). In the development and design of integrated assessment approaches one has to consider ways to integrate the theory and practice. Transparency of and access to assessment plans for all role players are crucial (SAQA, 2005: 4).

2.3.5 Evidence

SAQA (2001: 36) defines evidence as the proof that the learners produce which shows they conform to the requirements of the criteria of the standard they desire to obtain credits for. Sufficient evidence meets all the criteria necessary to certify the learners as competent. Authentic evidence describes what the candidate has produced. Current evidence indicates the applicability of skills, knowledge and understanding of the learners in the current circumstance. The assessment process and the evidence must be suitable to what is being assessed (validity). For instance, it will be invalid to assess whether cooks can bake cakes by asking them to draw a picture of them (Ollin & Tucker, 1997: 14). Table 2.2 displays the types of evidence, their value, some ways to collect the evidence and assessment tools used in the process (Fletcher, 1997: 69-70; Ollin & Tucker, 1997: 13-14; Kenwright, 2002: 92):

Table 2.2: Quality and types of evidence

Aspects of evidence	Direct evidence	Indirect evidence	Historical evidence
Description.	Actual evidence produced by the learners; assessor observes the learner's performance directly.	Evidence produced about the learner from another source; can be used to verify the authenticity of evidence from other sources.	Evidence verifies what the learner was capable of doing in the past; least reliable evidence, because it does not guarantee what the learner is capable of doing at present.
Value of evidence.	Authentic, valid, reliable, current.	Verify authenticity, supplementary evidence, insufficient on its own.	Supplementary evidence, insufficient, least valid.
Ways to collect evidence.	Direct observation, questioning (oral/written), video tape, product and output evaluation, completed work piece, portfolios, role-plays.	Team outputs, performance appraisal, training records, testimonials, reviews, projects, customer reviews.	Certificates, qualifications, CVs, medals, prizes, trophies, photographs.
Assessment tool/instrument.	Observation checklist, questionnaire.	Project review sheet, team report, performance appraisal report.	

From the aforementioned, it seems that evidence may be collected directly and indirectly. By implication, evidence needs to be collected in the most direct way possible and assessors must apply assessment methods that lend themselves to the gathering of that evidence. The evidence ought to relate to the current performance and competence of the learners. Evidence in the work place is authentic and current. Finally, the evidence required will dictate the assessment methods chosen.

2.4 ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

Several guiding principles underpin assessment in OBE. They serve as non-negotiable issues and the parameters in the assessment framework. The principles are:

2.4.1 Assessment is integrated with learning and should concentrate on deep, active learning that applies higher order cognitive skills

While the learners can, with difficulty, escape from poor teaching, they cannot escape from poor assessment (Boud, 1995: 35). How the lecturers assess, influences the way in which the learners approach learning. Often the learners second-guess the assessment and use that as their syllabus. They will under-appraise requirements if the assessment tasks allow them to do so ("backwash"). In this sense, Brown and Knight (1994: 12) conclude that "… it is not the curriculum which shapes assessment, but assessment which shapes the curriculum…". The implication is that lecturers should use the focus of the learners on assessment by ensuring that the "true" curriculum is in fact reflected in the assessment tasks (Gravett, 1995: 3). In aligned teaching, the assessment intensifies learning and becomes a senior partner in learning and teaching. As Brown and Knight (1994: 155) state fittingly: "Assessment is at the heart of learning. Assessment is for learning. Assessment is learning". Given this relationship between assessment and learning, Biggs (2000: 160) cautions about assessment: "Get it wrong and the rest collapses".

The learners learn by applying deep, surface or strategic approaches or learning styles that may be adapted to what the learners perceive as the requirements of each module. In deep learning, the intention is to understand, with the active learners maintaining the task structure. They relate ideas and apply abstract and higher order thinking skills. Deep learning is required for the realisation of meaningful learning and critical thought. Deep active learning concentrates on, for example, understanding an author's meaning and showing how an argument is supported by evidence (Entwistle, 1981: 85). Deep passive learners mention the main argument, but neglect to relate the evidence to the conclusion.

In surface learning, the intention is to complete the task requirements. Fear of failure motivates these passive learners and they apply low-level cognitive skills

and memorise discrete items of information (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983: 16-22; Johnston, 2000: 3; Entwistle, 2001: 20). Surface-active learners describe, for instance, the main points made without integrating them into an argument. Surface passive learners indicate a few isolated points or examples (Entwistle, 1981: 85). Strategic learners differentiate between desired outcomes and employ either a deep or surface approach depending upon their estimation of the situation. The extrinsic motivation is to obtain good marks through time management and a focus on the assessment requirements. Although the learners usually adopt either a deep or surface approach, their approach to a particular learning task is resolved mostly by their perceptions of the lecturer's expectations and assessment demands.

The deep, surface and strategic approaches which are not mutually exclusive, have implications for course design, assessment and feedback. For instance, an overload of assessment tasks and assessment methods which focus on recall or create stress, a lack of sufficient feedback and a lack of interest in and background knowledge of the subject matter encourage a surface approach to learning (Ramsden, 1992: 81; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983: 21). Rhem (1995: 4) offers other features that incline the learners toward a surface approach. These include an exorbitant amount of material in the curriculum as well as in the course, relatively many class contact hours, a lack of choice over subjects and the method of study, and a lack of opportunities to study subjects in depth.

The deep, surface and strategic approaches have implications for the learners in large classes. The learners may adopt a surface approach, when the need to interact with the content, and relate new ideas to previous knowledge becomes problematic. Papo (1997: 38-39) suggests additional measures to counteract surface learning: include higher-level intellectual skills like critical analysis in courses and decrease factual information that needs to be memorised. Other measures are to increase the ratio of group-based and self-oriented learning to

didactic teaching and avoid excessive workloads and unnecessary time pressures.

Rhem (1995: 4) suggests alternative strategies to foster deep learning. For example, making use of learner activity, interaction with others and a well-structured knowledge-base like group work and problem solving. Allowing the learners some choice and control in their courses will instil a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation.

Appropriate feedback for deep learning constitutes detailed comments on ideas, evidence and techniques. The feedback should reflect understanding. Surface learning is encouraged by general comments. Strategic learning relies on mark-related comments and cueing learners into what they need to do to get better marks. Detailed comments on ideas are not welcomed (Brown & Knight, 1994: 109-110). By implication, lecturers should match their feedback and the preferred deep learning approach. Another implication is that applying appropriate assessment methods and explicit assessment should promote deep learning criteria that focus on the assessment requirements.

From the discussion, it is clear that a surface approach to learning involves passive learners that memorise and reproduce, while deep learning involves an active attempt to understand the learning material. Certain strategies foster a surface or deep approach. The choice of one assessment method over another conveys to learners what is valued, as revealed in the deep and surface approaches to learning.

2.4.2 Assessment should be approached as an integral part of the programme and module development

Without alignment between feedback, criteria and the assessment tasks, the lecturers cannot assist the learners to master the learning outcomes of a module

or programme. In the planning of programmes and modules, the assessment tasks should fit the learning outcomes (Brown, 2001: 4; Dunn, Morgan, O'Reilly & Parry, 2004: 214). Since serious implications for learning emanate from the assessment decisions, the design of assessment needs to be embodied in the programme and module development and agreed upon by all the stakeholders concerned in the delivery of the programme and modules. Assessment should not be viewed as an "add on".

From the discussion, it seems assessment is linked to the learning programme. All stakeholders need to provide their input in the design of assessment.

2.4.3 Assessment needs to be authentic and contextualised

Authentic or performance assessment practices invite the learners to execute real-life tasks. Those assessment tasks need an active demonstration of the knowledge concerned in opposition to talking or writing about it (Phye 1997: 338-339; Biggs, 2000: 151). All learners attempt all tasks which generally comprise a higher order level of thinking for which the learners have to move further than the routine use of previously learned information (Vinograd & Perkins, 1996: 2; Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997: 168; Biggs, 2000: 151). The learners perceive tasks as worthwhile and relevant. According to Sutherland and Peckham (1998: 102-103) authentic assessment moves the focus of assessment to learning itself.

By implication, the assessors need to consider assessment contexts that the learners are likely to come across in real life situations. For example, open book examinations offer the learners the opportunity to analyse and synthesise information under "real-world" conditions (Candy, Grebert & O' Leary, 1994: 151). Other examples of authentic assessment include portfolios, simulations and in-situ work place assessments (Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 102). It can be documented through observation, anecdotal records, journals, logs, work samples, exhibits and projects (Vinograd & Perkins, 1996: 2).

Before developing authentic tasks, Van der Horst and McDonald (1997: 189-190) recommend that lecturers bear in mind the main disadvantages of authentic assessments. It may require more time, resources and effort by the lecturer to assess learner performance than to count correct answers in an objective test. However, all learning activities do not have to be authentic. There is still room to cover basic knowledge and skills through traditional testing. Furthermore, it is not necessary to assess all authentic tasks, since some of them may be used essentially as instructional tools that are not formally assessed.

Industry can and should play a role in authentic assessment. Experiential learning ensures proper integration of tuition and practical application, resulting in deep learning and competence (TSA, 2003: 4, 5, 10). More importantly, learners learn about the work place culture, norms of practice and what is acceptable behaviour and what is not by a process of enculturation in a work place context (Zegwaard, Coll & Hodges, 2003: 11). Employers are directly involved in the training of future human resource practitioners and can recruit their future employees from a pool of learners during experiential learning (Wait, 2004: 280-282). They convey the latest developments in the field to the learners. The latter gain work place experience that is valuable in their job hunting process. They have a better chance to secure full time permanent positions on completion of their studies. They bring fresh ideas from their institutions to the industry. The technikons establish relevant programmes that address the needs of the industry and the learners and gain access to new developments in the industry. The implication is to involve the industry in the assessment of the learners.

Authentic assessment is contextualised. Biggs (2000: 152) states that contextualised assessments like practicums and solving case studies are appropriate to assess functioning or operative knowledge. Decontextualised assessments, on the other hand, are used to assess declarative knowledge, for example a written examination or a term paper. Although both have a place, decontextualised assessments have been over-accentuated in relation to their

role in the curriculum. Functioning knowledge is endorsed by declarative knowledge and both should be assessed: the general understanding prior to how the learners use what they know in real-world challenges. A common error is to assess the declarative knowledge only; not the functioning knowledge. Learners say what they have learned, instead of demonstrating it in their performance.

Conceptually the basis of co-operative education is the application of the theory and knowledge gained in the technikon classroom and the development of practical skills, using recent technology and techniques in a real work place context (CHE, 2002: 110-111). Assessment occurs via the use of logbooks, project reports, learner interviews and a report from the mentor. The implication is for the industry to provide contextual assessment of the learners.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that authentic assessment focuses on the performance of real-life tasks. Authentic assessment is contextualised assessment in that it assesses functioning or operative knowledge. The technikons and the work place can each provide both authentic and contextualised assessment. Declarative knowledge should not be assessed at the expense of operative knowledge.

2.4.4 Assessment needs to be continuous

It is important to distinguish between continual assessment and CASS. Continual or intermittent assessment operates traditionally, with the lecturer as the only judge of quality (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 111; Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 101). It concerns repeated assessments of learners at short intervals by using the same or similar techniques often for summative purposes. Each assessment is viewed independently of other assessments and learners receive limited feedback. By implication continual assessment should be avoided, since OBA advocates a variety of assessment methods and multiple assessors. The focus is

less on summative assessment and more on formative assessment. Feedback from each assessment should enhance learning.

The Department of Education (1998: 9) describes CASS as an “ongoing process that measures a learner’s achievement during the course of a grade or level, providing information that is used to support a learner’s development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process”. The problem with CASS is that it is nearly impossible for lecturers to keep a record of every little thing they notice. In view of time constraints, lecturers may assess continually rather than continuously. Applying continual assessment, enables lecturers to keep a progress record without sacrificing too much time.

When assessing large classes, CASS has several advantages. Adjustments can be made to the learning unit while it is still proceeding and learning problems can be detected early on in the learners’ progress. Moreover, assessment becomes part of the learners’ learning process. Finally, CASS is a reliable sign of successful learning as it uses a wide range of techniques regularly (Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 101).

CASS may serve different purposes. It may be used as a way to gather evidence of the learners’ achievements throughout the year and to monitor learner progress and understanding. CASS assesses learners regularly and in a way that integrates teaching, learning and assessment. Feedback from each assessment informs further teaching and the next assessment. The assessor will assess the learning formatively and developmentally, but the lecturer is not always the only one to judge the quality of the learning (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 111; Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 101). CASS applies various approaches and uses the feedback from each assessment to advise the construction of the next. CASS implies a cyclical process which contributes to the development of a multi-faceted, holistic understanding of the learner rather than a repeated process. Continuous summative assessment is based on integrated

assessment. When applying CASS in a summative manner, it should summarise the evidence about learners by exercising professional judgement. This does not imply the addition of a series of test marks which are all of an equal weight (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 111). The implication is that CASS needs to be accommodated in a different way in large classes where fewer opportunities exist for feedback.

Different assessment methods need to be combined to collect evidence where CASS takes place routinely such as in the work place. Evidence can also be gathered from other sources such as supervisors' reports, testimonials, portfolios of work done formerly, logbooks and journals (SAQA, 1999: 29-30).

2.4.5 Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment purposes should be clear and include formal and informal assessment

The purposes of assessment are diagnostic, formative and summative.

2.4.5.1 Diagnostic assessment

In diagnostic assessment the purpose is to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of learners and to determine:

- The learners' prior knowledge to plan learning experiences based on existing knowledge.
- Whether the learners have the potential to gain access to a specific learning programme.
- The required remedial action to enable the progress of the learners (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 101).

Technology-supported diagnostic assessment opportunities and appropriate feedback can be designed and customised. Geyser (2002: 7) recommends that

assessors should take into account the data from diagnostic assessment when planning programmes and modules and organise supplementary learner support.

2.4.5.2 Formative assessment

Formative assessment refers to daily assessment and occurs during the process of learning and teaching (SAQA, 2001: 26). It feeds directly back into the teaching-learning process; supports this process; assists in the process of future learning and concentrates on learning from assessment. Formative assessment diagnoses the weaknesses and strengths of the learners and assists decision-making about the readiness of the learners for summative assessments. Due to its developmental nature, credits/certificates are not awarded.

Formative assessment methods can be timesaving: they make use of peer, self (Baume, 2001: 8) and group assessment as well as computer-assisted assessment. In providing feedback about the progress of learners and a profile of what they have learnt, formative assessments can motivate the learners through success, support a diagnosis of the individual's needs and assist to enhance learning (SAQA, 2001: 26). It promotes deep learning and consolidates work done to date. The greatest value in formative assessment for Brown and Knight (1994: 40) lies in a movement away from assessment as something done to the learners, to assessment as something done with learners and then to assessment as something done for learners.

Formative assessment has two major implications. Lecturers need to review the progress of the learners across the entire programme, identify areas for further attention and foster intrinsic motivation. Greater priority should also be awarded to teaching and with it, training for teaching that is in alignment with formative assessment.

2.4.5.3 Summative assessment

When referring to summative assessment, it is important to take note of the concept evaluation. In South Africa and other countries, like Australia and New Zealand, that have also developed national qualifications frameworks, the umbrella term “assessment” includes evaluation and assessment (Jessup, 1995: 1). Scriven (1991: 60) points out that the concept assessment originated in an effort to move away from a narrow perspective of evaluation and focus more on the processes and methods that are not solely concentrated on measurement. Brown, Bull and Pendlebury (1997: 8); Wolf (1994: 364); Lawton and Gordon (1993: 82) and Scriven (1991: 60, 139) reach consensus in that they identify evaluation as a process to determine the merit, quality, worth or value of entities and the product of that process. In other words, evaluation means, “to judge”. The concept of evaluation seems to reflect another paradigm. The framework will include summative assessment.

Summative assessment is assessment for making judgements about achievement. This takes place when the learners are ready to undergo assessment that *may* be at the end of learning to determine whether the learners are competent or not yet competent. Once deemed competent, the credits are awarded and recorded (SAQA, 2001: 26; Mokhobo-Nomvete, 1999: 5). Summative assessment reflects learning for assessment.

In formative assessment the learners are willing to reveal what they cannot do, unlike in high stakes summative assessment. Luckett and Sutherland (2000: 102-103) advise that formative and summative purposes should be kept separate, since confusion between the two may result in unfair assessment practices and unsound judgements on the 'what' and the 'how' of assessment. However, with the consent of the learner, results originally gathered for formative assessment can be used for summative assessment, in order to prevent having to assess outcomes twice (SAQA, 2001: 26). Formative assessment may also be used to

prepare learners for summative assessments (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997: 171; Sutherland & Peckham, 1998: 100-101). Transparency throughout is paramount: the learners must be clear as to whether they are undergoing formative or summative assessments.

Learning may be organised around one outcome and then assessed, or be organised around a set of outcomes and assessment could take place when the learners have achieved all the outcomes (Geyser, 2002: 8). This enables summative assessment to occur on a continuous basis at any given point of the whole learning experience and then it is called continuous summative assessment. Therefore, summative assessment is not restricted to a written examination that only assesses a learning sample within a fixed time (for example three hours). Assessors may use a range of assessment methods and evidence can be gathered from various sources (SAQA, 2001: 27). The assessment methods and timing of assessment ought to consider the purpose of the assessment in the planning process.

In view of massification, globalisation and diversity the different purposes of assessment imply that assessment practices/activities should consider diagnostic, summative and formative purposes. The assessment methods and timing of assessment must further consider the purpose of assessment. The learning guide, class discussions and the web-learning environment are examples of ways in which to communicate these purposes to the learners (Geyser, 2002: 7). Key role players should be clear about the purpose of the assessment.

Summative and formative assessments show similarities (Geyser, 2002: 9). Both:

- Occur continuously during a module or programme.
- Collect evidence of learner competence.
- Communicate their purposes to the learners.

- Should promote deep learning.
- Require feedback (albeit different kinds of feedback).
- Informs further teaching and module/programme development.

The differences between summative and formative assessments are depicted in Table 2.3 (Geyser, 2002: 9-10):

Table 2.3: Differences between summative and formative assessments

Summative assessments	Formative assessments
The purpose is to judge the performance of the learner in terms of pass or fail – the allocated marks communicate that to the learners.	The purpose is to assist the learners to identify strengths and weaknesses, redirect them and provide another opportunity to try again without judgement.
Formal feedback which usually consists of marks and some comments.	Feedback is often informal and usually consists of qualitative comments and advice to better the performance.

Luckett and Sutherland (2000: 101) caution that summative assessment enables lecturers to exert power over learners, and they should exercise this power in a responsible and accountable manner. The implication is that the number of summative assessments should be limited.

Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment purposes should make provision for both formal and informal assessment. Table 2.4 portrays the differences between formal and informal assessment (Geyser, 2001: 7).

Table 2.4: Formal and informal assessment

Formal assessment	Informal assessment
These are agreed upon assessment events between assessors and candidates.	These are incidental and are often one-sided, with the assessors collecting evidence without the candidate being aware of the fact that they are being assessed.
Both parties (assessors and candidates) know what kind of evidence is being collected, when it will be collected and how it will be done.	There are no specific times or procedures set for collecting evidence: selection and criteria are implicit rather than explicit.
Assessment is managed in accordance with agreed upon procedures and both parties are	There is no formal plan for the collection of evidence: it happens spontaneously and

Formal assessment	Informal assessment
aware of the criteria used to evaluate the results.	incidentally.

Summative assessment is more structured and formal. Frequently formative assessment is informal.

2.4.6 Assessment needs to be criterion-referenced and relevant assessment criteria need to be identified and applied

In criterion-referenced assessment (CRA) the learner's performance is judged against pre-stipulated criteria or standards, while in norm-referenced assessment (NRA) the learners' performances are compared with that of their peers in the same class or group. Conventional assessment practices tend to include both implicitly, while the assessment criteria have stayed implicit (CHE, 2002: 112-113). CRA is inclined to be more transparent due to its explicitly stated criteria. In order to apply CRA, the criteria and the evidence to satisfy those criteria should be clear.

However, this does not mean that CRA and NRA are mutually exclusive. In practice, lecturers are inclined to use a bit of each. The CHE (2002: 113) advocates criterion referencing, as long as one adopts a holistic approach.

On the other hand, assessors should guard against a reliance on this form of assessment only. It should be part of a range of assessments that include best practice like CRA and NRA. Furthermore, Biggs (2000: 150) concludes that CRA assessment can be quantitatively or qualitatively conceived, but NRA can only be quantitative.

Assessment criteria form an integral part of assignments and tasks and are essential to self-assessment and peer assessment. Assessment criteria ought to concentrate on observable and assessable competences. The criteria constitute

evidence that the learners have achieved the specific outcomes. In addition, the criteria are clear and transparent expressions of requirements against which lecturers assess performance (SAQA, 2001: 21). They do not point to marks and are not focused on measurement (Geyser, 1997: 328).

In OBET, the criteria derived from the specific outcomes should be negotiated between the learners and the assessors or both parties should develop them. The assessors can award marks for clear criteria the learners develop (Brown, Race & Rust, 1995: 79). In this way, the learners develop a deeper understanding of what the criteria involve and a mutually agreed upon and understood value system for assessment can evolve (Gravett, 1995: 7). According to SAQA (2001: 21), the criteria are descriptions of applied competence in their interaction. The criteria ought to be understandable by all the parties who use them. Further requirements are that they should be explicit about the expectations of the learners, clearly communicated to the learners and posed at the right level.

Learning processes need to be translated into pre-defined assessment criteria that the learners receive before they are assessed. Their performances are then judged transparently against these criteria.

2.4.7 Assessment processes need to be reliable

Reliability indicates consistency in assessment, including in the administration of assessment. The assessor would make the same judgement in the same or similar contexts each time a specific assessment for specified stated intentions is conducted (SAQA, 2001: 18). The judgement passed is comparable to the judgement that other assessors would make. Assessor bias and assessor assumptions about the learner, based on previous performance, must not be allowed (SAQA, 2001: 18). The learners should be briefed consistently, receiving the details in information and the identical opportunity to inquire about criteria

and outcomes. Systems should be in place for moderation, for example, double marking, sampling or cross-moderation. For assessment practices to be both reliable and valid, assessors should apply a variety of assessment methods.

Great inconsistencies between the marking of different assessors and within the marking of a single assessor can occur. To reduce inconsistency in marking, the CHE (2002: 114-115) recommends the following strategies: anonymous marking (learner numbers instead of learner names), clear and manageable assessment criteria, internal moderation and the use of several assessment tasks that engage a range of assessment methods.

From the foregoing discussion, assessors need to ensure the reliability or consistency of the assessments. Several strategies can be applied to ensure that inconsistencies do not occur, for example, anonymous marking.

2.4.8 Assessment tasks need to be valid

Validity concerns the appropriateness, usefulness and meaningfulness of the deductions made from the assessment results (CHE, 2002: 113). In other words, one asks: “Am I really assessing what I intended to assess and are my intentions justifiable in the first place?”. This question connects to the question of fitness of purpose (Are we assessing the right things?) and the questions of fitness for purpose (Are we assessing things right?).

Although the importance of accuracy or validity has been pointed out, the CHE (2002: 114) advocates a shift away from “scientific”, “empirical” or experimental models of assessment, to “interpretative” or “judicial” models rather. Assessment criteria should not be stipulated so closely that the assessor’s judgement is ruled out. Ways to achieve validity include the following:

- Use of clear learning outcomes and their connection to specific

assessment criteria within an all encompassing assessment strategy.

- Selection of assessment methods that are “fit for their purpose”.
- Use of a range of assessment methods to ensure that all learning outcomes are assessed (avoid assessing those that are easy to assess).
- Constituting links between assessment, learning and personal development, by inter alia, giving the learners some element of choice, promoting self-assessment and reflection (CHE, 2002: 114).

In summary, assessment is viewed as an interpretative, human exercise based on professional dialogue and judgement instead of based on objective measurement. This implies that the learning context should be considered when making judgements. The conviction of the CHE (2002: 116) is that the closer assessment is to the teaching and learning process, the more valid it is likely to be. Assessment in higher education should thus be site-based, locally controlled, context-sensitive and accessible to all stakeholders.

2.4.9 Assessment and assessment rights need to be transparent to learners and assessors

All stakeholders need to understand the assessment system and have confidence that it is well planned, works in practice and is regulated properly. This involves the following: inform the learners beforehand about the expectations; provide a clear brief with indicators of satisfactory performance; give indicators of the weight of individual elements; provide clear guidelines to hand work in; provide equivalent levels of support to learners prior to submission; outline how failure is communicated and achievement can be restored and provide access to assessment regulations and information (Geyser, 2002: 11).

In line with a more democratic culture in South Africa, Boyse and Le Roux (1996: 66-69) identify the following assessment rights for learners:

- The learners have the right to be assessed by a trained and competent assessor. No-one who is not familiar with the theory and practice of assessment, should be allowed to assess.
- The learners have the right to be informed of assessment requirements (for example the standards, expectations, outcomes, assessment criteria, time and date and venues). They also have to be assisted in their preparation for the assessment session.
- The learners have the right not to be subjected to excessive assessment for the record only. The lecturers should apply continuous and more informal formative assessment.
- The learners have the right to relevant assessment: applied competence remains the focus of assessment. The assessment should also be oriented towards the vocation for which they are preparing themselves.
- The learners have the right to constructive feedback and to view scripts or receive a memorandum. The lecturers should take into account providing the learners with a memorandum as they leave the examination venue or shortly thereafter.
- The learners have the right to be protected against improper disclosure of results. Confidentiality needs to be maintained in order to prevent embarrassment about unflattering remarks in the presence of others.
- The learners have the right to formally lodge a complaint. A grievance or appeals procedure should be in place to resolve assessment disputes. The procedure should include an indication of how many re-assessments will take place.

In summary, as part of a transparent and clear assessment process, all learners have assessment rights that need to be respected. A further implication is that the process of assessment (from outcomes and criteria up to the reporting and recording of assessment) should be described in broad terms to allow faculties to develop their own assessment procedures. The rights should extend to on-

campus and off-campus locations.

2.4.10 Assessment needs to be fair

In view of diversity and massification in HE, fairness constitutes assessment that does not in any way impede or advantage a learner. Complaints about unfairness in assessment may stem from perceptions about inequality of opportunities, resources and appropriate teaching and learning approaches in place in terms of the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills (SAQA, 2001: 16). They may also stem from perceived bias based on ethnic, gender, age, disability, and social class and race issues in that the assessment approaches, methods, instruments and materials disregard these differences. SAQA (2001: 16) recommends that the influence of these factors needs to be considered and addressed. The assessment process should be transparent, clear, and be available to all learners. All learners should have access to appeal mechanisms and re-assessments. The assessors have to comply with the assessment criteria.

2.4.11 Assessment tasks need to be feasible

With respect to limited resources, feasible and practical assessment takes into account constraints in terms of obtainable financial resources, facilities, equipment and time to prevent failure of the system. Examples include the available facilities for the learners, number of learners using the same equipment, books, and number of support staff available. (SAQA, 2001: 19).

Mutch and Brown (2001: 17) include the issue of whether there are alternative assessment methods that could assess the learning outcomes that are less burdensome for the lecturers and the learners. It should also be considered how much time lecturers spend on assessment including the preparation of assessment tasks, marking, checking results and preparing reports and attendance at meetings.

In conclusion, assessment needs to be feasible and practical. In doing so, the available financial resources, facilities, equipment and time need to be considered.

2.4.12 Assessment workload needs to be realistic to learners and assessors

Due to massification in HE, the huge volume of assessment has caused concern. Dunn, et al. (2004: 219) believe a fair assessment load is one that ensures that the learning outcomes are covered as efficiently as possible. The learners will deem it to be reasonable if they obtain a fair return for their striving by means of a grade and its weighting and constructive feedback. The assessment tasks must not demand unequal effort by the learners. Dunn et al. (2004: 219-220) advise that time should be allocated for marking and feedback sessions before submitting the next piece of work. Prescribed word lengths of the assessment tasks ought still to demonstrate the comprehension of the assessment requirements in relation to the marking criteria. Feedback from the learners about the amount of time and effort spent on the assessment tasks will portray an idea of their workload. The following guidelines by Biggs, (2000: 188-190) and Rust (2001: 6, 7, 19) contribute to more effective assessment management and should be considered by faculties:

- Staggered deadlines so everything is not compressed for learners and lecturers.
- Co-ordinated assessment timetables.
- Assessment schedules published beforehand.
- Supportive administrative assessment systems (for example assessment assistants who receive and issue assignments).
- Acknowledgement by academic managers that assessment is an integral part of an academic's workload.

- Streamlining assessment (for example the use of technology to provide feedback individually and to the whole class, assignment reports or lists of regular comments with numbers).

2.4.13 Assessment should include a wide range of methods and techniques and tools

Ramsden (1988: 24), Biggs (1993: 80) and Boud (1990: 103) suggest that the learners' perception of the assessment procedures in a course is the one most important influence on their learning. In support of this view, Brown, Bull and Pendlebury (1997: 6) argue that "If you want to change student learning, then change the methods of assessment". Different methods are necessary to assess different outcomes and different kinds of competences. Different methods are used to assess process and product. The effectiveness of an assessment method relies not upon the method per se, but upon the learning outcomes to be assessed (Brown, 2001: 10). Self-assessment and peer assessment can be used with any method or instrument (tool). By implication, the lecturers need to be informed about the different methods so that they do not keep to a single traditional method.

Identical assessment methods can be applied summatively and formatively, but some formative methods are time-economical and focus on feedback. Both formative and summative assessment methods and techniques should be used within a module. The methods are described in section 2.5.5.

2.4.14 Assessment needs to provide communication and feedback to support the learning process

Communication and feedback need to occur throughout the assessment process as part of enabling the learners to perform to the best of their ability. Dunn et al. (2004: 250) recommend explaining the rationale of the assessment task so that

the learners will not be “tagging along feeling bewildered” (Gibbs, 1995: 8), assessment terms and form (for example essay or journal forms), and suggesting methods of approach. The lecturers must inform the learners about the required resources, library procedures, duration of the assessment session, venue, time and assessment methods. The more clarity on assessments, the less likely appeals against assessment decisions from the learner (SAQA, 2001: 52). On the other hand, too much information may be as distressing to the learners as too little (Dunn et al. 2004: 250).

Feedback is provided with the purposes of motivating the learners and informing them how well they have done and how to improve (Brown, 2001: 17). Rowntree (1987: 24) regards feedback to be so indispensable that he calls it “the life-blood of learning”. However, some learners, who receive feedback that their progress is not at the same rate as their peers, may feel demotivated (Kyriacou, 1995: 108). Therefore, the manner in which feedback is provided will influence what the learners will gain from it.

Most effective feedback is timely, seen as relevant, meaningful and present improvement strategies that are within the learner’s grasp (Brown, 2001: 17). Assessment requires sufficient formative feedback in order for learners to remedy deficiencies. Feedback should relate to the learning. It should be descriptive, understandable and specific (Wiggins, 1998: 46). Other requirements include feedback to be positive, detailed, participative, honest and fair (Brown, Race & Smith, 1996: 31-32). The assessors ought to provide detailed feedback depending on the time limits and consider instantaneous feedback (for example e-mail, computer-assisted assessment or class feedback sessions).

Feedback on self-assessment can be very powerful. The feedback is not only on the learners’ work, but on their thinking too. When the learners have over-estimated their own work, Race (2001: 14) suggests that the feedback from lecturers needs to be relatively gentle and explanatory rather than accusatory.

This will help the learners to still have faith in the value of self-assessment. On the other hand, learners gain confidence when they have underestimated their worth and the lecturer feedback aims to encourage them.

The different forms of feedback match the different purposes of assessment. These purposes need to be placed within the context of the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria that are applied. For example, the assessors provide “feedout” (Baume, 2001: 3, 7) in the shape of a grade (summative purpose), justify a grade (summative and formative purposes) and assist learners to learn further (formative purpose). Formative assessment aims to provide constructive and developmental feedback to improve learning. It is more helpful when the learners openly face their limitations, while summative assessment purposes discourage that openness. Summative assessment needs to occur, but the feedback should promote learning. However, feedback from summative assessment can take a long time to come and the learners do not receive feedback from their examinations that will assist them to improve in their written examinations (Baume, 2001: 11).

Brown (2001: 6) cautions against heavy assessment loads that may invite assessors to provide indifferent feedback. In large classes it is difficult to provide the level and depth of feedback required in order for feedback practices to create an informed dialogue for improvement. With larger learner numbers, the importance of peer feedback increases as the availability of lecturer feedback decreases. Although it saves time to some extent, a great deal of preparation goes into explaining, developing and negotiating the assessment criteria with the learners (Brown & Knight, 1994: 58).

Rust (2001: 9-22) suggests additional time-saving techniques. These include checklists, full briefing instructions, clarification of the assessment criteria, general rather than individual feedback, assignments which can be marked or undertaken in class, computer-based assessments, self-assessment, peer

assessment, group assessment, statement banks and feedback sheets or a standard pro-forma. Additionally, assessors need to reduce repetitive assessments and reduce the time spent on feedback. Brown (2001: 19) further recommends a review of the modular system in order to reduce assessment requirements. Dunn et al. (2004: 219) support the idea of less assessment. The more modules there are, the greater the assessment and administrative load for the learners and staff. The workload should be uniform across the set of modules in the department.

Unfortunately, the learners do not always read, let alone use, the feedback provided (Brown, 2001: 18). However, Gibbs (1999: 46) implies that the learners pay more attention to feedback that has a social dimension such as having a face-to-face meeting with the lecturers about their work or conducting peer assessments. Returning assessed work with comments, but no grades (although this is recorded beforehand) and asking the learners to work out what their score should be, will induce them to read the comments (Brown, Race & Smith, 1996: 18). When departments or institutions keep assessments for inspection or record keeping purposes, the feedback is not available when the learners need it. This approach defeats the purpose of feedback to the learners. Management and quality assurance bodies should consider the costs and benefits of alternative strategies in these cases.

The implication is that feedback needs to be communicated in a way that will enhance learning. The lecturers need to teach the learners how to give, receive and use the feedback and check afterwards that they have used it. Management and quality assurance bodies should devise ways as to how the learners can have access to their assessments, so that the feedback is available when they need it.

2.4.15 Quality assurance needs to be integral to assessment

Quality assurance is essential for quality programme and module design and delivery. The HEQC (CHE, 2003b: 25-26) proposes the following criteria for programme process that cover learner assessment:

- Assessment is recognised and used as a key motivator of learning as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, to inform teaching practice and to improve the curriculum (section 2.4.1).
- The learners' learning achievements are internally assessed by the academic staff responsible for teaching a course/module in terms of a system that includes internal moderation (sections 2.4.7 and 2.4.9).
- Appropriately qualified people, who have been appointed in terms of clear criteria, externally examine the learners' learning achievements on the exit level of a qualification and conduct their responsibilities in terms of clear guidelines. (section 2.4.9).
- The assessment system is rigorous and secure (sections 2.4.7, 2.4.8 and 2.4.10).
- The level of challenge of assessment is appropriate to the level on which the qualification is pegged. Assessment practices are effective and reliable in measuring and recording learner attainment of the intended learning outcome (section 2.4.7).

The quality of assessment can be assured by monitoring the following:

- Sufficient diversity of assessment methods applied.
- The encouragement of deep, active and reflective learning via assessment.
- The provision of opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge and understanding to different problems and contexts.

HEIs must establish structures that oversee the quality of assessment practices. Assessment must be planned and managed at different levels: institutional, faculty, programme and learning unit (Geyser, 2004: 99). Since the focus of the study excludes quality assurance and moderation, this principle will not be examined further.

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that quality care procedures are essential for quality programme and module design and delivery. By implication, the lecturers should understand the fundamentals of assessment in order to address the demands of quality assessment for a learner population which has grown considerably in numbers, is more diverse and is more critical than in the past. The quality assurance criteria will assist lecturers to identify and disseminate good practices in assessment in their programmes.

2.5 SYNTHESIS

The aforementioned discussion highlights several issues. Formative assessment occurs during the process of learning. As soon as formative assessment results are recorded and used to form judgements about learner achievement, they fall into the category of summative assessment. When results that were originally intended for formative assessment purposes, are used for summative assessment purposes, the learners need to be informed. Various formative and summative assessment methods and tools may be used in the assessment process.

If formative assessment is viewed seriously, then effective feedback needs to be addressed. Feedback should relate to the learning and ought to be provided before, during and after assessment. The assessors should provide detailed feedback depending on the time limits. Assessors need to communicate the results of the assessment effectively to the learners. Management and quality

assurance bodies should devise ways as to how the learners can have access to their assessments, so that the feedback is available when they need it.

Well-constructed assessment sets assessment criteria (for example in learning guides) that should be clear to all stakeholders in the assessment process. The assessment criteria, specifically, form the basis of the assessment and can be used to benchmark the formative assessment. The learners should not be exposed to any uncertainty or a guessing game. Applied outcomes are assessed by means of clear assessment criteria that are negotiated and conveyed to all learners.

How well the learners are performing in relation to one another is NRA. CRA is concerned with unambiguous specified outcomes and clear, previously known criteria. The framework requires that lecturers move to CRA and concentrate on the ability of the learners to perform.

Reasonable scheduling of assessments to direct learners and enable valid and reliable assessments is required. Excessive assessment does not contribute to the learners adopting a deep approach to their studies.

The assessment rights of all learners need to be transparent and must be considered in the assessment process. Various formative and summative assessment methods and tools may be used in the assessment process. The choice of one method over another conveys to the learners what is valued, as revealed in the deep and surface approaches to learning.

Authentic assessment enables the learners to perform real-life tasks that require higher order thinking skills. Authentic assessment is further contextualised. Depending on the purpose, functional and declarative knowledge can be assessed. Finally, the basic principles of assessment, validity, reliability and fairness need to be adhered to.

2.6 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

When viewing assessment, questions with regard to the why, what, who, where, when and how of assessment are raised. The answers to these questions will provide more detail and inform the development of an assessment framework.

2.6.1 What should be assessed?

New trends in higher education demand that generic and applied competences be assessed. In the South African context SAQA requires that all qualifications develop these generic competences, called critical cross-field outcomes, in learners (CHE, 2002: 112). Integrated assessment allows the learners to demonstrate applied competence which consists of practical, foundational and reflexive competence, and which employs a range of formative and summative assessment methods (SAQA, 2001a: 31).

The National Training Board and German Agency for Technical Co-operation or GTZ (1997: 106) explain practical competence as the demonstrated ability to perform a set of tasks in an authentic context. A range of actions or possibilities is considered and decisions are made about which actions to follow. Foundational competence is the demonstrated understanding of what the learners do and why. It underpins the practical competence and the actions taken. Reflexive competence refers to the demonstrated ability to integrate performance with understanding in order to show that the learners can adapt to change circumstances appropriately and responsibly and to explain the reasons behind actions.

By implication, all three competences ought to be assessed in their interaction and not in a separate manner (Geyser, 2002: 12). Applied competence should be addressed in learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The learners may need some training in reflection.

2.6.2 Who assesses?

In the traditional paradigm, the lecturers are the only legitimate assessors. According to Brown (1999a: 8) and Luckett and Sutherland (2000: 114), other options now include learners who assess themselves (a process known as self-assessment) and learners who assess each other as peers (a process known as peer assessment). The latter can be combined with group assessment (Rust, 2001: 4). Employers and clients assess experiential or work-based learning outside the HEIs.

2.6.2.1 Self-assessment

Boud (1989: 21) views self-assessment as the key to establishing a process of life-long learning. Self-assessment applied informally and formally, enables learners to become reflective, autonomous and effective learners (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 112; McAlpine & Higgison, 2002: 3-8). Self-assessment may be applied in essays, individual and group projects, oral presentations and reports/reviews (Brown & Knight, 1994: 132; Price & Cutler, 1995: 151). The purposes of self-assessment may be summative, but unless the learners have some self-critical awareness which self-assessment enhances, it is unclear how they can benefit from formative assessment. For Brown and Knight (1994: 54), self-assessment, self-knowledge and formative assessment interconnect. Negotiating criteria further fits well with the idea of formative assessment.

Kwan and Leung (1996: 206) stress that a main impediment to a wider establishment of self-assessment in the educational process is the belief that learner-derived marks could not be used in formal grading procedures, since they would not be accurate enough. To this Boud (1990: 109) adds, “Assumptions that learners are unable to make judgements, undermine their capacity to do so”.

However, a study by Peckham and Sutherland (2000: 78) indicates that the learners are able to make reliable judgements of their own worth, given the correct guidance, training, practice and support.

Boud (1995: 15) postulates that the self-assessment approach to assessment carries more meaning for the learners than the same assessment by others. Learners not only assess the products (assessment of learning) and process (assessment for learning) of their learning, but also their emotions and thoughts about what they are learning. However, Boud (1990: 109-110) argues that self-assessment cannot occur wholly independently of others: assessments by peers and staff are fundamental to assist the learners to make sound judgements. Training and support to self-assess or peer assess is essential to optimise learning.

The implication for higher education to produce life-long learners is to assist those learners to become self-directed. For learning to move from lecturer-directed to being learner-directed, future assessment practices need to consider learner assessment in a more direct manner.

2.6.2.2 Self-reflection

All self-assessment involves reflection, but not all reflection leads to self-assessment (Brew, 1999: 160). According to McAlpine and Higgison (2002: 6) self-reflection (reflection or metacognition) is frequently a pre-requisite for self-assessment. It assists in the planning of a task, monitoring of the learners' progress and assessment of their accomplishments. The learners reflect on their own learning progress, the problems that they experienced with content (for example, an assignment) and how they addressed these problems. An unusual or puzzling situation or experience activates self-reflection and it results in an integration of a new understanding of one's experience (Rogers, 2001:41-42). For Spandel (1993: 586) self-reflection adds enrichment to the responses to that

work. Reflection results in learners who take charge of their own learning, thinking, and management of life. Logbooks and journals can encourage reflective practice for both learners and lecturers.

2.6.2.3 Peer assessment

Peer assessments can assist self-assessments: by judging the work of others, the learners obtain insight into their own performance (Bostock, 2000: 1). Peer assessment leads to an in-depth understanding of the subject. It assesses how the individual learners function in teams (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 112). Peer assessment may be applied in group projects, oral presentations and reports (Brown & Knight, 1994: 132; Price & Cutler, 1995: 151). Learner peer assessment can be anonymous, with assessors chosen at random so that friendship factors are less likely to affect the results. It usually works most effectively when more than one assessor assesses each element of work, so that consistency can be demonstrated (Race, 2001: 4). When peer assessment is used in a formative manner, the real purpose is to allow the learners to obtain feedback from each other.

However, the use of peer assessment for summative purposes remains a controversy. Research by Kwan and Leung (1996) shows that if learners receive sufficient guidance, their assessment can be reliable. Criteria need to be determined and negotiated beforehand.

The implication for practice is that peer assessment and self-assessment can be combined. This can prevent problems like friendship marking, resulting in over marking; collusive marking that results in a lack of differentiation within groups; decibel marking in which dominating individuals obtain the highest marks and parasite marking where the learners fail to contribute, but benefit from group marks (Pond, Ui-Haq & Wade, 1995: 314-323). Finally, by implication, peer and

self-assessment alleviate the assessment load of the lecturers in the face of worsening staff-learner ratios.

2.6.2.4 Group assessment

In group-based assessment for formative and summative purposes, learners work in teams and are assessed as a group or individually, or a combination of both, since the learners need to develop teamwork skills and still graduate as individuals. Another option, that is incorporated to avoid freeloading, is to make the group assessment the sum of individual members' assessments (Boud et al., 1999: 421).

The assessors assess the learning process as well as its product (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 112). For fair assessment, there are several ways to assess groups (Brown & Knight, 1994: 62). All the learners in the group can receive the same mark, but it must be lightly weighted. Marks may also be awarded for the product and the learners will allocate within their group a mark per learner by negotiating with each other and considering the criteria and evidence. If they agree to give each other the same mark, the lecturers may follow up with an oral examination. Another possibility is that the learners receive the same mark for the product plus another set of marks given by their co-learners within the groups in recognition of their individual contribution. A further method is to break down the group task into different tasks so that each learner's contribution is assessed separately. Finally, the learners can obtain the same mark for the product, but at the end of the unit the learners will need to answer, in an examination, a question based on the group project.

The unfamiliarity of group assessment may create difficulties. Lecturers, who lack experience of problem-based learning environments, need training to assess fairly. The implication is that this assessment requires careful planning and scheduling as well as management of the roles and contributions in a group.

Learners with independent study habits need to be convinced of its value (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 112). Boud et al. (1999: 421) caution that unless sufficient opportunities exist to build group planning and group accountability skills, the use of group assessment is premature. Nevertheless, these difficulties should not discourage any lecturers from including group assessments. Luckett & Sutherland (2000: 112) advise that peer assessment be used at first for formative purposes and, after some experience by the learners, summatively. Honest dialogue by the learners about their group processes during the process, rather than after, will assist in arriving at a fair grade distribution (Heathfield, 1999: 137).

The implication is that higher education should include peer assessment, self-assessment (including self-reflection) and group assessment in formative assessment to enhance learning. A registered assessor should conduct summative assessment (SAQA, 2001: 29). Thorough preparation is required in order to apply these assessments.

2.6.2.5 Employer supervisors or mentors

Employer supervisors or mentors in the off-campus location usually assess the learners' performances, while learners submit a written report or portfolio to their campus lecturer (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 110).

Rainsbury, Hodges, Sutherland and Barrow (1998: 313, 316) argue that it is important for employers to be involved in the assessment as they would be in a better position to assess the learners than the academics. Many would appraise their staff and thus would possess the necessary skills to apply in the assessment of the learners in the work place. Stipulating clear assessment criteria and providing a briefing will aid their understanding and minimise different interpretations (Rainsbury et al., 1998: 316). Employers may also need to justify their assessment and provide evidence for it.

Boud (1995: 8) claims that “assessment in society is as much to do with issues of power and control as it ever was about learning.” However, a work-based course transfers some of this control through a collaborative process involving the three parties (Rainsbury et al., 1998: 316-318). The academic acts as a co-assessor and facilitator encouraging the learner and employer to discuss the evidence for their assessments.

Rainsbury et al. (1998: 317-318) found that the learners thought it fitting for them to be involved in the collaborative assessment process. The main reason given was that they are in the best position to appreciate the amount of effort put into their experience and the work involved.

Bitzer, Kapp and Engelbrecht (1999: 7-11) argue that mainstreaming co-operative education could be a major step to raising the relevance of HE. Not only does it strengthen the principles and objectives of the NQF in HE through shared and self-regulated learning, but it also benefits effective learning. The authors conclude that experiential learning is more essential than ever before and that institutions will need policy decisions on the compulsory implementation of experiential learning. A great challenge emerging from the knowledge required in an era of globalisation, is the need to integrate tacit or experiential knowledge (from the work place) with intellectual knowledge (as in academic science) through suitable institutional structures and educational mechanisms. The authors suggest that one of those mechanisms is co-operative education.

By implication, the industry, as one of the stakeholders in assessment, will employ the graduates of technikons and should act as one of their assessors of experiential learning. Another implication is that the industry needs to assess experiential learning in the work environment. Where possible, the assessment ought to take place in a collaborative process with the learners and academics.

2.6.3 Where and when are learners assessed?

Typically the institution is responsible for on-campus activities, like lectures and practical classes. These activities tend to deliver content knowledge and are usually seen as being limited in providing practical experience, since the full complexities of the work place cannot be duplicated (Zegwaard, Coll & Hodges, 2003: 11). Assessing experiential learning takes place off-campus in the working environment. Meetings to discuss progress are by appointment.

The timing of assessment accommodates the needs of the learners rather than the administrative system. Although learner readiness may pose administrative problems, the tendency is to move away from long, stressful examination sessions where all learners are assessed at once (Luckett & Sutherland, 2000: 114). The assessment purpose should determine the time of assessment and the assessors, methods and techniques chosen. Geyser (2002: 15) summarises different aspects related to the time of assessment in Table 2.5. This table is extended to include the industry as an assessor (SASCE, 2000: 36).

Table 2.5: Time of assessment

When do the assessors assess?	Why do the assessors assess now?	What kind of assessment is this?	Who assesses?
At the beginning of a new section of work.	To find out what the learners know about a topic in order to plan learning activities.	Diagnostic assessment (also known as base-line assessment).	Lecturers.
Continuously (during learning activities).	To monitor and to support learning; both lecturers and learners receive immediate feedback.	Formative assessment.	Lecturers. Learners (self-assessment and peer assessment).
When learners appear to be having difficulties with some work.	To find out the cause of the learning difficulties.	Diagnostic assessment.	Lecturers.
At the end of a section of work or a learning programme.	To establish and record overall progress of learners toward desired outcomes.	Summative assessment.	Lecturers.

When do the assessors assess?	Why do the assessors assess now?	What kind of assessment is this?	Who assesses?
During the experiential learning period in the work environment.	To monitor and to support learning. To establish and record overall progress of learners toward desired outcomes.	Formative assessment. Summative assessment. Interim and continuous assessment occurs throughout experiential learning period.	Lecturers or co-ordinators, learners, industry (mentors or supervisors). Industry provides feedback on learner performance, training relevance and recommendations. Debriefing forms part of the assessment. Reporting is done by the co-ordinators and mentors.

In conclusion, the learners are assessed on and off campus. By implication, the industry is an important partner in assessment and should be involved in the assessment of learners in the working environment. The needs of the learners influence the time of assessment.

2.6.4 How are learners assessed?

Both formative and summative assessment methods are used to assess the learners. Biggs (2000: 185 -190) explores alternatives for large-class assessment that are quickly executed, completed and assessed as well as aimed at higher order learning. The methods for formative assessment purposes do not concentrate on awarding marks. The methods are:

2.6.4.1 Rapid formative assessment methods

Concept maps: This method requires a glimpse to inform the lecturer if the learners possess an impoverished or enriched knowledge structure about the topic.

Venn diagrams: These diagrams express the boundary of a concept in a circle or ellipse and interrelations between concepts by the intersection or overlap of circles.

Three-minute essay: This method requires reflection by posing questions that learners can answer in minutes in a large class. For example, learners can mention what they most want to find out in the next class or the main points that they had learnt that day.

Short answer examinations: The learners answer in note form. This method is meaningful to assess factual material. It is less predisposed to test-taking strategies (learners are unable to work out the correct answer by elimination).

Gobbets: This method involves notable pieces of content with which the learners should be acquainted and to which they have to respond. The learners identify the gobbet, explain its context, and motivate its importance and what it reminds them of.

Letter to a friend: The learners write a letter of a page in length to imaginary or real friends who are contemplating enrolling in the unit next year and reflect on their own experiences of the unit and how it has affected them. The letters are written and assessed in a few minutes.

Cloze tests: The lecturer eliminates every seventh or so word in a passage and the reader has to fill in the spaces with the correct word. The learners can only understand the selected text if they can understand the topic under discussion

The rapid formative assessment methods allow for speedier assessment. The feedback is quick.

2.6.4.2 Summative assessment methods

Erasmus and Van Dyk (1999: 220), Race (1995: 2-12), Luckett and Sutherland (2000: 110-119) and Kenwright (2002: 96-102) propose several summative

assessment methods:

Observation of performance: Assessors observe learners in an authentic professional context. An oral assessment or interview may follow the observation to check the learners' understanding. Process and product can be observed. The need exists for trained, multiple assessors as well as clear communication and quality assurance measures.

Role plays/simulations: This method consists of a scenario which is similar to a situation which the learner may come across in the work place. The observer completes a checklist which focuses on aspects like body language, questioning skills and problem-solving skills. It assesses the ability to perform across contexts. Strategies to cope with anxious learners are: explain how the role-plays can bridge the gap between the theory and practice in an environment; complete an exercise first; give encouragement; ask the learners to construct the details of the situation by basing them on real life; negotiate the ground rules for participation; set suitable learning outcomes; place nervous learners with supportive ones and ask groups to identify key issues to raise in the reviews of the role-plays afterwards (Williams, 1993: 18).

Essays: Traditional and open book examinations often require learners to write essays. It forces learners to integrate knowledge, understanding and communication skills. Essays can reflect the depth of the learners' learning. The lecturers are able to assess complex cognitive outcomes. Since this method favours learners with high verbal skills, clear assessment criteria and formative feedback are required during different stages of the writing process to assist the learners from a disadvantaged background. A variation of this method is the twenty-four hour essay which should be submitted the next day and assesses the learners' organisation skills.

Practicals: To assess reports of practical work may involve the assessment of the quality of the end product of the practical work and not the work itself. The assessors may find it difficult to assess or agree on criteria. The learners may feel inhibited during the observation.

In-tray exercises: They simulate a real-world context and learners must demonstrate how they cope with unexpected changes in the work place. They begin with a dossier of documents to read. They later receive tasks to perform that relate to the documents. The exercise has a time limit.

Productions and exhibitions of artefacts: This method can be conducted individually or in groups. Assessment criteria should be clear and formative feedback should be given during the production process.

Projects, reports and assignments: The terms projects and assignments are sometimes inter-changed. A project is characterised by more openness and differences in the way it is approached (Reece & Walker, 1997: 466). For projects and reports the learners complete tasks in authentic contexts and report on these and their own learning which usually takes place in an experiential manner. They assess applied competence and critical reflection. When using assignments, assessment criteria should be provided to the learners beforehand to familiarise them with the criteria and, at the same time, serve to reduce the time for feedback to learners. Co-learners can also use them for the assessment of work.

Case studies: Case studies present learners with written descriptions of actual or hypothetical problems in an organisational setting. They are used for individual or group-based assessment. This method assesses the ability to translate knowledge into action.

Orals and interviews: These methods assess interpersonal skills and are linked to written paper or other products of learners' work. Learners may experience

stress due to their unpredictability. Giving structure to the process alleviates the problem. Both methods provide potential for detailed immediate feedback, but a panel of examiners will enhance reliability. Orals are useful when probing for understanding or to make decisions about borderline cases (Kenwright, 2002: 100; Race, 1995: 9).

Portfolios: These are a collection and explanation of evidence to demonstrate that learners have achieved prescribed learning outcomes. For successful learning portfolios, learners should understand the purpose and advantages of portfolios. They should align with explicit programme goals. Institutions with large numbers of learners can avoid a storage problem, by using digital or electronic portfolios (Wiedmer, 1998: 587). Educators need to be trained to use portfolios. This method is suitable to assess experiential learning in the work place. Portfolios allow the learners to show breadth and depth of learning (growth and achievement).

Multiple-choice questions: In multiple choice questions learners select an answer from several alternatives (Gravett, 1995: 27). Multiple-choice tests are used due to huge increases in learner numbers and may lead to surface learning. Paxton (1998: 3) plead for the use of multiple-choice questions as part of a broader and varied range of assessment measures. The learners are required to provide answers to isolated and decontextualised problems (Paxton, 1998: 4). Success in the working environment in some subjects relies on a learner's ability to communicate effectively, since they are working with people all day and need people skills as a core competence. Training to formulate questions is required.

Examinations: Traditionally, they require rote learning and a surface approach to learning. Despite these concerns about the validity and fairness of examinations, they should not be discarded all together in the assessment framework, since they motivate learners to learn. The implication is to set clear criteria and use variations within the examination framework in order to achieve

reliability and assess a range of skills. Another option is take-away papers in which learners deliver a product within a specified time which resemble real world conditions. Learners from disadvantaged backgrounds need support and training to develop effective writing and communication skills.

Open book examinations: This method allows learners to consult sources of reference material in order to prove that they can handle applicable information sources (Van Hamburg, 1993: 25-26). Open book examinations are more authentic. This method fulfils the requirement of integrated assessment and applied competence. However, Ioannidou (1997: 136) warns that surface learning may still be encouraged, as the learners will prepare in such a way that they only understand the knowledge. Since the learners regard this method as easier than traditional methods, they may prepare less.

Logs, diaries, reflective journals and critical incidents: Logs for experiential learning contain descriptive accounts. Diaries narrate personalised accounts, while critical incidents are selections of these in which learners highlight action-taking processes and their consequences for learning. Journals contain some description/observation/notes on which learners reflect and then record proposed action (Woodward, 1998: 417). For assessment, Wagner (1999: 264) recommends that the journal should demonstrate breadth (the range of topics covered), distance (length of a learner's journey with a specific topic) and depth (the extent to which a learner examines issues thoroughly and comprehensively). Clear criteria for these methods must be articulated in advance. Making use of peer and self-assessments can reduce feedback on projects by the lecturer.

Posters and presentations: These individual or group-based methods may follow up on placements or projects. Learners present their own interpretations. They involve peer and self-assessments and immediate feedback. Peer assessment of poster displays is applied by using a checklist containing negotiated criteria between the learners and the lecturer. Presentations take a lot

of time in large classes, but it may be done collaboratively. Some learners may find this method traumatic. Another disadvantage is that it favours those with good communication skills (Kenwright, 2002: 98, Race, 1995: 2-12).

Since OBET assessment assesses a range of elements (for example knowledge and skills), various assessment methods can be used to assess the learners. These methods can be applied in formative and summative assessments.

2.6.4.3 Assessment tools

The Department of Education (2000: 8) describes a tool as any instrument that educators use when assessing and it is appropriate to the assessment method. Since self and peer assessments occur, the definition should incorporate the learners as well and not only educators. Assessors may use several tools like rubrics, checklists, rating scales or some written guide in the form of interview sheets to help them conduct assessments in a reliable and fair way. Their purpose will be the deciding factor whether they want to rate the presence or absence of a performance like in a checklist, or use qualitative evaluations (Herman, Aschbacher & Winters, 1996: 12). For example, if they want to describe what learners can do, a simple rating scale like a checklist will suffice. To determine the extent to which dimensions were observed or the quality of the performance, they need more elaborate scales.

2.7 CONCEPTUAL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The framework describes the purpose and scope, rationale, key concepts, non-negotiable principles and practical implications and procedures emanating from those principles followed by the prerequisites or parameters or conditions. Some principles that do not form the core of this study have been omitted.

2.7.1 Purpose and scope

The framework informs the policy makers that formulate the current teaching and assessment policy at technikons. It further informs the lecturers and departmental heads that are involved in the assessment practice. Finally, the assessment framework informs the industry that offers experiential learning. The framework is applied to undergraduate learners in HRM.

2.7.2 Rationale

Within the OBET paradigm, assessment is viewed as a means to an end and is integrated in the teaching and learning process rather than being affixed to it as a subsidiary addition. In doing so, assessment should enhance learning. Massification in HE influences the framework. The different target groups bring different perspectives to the fore.

2.7.3 Key concepts

The key concepts were clarified in chapter 2. The following key concepts are applicable in this framework and inform the framework:

- *Assessment* is a structured process to gather evidence and make judgements about the learners' performances (section 2.3.1).
- *Assessment criteria* are statements that describe the standard to which learners must demonstrate the actions, roles, knowledge, understanding, skill, values and attitudes stated in the outcomes (section 2.4.6).
- An *assessment tool* is any instrument that the educators use when assessing and it is appropriate to the assessment method.
- *Authentic assessment* deals with the assessment of complex performances and higher-order skills in real life contexts. Authentic assessment is contextualised (section 2.4.3).

- *Continuous assessment* means assessing the learners regularly in a way that integrates teaching and assessment. It employs feedback from each assessment to inform further teaching and the construction of the next assessment (section 2.4.4).
- *Criterion-referenced assessment* means that the learner's performance is assessed in terms of a particular description of the performance (section 2.4.6).
- In *deep learning*, the intention is to understand, with the active learners maintaining the task structure (section 2.4.1).
- *Diagnostic assessment* diagnoses the strengths and weaknesses of learners (section 2.4.5.1).
- *Formal assessment* is agreed upon assessment events between assessors and the learners (section 2.4.5.3).
- *Formative assessment* aims to provide feedback to the learners about their progress (section 2.4.5.2).
- *Group assessment* means that the learners are required to work in teams and they may be assessed as a group or individually (section 2.6.2.4).
- *Informal assessment* happens spontaneously and incidentally. There is no formal plan for the collection of evidence (section 2.4.5.3).
- *Integrated assessment* assesses applied competence which is a union of practical competence, foundational competence and reflexive competence (section 2.3.4).
- *Peer assessment* refers to assessment of the learners by their peers (section 2.6.2.3).
- *Self-assessment* means that the learners assess themselves (section 2.6.2.1).
- *Summative assessment* aims to provide judgement on the learner's achievement (section 2.4.5.3).

2.7.4 Principles

In conducting effective assessment, underlying principles governing assessment have to be stated up front and need to be adhered to by the assessors. Some principles that lie outside the core focus of this framework will be omitted. The following principles that incorporate key concepts are accepted in the framework:

2.7.4.1 Assessment is integrated with learning and should concentrate on deep, active learning that applies higher order cognitive skills (section 2.4.1):

2.7.4.2 Assessment needs to be authentic and contextualised (section 2.4.3).

2.7.4.3 Assessment needs to be continuous (section 2.4.4)

2.7.4.4 Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment purposes should be clear and include formal and informal assessment (section 2.4.5).

2.7.4.5 Assessment needs to be criterion-referenced and relevant assessment criteria need to be identified and applied (section 2.4.6).

2.7.4.6 Assessment and assessment rights need to be transparent to the learners and assessors (section 2.4.9). The assessment rights are:

- The learners have the right to be assessed by a trained and competent assessor. No-one who is not familiar with the theory and practice of assessment, should be allowed to assess.
- The learners have the right to be informed of assessment requirements (for example the standards, expectations, outcomes, assessment criteria, time and date and venues). They also have to be assisted in their preparation for the assessment session.
- The learners have the right not to be subjected to excessive assessment for the record only. The lecturers should apply continuous and more informal formative assessment.
- The learners have the right to relevant assessment: Applied competence remains the focus of assessment. The assessment should also be oriented

towards the vocation for which they are preparing themselves.

- The learners have the right to constructive feedback and to view scripts or receive a memorandum. The lecturers should take into account providing the learners with a memorandum as the leave the examination venue or shortly thereafter.
- The learners have the right to be protected against improper disclosure of results. Confidentiality needs to be maintained in order to prevent embarrassment about unflattering remarks in the presence of others.
- The learners have the right to formally lodge a complaint. A grievance or appeals procedure should be in place to resolve assessment disputes. The procedure should include an indication of how many re-assessments will take place.

2.7.4.7 Assessment workload needs to be realistic to learners and assessors (section 2.4.12).

2.7.4.8 Assessment should include a wide range of methods and techniques and tools (section 2.4.13).

2.7.4.9 Assessment needs to provide communication and feedback to support the learning process (section 2.4.14).

2.7.5 Practical implications or procedures

Several practical implications or procedures with regard to the assessment process are discussed. Further practical implications will be discussed and interpreted with the empirical data in chapter 6.

2.7.5.1 What should be assessed?

Generic and applied competences, consisting of practical, foundational and reflexive competences, are to be assessed. By implication all three competences ought to be assessed in their interaction in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The learners may need some training in reflection.

2.7.5.2 Who assesses?

The assessors can be the lecturers, peers, the learners themselves and supervisors/mentors in the industry. Opportunities need to be created in which the learners can apply self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment. Training, preparation and guidance for these assessments are necessary. Several measures can be applied for effective self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment. Group assessment requires careful planning and scheduling as well as management of the roles and contributions in a group to enhance learning. Self-assessment does not replace peer assessment or assessment by the lecturer or work place assessor. Explicit criteria need to be stated beforehand. By implication, peer and self-assessments ease the heavy assessment loads of the lecturers. A registered assessor (lecturer or work place assessor) should conduct summative assessment. Another implication is that the industry needs to assess experiential learning in the work environment, with the necessary input from the learners and the educators.

2.7.5.3 Where and when are learners assessed?

The timing of assessment depends on the learners' needs and assessment purposes. Since assessment should not create anxiety, long, stressful examination sessions are deemed undesirable. The learners are assessed outside the HE institution campus and in the industry. By implication the industry is an important partner in assessment.

2.7.5.4 How are learners assessed?

Rapid formative assessment methods, which elicit relatively quick feedback, as an alternative for large-class assessment and summative assessment methods,

are used to assess the learners. Assessors may use a variety of tools to assist them to conduct assessments. They should gather direct evidence mostly.

2.7.6 Prerequisites

The assessment of work-based learning or experiential learning needs to be considered in order for effective assessment to take place. All relevant stakeholders need to be consulted in the assessment process. The relevant parties need to be knowledgeable about the assessment of the learners. The assessment policy needs to be applied so that the parties can make informed decisions about assessment.

2.7.7 Summary of the framework

The assessment framework reveals a hierarchy. First is the purpose and scope, followed by the rationale of assessment that gives justification for the framework and describes how assessment has changed. The key concepts and principles thereafter are used to design the framework further. Practical implications or procedures emanate from the principles. The parameters or prerequisites restrict how assessment should be done.

2.8 SUMMARY

Various theoretical perspectives on assessment were discussed. A theoretical or conceptual framework consisting of the purpose and scope, rationale, key concepts, principles for assessment, practical implications and prerequisites was described.

Chapter 3 deals with the research design and data collection methods applied in this study to explore the practice of assessment at technikons and in the industry.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter 2 provides a sound theoretical basis for the empirical component of this study. Chapter 3 seeks to discuss theoretical research methodology issues, that is, a relevant research paradigm and the influence on research methodology with specific reference to this study. The chapter explains why the qualitative paradigm is a suitable paradigm to investigate the research problem for this study, and it is accordingly described. Since different terminology is required to fit the qualitative view, the issue of trustworthiness is discussed and applied to this study. Protocols for the collection of data and a protocol for the explicitation of the data, are developed.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

To ensure a proper understanding of the term “paradigm” and to curtail the problem of a loose usage of the term by contemporary speakers, writers and critics, the term paradigm needs to be described. Lincoln (1985: 25) describes a paradigm as “… much more than a model or pattern; it is a view of the world – a *weltanschauung* that reflects our most basic beliefs and assumptions about the human condition”. Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 157) in a further refinement explain a research paradigm as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action”, dealing with first principles, ‘ultimates’ or the researcher’s worldviews.

There have been many debates about the quantitative and qualitative paradigms which are used to indicate different approaches to investigate research questions. Distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research are firmly entrenched in a number of social science disciplines. These have different philosophical premises, and epistemological roots that must be understood,

respected and maintained for credible and sound research outcomes (Morse, 1994: 101). The research issue determines which approach to research will be used. The one approach is not necessarily superior to the other one and a researcher can even combine the two (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 18). The characteristics of the qualitative paradigm are briefly discussed in an attempt to demonstrate the suitability thereof for this study.

3.2.1 Qualitative paradigm

"The laboratory of the qualitative research is everyday life and cannot be contained in a test tube, started, stopped, manipulated or washed down the sink" (Morse, 1994: 1). Qualitative researchers examine the constraints of everyday life and become involved with the phenomenon (Mouton & Marais, 1990: 162; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 10). Mouton and Marais (1990:12) add further that individual researchers "hold explicit beliefs".

Wallen and Fraenkel (1993: 382) cite the major characteristic of qualitative research as being its ability to generate detailed data with rich descriptions of what is being studied. The qualitative research is in-depth and tends to rely on direct quotations reflecting people's personal perspectives and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 11). This follows an inductive explicitative approach where important categories, dimensions and interrelationships emerge from the data.

Other defining characteristics of qualitative research include a focus on interpretation, subjectivity and on processes and meanings (which are not examined or measured in a rigorous way in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency). Qualitative researchers think they can capture the individual's point of view more closely through detailed interviewing (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 10). Finally, qualitative research recognises that the research process impacts on the research situation (Cassell & Symon, 1995: 7; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 8).

With the characteristics of the qualitative research paradigm now outlined, an appropriate research design for this study is chosen.

3.2.2 Research design for this study

Considering the research aim and objectives, the research design of this study is based on a qualitative approach. The researcher is interested in the experiences, views, perceptions and personal opinions of various academic parties (the learners, lecturers, departmental heads and policy makers) with regard to the assessment of the learners in HRM in the context of a technikon environment. The aim of the researcher is to gain an in-depth understanding thereof. The role of industry in the assessment of those learners will be explored and clarified. The opinions of industry with regard to the training and assessment of experiential learning provided to the technikon learners in HRM, will be explored. The researcher will seek to capture the richness of the participants' experiences in their own terms.

Qualitative data in this study will appear in the form of words of the participants, as obtained in interviews, and not numbers. According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 1, 10) qualitative data of this type enables researchers to move beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks. In this study smaller samples of learners, lecturers, departmental heads, policy makers and participants from industry are applicable to keep the study manageable and cost-effective.

Qualitative research methods allow researchers to follow an open and flexible research strategy to explore phenomena in their natural environment (Mouton & Marais, 1990: 43; Cassell & Symon, 1995: 4; Mason, 1998: 4) which is in line with interviews with open-ended questions used in this study. The focus in the

interview falls on the participants and the relevance of their opinions, lived experiences, perceptions and views about assessment to their lives.

This research focuses on words based on interviews. Words have concrete and vivid aspects that are more persuasive to the reader than pages of numbers (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 12). Due to the research problem to be addressed, the researcher will reduce the data collected to categories and themes, to obtain a holistic perspective and this will be evaluated in a subjective way. No attempt will be made to fit the participants' experiences into predetermined standardised categories. Thus, the qualitative research paradigm is deemed to be more appropriate to address the assessment needs and problems of the learners, as perceived by the academic staff and the learners. The role of industry in the assessment of these learners will also be explored by conducting interviews.

3.3 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Krefting (1991: 214) and Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 187) contend that the terms validity and reliability in qualitative research are inappropriate, since they reflect a specific philosophical and epistemological orientation. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290-327) suggest that qualitative research should rather be assessed in terms of the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of its data.

Ethical guidelines will be adhered to during the research. These include the informed consent of participants, ensuring confidentiality and providing feedback on the project if required as well as an awareness of the voluntary nature of research participation (Bailey, 1996: 11).

3.3.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the truth as it is known, experienced, perceived and understood from an emic viewpoint of those involved in the study (Leininger, 1994: 105).

Triangulation is the combination of research methods in a study of the same phenomenon (Husèn & Postlethwaite, 1994: 6461). To ensure triangulation different data collection methods (individual interviews and focus group interviews) with different participants (the learners, lecturers, departmental heads, policy makers and participants from industry) will be utilised in this study. The results from the interpreted data will be substantiated by a research report.

“Bracketing” means to suspend or bracket as much as possible the researcher’s meaning and interpretations and enter into the world of the participant (Hycner, 1999: 144; Cohen & Manion, 1994: 293). Both the researcher and independent interviewers will apply “bracketing” during interviewing and use an interview schedule. Questions will be repeated in the same format in the interviews. The researcher will apply “bracketing” during the verbatim transcription of the interview.

An independent coder will confirm the saturation of the data after all the interviews have been conducted. The coder will also determine the categories independently of the researcher. It is envisaged that the two parties will reach consensus in a discussion.

Finally, this study contains a substantial portion of the voices (direct words) of the participants in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.3.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the issue of whether conclusions made from one naturalistic inquiry can be transferred to another (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 279). In qualitative research, transferability is not determined by the original researcher, but by future users of the research findings. The original researcher should only provide sufficient data which will enable other researchers to compare their data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 290; Krefting, 1991: 217).

The interviews in this study will be conducted under the same circumstances as far as possible, for instance, in conference rooms or venues that are isolated from noise. The interviewers will probe during interviewing in order to obtain thick descriptions of the data and convey the experiences of the participants. The interview questions will be reviewed after pilot studies have been conducted. A literature control will be done for verification purposes.

The assessment framework applies to a specific context and is not representative of the whole HE context, for example, colleges. Further research will determine to which extent this descriptive research may be applicable to other contexts.

3.3.3 Dependability

Dependability is concerned with whether the study reveals consistency and reasonable stability over time and across researchers and methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 278). The researcher does not conduct research over time in the present study.

3.3.4 Confirmability

Confirmability "…refers to the repeated direct participatory and documented evidence observed or obtained from primary informant sources (Leininger, 1994: 105). The interviews used in this study cannot be repeated. Two pilot studies will be conducted and the researcher will view all the opinions as important. An independent coder will be used to explicitate the data according to the protocol for data explicitation, develop categories and reach consensus with the researcher. Member checking will be done by sending the verbatim transcriptions to the participants to verify.

Now that the research design and relevant key concepts have been described, the following section outlines the particular methods of data collection that will be used in the present study.

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher is the instrument for data collection in qualitative research (Merten, 1998: 175). Interviewing is the dominant strategy in this study to collect data. Most people are familiar with interviews and they have a reasonable idea of what to expect. Kerlinger (1986: 441) describes an interview as a "…face to face interpersonal role situation in which one person, the interviewer, asks a person (s) being interviewed, the participant(s), questions designed to obtain responses pertinent to the research problem".

3.4.1 Motivation for individual interviews

Individual interviews are conducted in a private setting with one person at a time. Individuals feel free and express themselves trustfully (Walford, 1994: 97).

Since the lecturers or learners in this study may be uncomfortable in interviews where people of seniority are present and not respond as freely as they may wish to, departmental heads will be interviewed in individual interviews. Participants from different industries will be interviewed individually at times that will be convenient for them, considering peak work or production periods. These interviews are without the threat of divulging confidential company information in the presence of participants from, perhaps, their competitors.

The interviewers will pose open-ended questions that will allow the participants to reconstruct their own experiences about assessment and the role of industry. The purpose is to obtain their perceptions about the assessment needs, problems and the role of industry. The use of individual interviews as well as focus group interviews will ensure that that the data collection process occurs in a structured manner. It will give other researchers an indication of the steps that this researcher followed to come to a conclusion. In addition, it will ensure that the participants provide the data under controlled conditions.

3.4.2 Motivation for focus group interviews

Krueger (1994: 6) describes a focus group interview as "…a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment". Furthermore, it is imperative that the researcher subjects participants who may possess a limited framework of reference and limited language skills, to simple data collection methods which will set them at ease and allow comprehension of questions.

It has certain advantages. The focus group interview can be a cost-effective method. The information is gathered rapidly, since the participants are simultaneously interviewed. Focus group interviews also elicit more in-depth opinions, than if the participants were interviewed individually. The participants stimulate each other and share their opinions more readily in this way (Morgan,

1988: 15-21; Jerling, 1997: 13; Welman & Kruger, 1999: 198). Thus, it is an effective method to obtain a great volume of information within a certain time span. Finally, interviewing is a very flexible method (Mouton & Marais, 1990: 43; Mason, 1998: 42) in the sense that it can be used almost anywhere and it can produce data of more depth, complexity and roundness. It is more likely to produce a fairer and fuller representation of the perspectives of the participants.

The purpose of focus group interviews in this study is to capture the perceptions of the learners and lecturers about assessment. The assessment methods applied and their effectiveness as well as the role of industry in the assessment of the learners will be researched.

3.4.3 Characteristics of focus group interviews

Kreitner and Kinicki (1998: 287) describe a group as two or more individuals who interact with each other to achieve specific goals and who share a mutual identity and have common norms. Focus groups are generally composed of four to six or six to 12 people which enable them to share their insights, while still eliciting a range of responses (Krueger, 1994: 17).

The researcher and independent interviewers are responsible for encouraging the participants to participate in the discussion about the assessment methods and the role of industry in the assessment of the learners. The interviewers are part of the group and can exert some control over the types of questions by means of a question schedule. After some introductory questions to focus the discussion, they will play a passive role and only redirect the attention of the group to the relevant questions when the latter becomes side-tracked. By probing fully, the interviewers can clarify any misunderstandings or assumptions and gain a clear perspective or even explore issues that were not anticipated earlier.

Kerlinger (1986: 442) and Krueger (1994: 69) agree that open-ended questions permit the participants to determine the nature of the response. Open-ended questions in this study will allow the participants to reconstruct their own experiences about assessment. The researcher will be able to explore the assessment needs and problems as well as the role of industry.

3.4.4 Requirements of interviews

Table 3.1 presents the way the planned individual interviews and focus group interviews will proceed:

Table 3.1: Planned interviewing

Requirements for interviewing	Focus group interviews	Individual interviews
Preparation.	The participants will receive reminders about the topic, date, time and place of the interview at least 10 days before the time in the form of a telephone call, e-mail or fax. The lecturers will also remind the learners. The participants will sign consent letters on the day of the interview.	The participants will receive reminders about the topic, date, time and place of the interview at least 10 days before the time in the form of a telephone call, e-mail or fax. The participants will sign consent letters on the day of the interview.
Size of groups.	Not more than 10 learners and 10 lecturers per interview. Small groups are manageable. They compensate for absenteeism and allow participation, while still eliciting a range of responses.	One participant.
Duration of interviews.	Approximately one hour. Interviews will be conducted till all the participants have expressed their opinions.	Approximately one hour. Interviews will end after the participant has expressed his/her opinion.
Recording of interviews.	In case of equipment failure, two high quality tape recorders will be used. Recording should not inhibit the participants' spontaneous reactions and permission to tape-record the interview must be obtained beforehand.	In case of equipment failure, two high quality tape recorders will be used. Recording should not inhibit the participants' spontaneous reactions. The participant must extend permission to tape-record the interview beforehand.

Requirements for interviewing	Focus group interviews	Individual interviews
Context of interviews.	Staff room, meeting room.	Board room, meeting room or conference room.
Focus of the interviews.	The interviewer will keep an open mind and focus the participants on the questions. Strategies like empathy, clarification, reflection and probing will be applied.	The interviewer will encourage the participant to answer. The interviewer will use strategies like empathy, clarification, reflection and probing.
Medium of interviews.	English and/or Afrikaans.	English and/or Afrikaans.
Follow-up.	The researcher will transcribe the recording verbatim in order to allow the voices of the participants to speak. The interviewers will write reflective notes to retain the data gathered.	The researcher will transcribe the recording verbatim in order to allow the voices of the participants to speak. The interviewers will write reflective notes to retain the data gathered.

3.4.5 Number of interviews and interviewers

Interviews will be conducted till the data is saturated. The saturation point will be reached as soon as content is repeated and a pattern emerges.

Interviewing can be very time-consuming, especially if the researcher has to collect large amounts of information and transcribe it. Therefore, two independent interviewers in addition to the researcher, will interview the participants. This will compensate for the possible inexperience of the researcher, the number of interviews to be conducted and the interviews to take place in distant provinces which may be not easily accessible to the researcher and which might otherwise have to be eliminated. It is also desirable to have interviews conducted with different target groups by independent interviewers to ensure quality interviewing.

The independent interviewers, who are familiar with qualitative research, conduct interviews and facilitate on a regular basis in their work environment. Independent interviewer 2 specialises in the field of HRM. To avoid discrepancies, the researcher will brief the interviewers beforehand about the necessary arrangements, the question schedule and the protocol for interviewing

and listen to the transcriptions of their interviews with the different participants afterwards.

3.4.6 Selection of participants

Due to time and financial constraints, the interviews will be conducted in all the provinces, except KwaZulu-Natal which experiences unrest in some parts from time to time. The technikons will be chosen on the basis of accessibility and convenience. Letters requesting permission for research will be sent to numerous technikons and those who respond favourably, will be used.

Purposive sampling, considered by Welman and Kruger (1999: 63) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling, was chosen to determine the primary participants. The sample was selected based on the judgement and purpose of the researcher. As Kruger (1988: 150) states those that “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched”. The researcher made use of Internet searches and telephonic inquiries to the administrative offices of contact technikons to identify the policy makers and departmental heads of HRM. The latter provided further details about the lecturers in HRM.

The technikons will provide a list of names of organisations that provide experiential learning to the learners in HRM. In a convenience sampling, individual interviews with participants from these organisations in the Gauteng area, which is in close proximity, will be conducted.

The researcher will choose the learners from nearby technikons by going to a class, asking for volunteers and those who are willing to participate, will be used. The independent interviewers will apply the same method after the researcher has made the necessary arrangements.

The data collection methods, target groups, reasons for their selection and the selection criteria, contexts within which the interviews will take place, the purpose of each data set in this study and the interviewers are represented in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Data collection

Methods	**Target groups**	**Reasons for selection**	**Selection criteria**	**Contexts**	**Interviewers**
Focus group interviews.	Learners.	The learners are at the centre of OBE. The learners have the experience of being assessed in HRM. Triangulation with the lecturers and departmental heads.	They must be third year learners in the National Diploma: HRM. They should extend their written consent. They must be willing to participate.	Technikons.	One interview each conducted by the two independent interviewers. Four interviews conducted by the researcher.
Focus group interviews.	Lecturers.	Triangulation with the learners and departmental heads. The lecturers have knowledge of the learners' needs. The lecturers conduct teaching and assessment. The lecturers implement policy.	They should have a minimum of three years lecturing experience in HRM. They should be from different ranks, for example, junior lecturer, lecturer and senior lecturer. They should lecture one or more subjects in HRM. They should extend their written consent to participate in the interview. They must be willing to participate.	Technikons.	One interview each conducted by the two independent interviewers. Four other interviews conducted by the researcher.
Individual interviews.	Departmental heads.	Triangulation with the lecturers and learners. The departmental heads manage policy and may teach	They should have a minimum of three years lecturing experience in HRM. They should extend their	Technikons.	One interview each conducted by the two independent interviewers. Three interviews conducted by the researcher.

Methods	Target groups	Reasons for selection	Selection criteria	Contexts	Interviewers
		and assess learners themselves.	written consent to participate in the interview. They must be willing to participate.		
Individual interviews.	Policy makers.	The policy makers formulate and implement teaching and assessment policies.	They must be in a position to influence policy. They should extend their written consent to participate in the interview. They must be willing to participate.	Technikons.	One interview conducted by an independent interviewer. Five interviews conducted by the researcher.
Individual interviews.	Human resource managers, supervisors, trainers or those who deal with the learners in industry.	Industry representatives are the future employers and possible partners in providing the experiential learning component of co-operative education. Triangulation with learners, lecturers and departmental heads. Industry representatives provide a work environment perspective.	Small, medium or large industries must provide experiential learning to technikon learners in HRM. The individuals should be working closely with these learners and have sufficient knowledge about their performance. They should extend their written consent to participate in the interview. They must be willing to participate.	Industry.	Eight interviews conducted by the researcher.

3.4.7 Development of interview questions

By using the open-ended interview questions, the researcher will attempt to answer the research sub-questions or objectives. The questions are formulated in such a way that the information required, will be collected and the participants can freely answer. It is envisaged that the academic staff will be able to understand the research questions fully and arrive at clear and relevant

responses. Third year learners are deemed to be emotionally more mature, experienced and articulate to express themselves, than first year learners.

The questions intended for these target groups, namely the learners, lecturers, departmental heads and policy makers, are provided in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Interview questions and target groups

Learners	Lecturers	Departmental heads	Policy makers	Industry
1. Which assessment methods and techniques do the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply when assessing you?	1. Which assessment methods and techniques do you apply when assessing your learners?	1. Which assessment methods and techniques do you apply when assessing your learners?	1. Which factors play a role in the formulation of the assessment policy for this technikon?	1. What role does your industry/organisa-tion play with regard to the training of learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?
2. Why do you think the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing you?	2. Why do you apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing your learners?	2. Why do you apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing your learners?	2. What role does industry play in the assessment of your learners?)	2. What role does your industry/organisa-tion play with regard to the assessment of learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?
3. How effective are these assessment methods and techniques which the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply?	3. How effective are these assessment methods and techniques which you apply when assessing your learners?	3. How effective are these assessment methods and techniques which you apply when assessing your learners?	3. How effective is the involvement of industry in the assessment of your learners?	3. How effective is the involvement of your industry/organisa-tion with regard to the training and assessment of learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?
4. What role does industry play in your assessment in Human Resource Management?	4. What role does industry play in the assessment of your learners?	4. What role does industry play in the assessment of your learners?		4. How would your industry/organisa-tion like to become involved with regard to the training and assessment of learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?
5. How effective is the involvement of industry in your assessment in Human Resource	5. How effective is the involvement of industry in the assessment of your learners?	5. How effective is the involvement of industry in the assessment of your learners?		5. How would you describe the current co-operation between your industry/organisa-

Learners	Lecturers	Departmental heads	Policy makers	Industry
Management?				tion and the technikon with regard to the training and assessment of learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?
				6. How would you describe more effective co-operation between your industry/organisa-tion and the technikon with regard to the training and assessment of learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?
				7. What is your viewpoint about compulsory experiential training/ experiential learning/co-operative education of technikon learners in Human Resource Management?

3.5 PILOT STUDIES

Johnson and Briggs (1995: 64) describe a pilot study as a "small-scale investigation or trial of the materials and methods adopted in search of the study's general objective". A small group of participants who are representative of the same population as that of the research project, are selected for a pilot study. A pilot study should not take too long to conduct. Welman and Kruger (1999: 146) state that the purpose of a pilot interview is to find possible flaws in the procedures (like ambiguous instructions or insufficient time limits) and to recognise the non-verbal behaviour of the participants which may point to discomfort about the content or wording of the questions. It is also intended to identify items which are vague or ambiguously formulated. Actual questions are

posed to the participants and the researcher ascertains how the participants interpret these questions. Another purpose of the pilot study in this research is to train an inexperienced interviewer. Two pilot interviews will be conducted in this study as set out in Table 3.4:

Table 3.4: Pilot interviews

Requirements	Technikons	Industry
Type of interview.	Focus group.	Individual.
Context of interview.	Technikon in a rural environment.	Hospital industry in Gauteng.
Location/venue.	Staff room or conference room.	Office, board room or conference room.
Duration of interview.	Approximately one hour.	Approximately one hour.
Medium of interview.	English.	English.
Interviewer.	Researcher.	Researcher.
Target group.	Lecturers and senior lecturers from HRM department.	Human Resource Director from the HRM department.

In both interviews confidentiality of information will be assured and the value of the participants' inputs will be emphasised. The use of two tape-recorders to record the data will be explained and placed on a small table in full view of the participants. The data will be transcribed shortly afterwards for explicitation purposes. The researcher as interviewer in both pilot studies will encourage the participants to interact freely and probing will be applied to obtain supplementary information from the participants.

The interviewer needs a protocol according to which the interview will be conducted.

3.6 PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWS

There is no recipe for effective interviewing. The particular situation, characteristics of the participants and personal style of the interviewer interact to create a unique situation for each interview. However, some guidelines in the form of a protocol can be supplied. The following protocol which is a combination

of the approaches of Field and Morse (1985:4), Patton (1987: 142-143), Cohen and Manion (1994: 284-287), Frey and Oishi (1995: 27), King (1995: 21) and Jerling (1997: 14-16) will be applied in this study:

3.6.1 Protocol before the interview

- The written consent of all the participants will be obtained beforehand to record the interview and incorporate it in the research. The transcriptions will also be made available to the participants.
- Arrangements will be made for a non-threatening venue that is isolated from noise.
- The participants will receive reminders of the interview at least 10 days before the time in the form of a telephone call, e-mail or fax. The learners will receive a letter in the class or those who have access, will be contacted telephonically or electronically.

3.6.2 Protocol during the interview

- The interviewer will provide each participant on the day of the interview with a card on which the questions appear, to focus and structure the discussion, and encourage the participants to talk freely about the topic.
- The interviewer will attempt to establish personal rapport with the participants and a sense of mutual interest and trust. This will be achieved by keeping the participants in close proximity, so that the seating arrangements will contribute to an intimate atmosphere. Time will be allowed for informal chatter at the beginning to establish trusting relationships and an atmosphere which is not threatening.
- The interviewer will explain the purpose of the investigation.
- The interviewer will guarantee the confidentiality of comments and an explanation as to why everybody is involved in the research project, will be provided.

- The participants will be encouraged to participate spontaneously in a trusting atmosphere and by emphasising that no right or wrong answers exist.
- The interviewer will ask open-ended questions, using clear, understandable and appropriate language. One question at a time will be asked and the interviewer will keep to the question schedule in the exact format.
- The interviewers will "bracket" themselves in order to maintain neutrality. The focus will fall on the participants' perspectives in order to allow the phenomenon to emerge.
- The interviews will be recorded in clear view of the participants on two tape-recorders.
- Participants will be given enough time to think and generate ideas.
- The interviewer will make use of probes to elicit depth and detail. This includes gestures like nodding the head or saying "uh-uh" and neutral questions like "Could you tell me more?"
- The participants will be treated with respect, since it is a privilege and responsibility to explore another person's experience.

During interviewing, the interviewer will apply several strategies (Jerling, 1997: 14-16; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004: 53, 57-58, 75-79):

- Empathy, warmth and unconditional acceptance to set the participants at ease.
- Reflections of the participants' words to enable them to think about what was said and to possibly expand on it.
- Clarification in an attempt to understand the opinion of the participant by stating that the interviewer does not understand.
- Open-ended questions to stimulate the participants to express themselves. The interviewer will start the interview with a question which can be answered easily and without potential embarrassment.
- Focus by stating that the participants should look at the questions again when they become side-tracked.

- Encouragements to provide further information by using minimal responses like nodding of the head and saying “mm, mm”. Encouragement will also be achieved by making use of a warm and friendly tone of voice, active listening skills, relaxed body language and sufficient eye contact with the participants.

3.6.3 Protocol after the interview

- As soon as possible after each interview, the interviewer will thank the participants, check the recording for malfunctions and compile reflective notes to complement understanding of the data.
- The data will be transcribed for further investigation and explicitation.
- Follow-up interviews may be required to clarify information.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher and an independent coder will follow several steps in the explicitation and interpretation of data which to be will have been collected through interviewing participants from different technikons and industry.

3.7 PROTOCOL FOR DATA EXPLICITATION

Patton (1987: 144) describes analysis as “…the process of bringing order to the data, organising what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units”. The term ‘data analysis’ is deliberately avoided here in view of Hycner (1999: 161) who cautions that “analysis” has dangerous connotations for phenomenology. The “term [analysis] usually means a ‘breaking into parts’ and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon”. The term ‘explicitation’ implies an “investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole”.

The data explicitation should be verifiable in the sense that if another researcher uses the same raw data, that person should come to the same conclusions

(Krueger, 1994: 129). The researcher should maintain a distance from the information. Therefore, the data will be analysed independently by the researcher and an independent coder. The researcher should display an open mind to possibilities, as well as conflicting explanations for the findings (Creswell, 1994: 153).

The data explicitation process starts with the reading of the data and the division of the data into smaller and more meaningful units. The data is organised into categories and sub-categories although additional categories or themes can flow from the data (Merten, 1998: 350). The categories are flexible and can be adapted by means of further data explicitation.

The following protocol, which is compiled and based on the guidelines proposed by Kerlinger (1986: 477-481), Strauss and Corbin (1990: 62-69) as well as Hycner (1999: 143-156), will be followed step-by-step to explicitate data and ensure the trustworthiness of this study:

Step 1: Reading of transcriptions. The researcher will read all the transcriptions for a holistic view and a clear picture of the responses with regard to assessment. In doing so, the researcher will make an attempt to consciously set aside any preconceived ideas as mentioned in the technique of "bracketing" and only focus on the responses obtained in the transcription (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 6; King, 1995: 31). As Crabtree and Miller (1992: 24) put it, the researcher must "enter into the individual's lifeworld and use the self as an experiencing interpreter". This will enable the researcher to avoid promoting false responses and explicitate as objectively as possible.

Step 2: Line-by-line explicitation. The researcher will read all the transcriptions for the second time and underline relevant responses as preliminary classifications that will be refined later. This step involves a line-by-line explicitation with the relevant and irrelevant phrases or words or terms

distinguished. The researcher will list relevant responses in the language or actual words of the participants.

Step 3: Labelling the phenomenon. This step entails the conceptualisation of data which entails the researcher giving each discrete incident, idea or event a name.

Step 4: Identification of categories. This step refers to the grouping of ideas or labels, which appear to belong together, to the same phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 65). In this study, the categories discovered relate to the relevant responses to the interview questions.

Step 5: Description of categories. In this step, the essence is on giving a 'thick description' of each category as identified in step four. The density and saturation of categories will direct the description of the categories. The theoretical explicitation of the data will be subjected to a literature control for verification purposes.

Step 6: Integration of categories. The data of the interviews with the *learners, lecturers and departmental heads* will be integrated on the category and sub-category levels, per question, due to the similarity of the questions (Data Set 1). To achieve this, the responses of the three target groups will be gathered together for question 1 and categories and sub-categories will be identified for this question across these three target groups. The process will then be repeated for question 2 till the categories and sub-categories for all the questions have been outlined.

The *policy makers* received different questions and did not answer specifically for the learners in HRM, but for their technikon as a whole. Therefore, their data will be kept separate (Data Set 2). The *learners, lecturers, departmental heads and the policy makers* present data that are internal to the technikons.

Since the questions posed to the participants in industry differed from all the other interview questions, their data will be kept separately as well (Data Set 3). Industry participants as external “partners” in training and assessment constitute data that is external to the technikons. Finally, themes will be developed across the data sets, regardless of the questions and target groups.

Step 7: Independent coder. An independent coder ought to explicitate the data, according to the protocol. The researcher will brief the coder about the study and forward a copy of chapter 1. The coder will also receive a copy of the protocol for data explicitation. The aforementioned steps will be repeated in order to determine whether the independent coder agrees with the researcher’s classification of categories as well as the kind of categories identified. The independent coder’s insight with regard to the transcription will be validated by means of the direct quotations and all the material will be returned to the researcher. The researcher and independent coder will consult before and after the data processing phase, till they reach consensus with regard to the findings.

Step 8: Interpretation of the data. The researcher will interpret the data and develop several themes across the data sets and interview questions.

Table 3.5 displays the application of the data explicitation steps to the target groups in different chapters.

Table 3.5: Data explicitation steps for the Data Sets

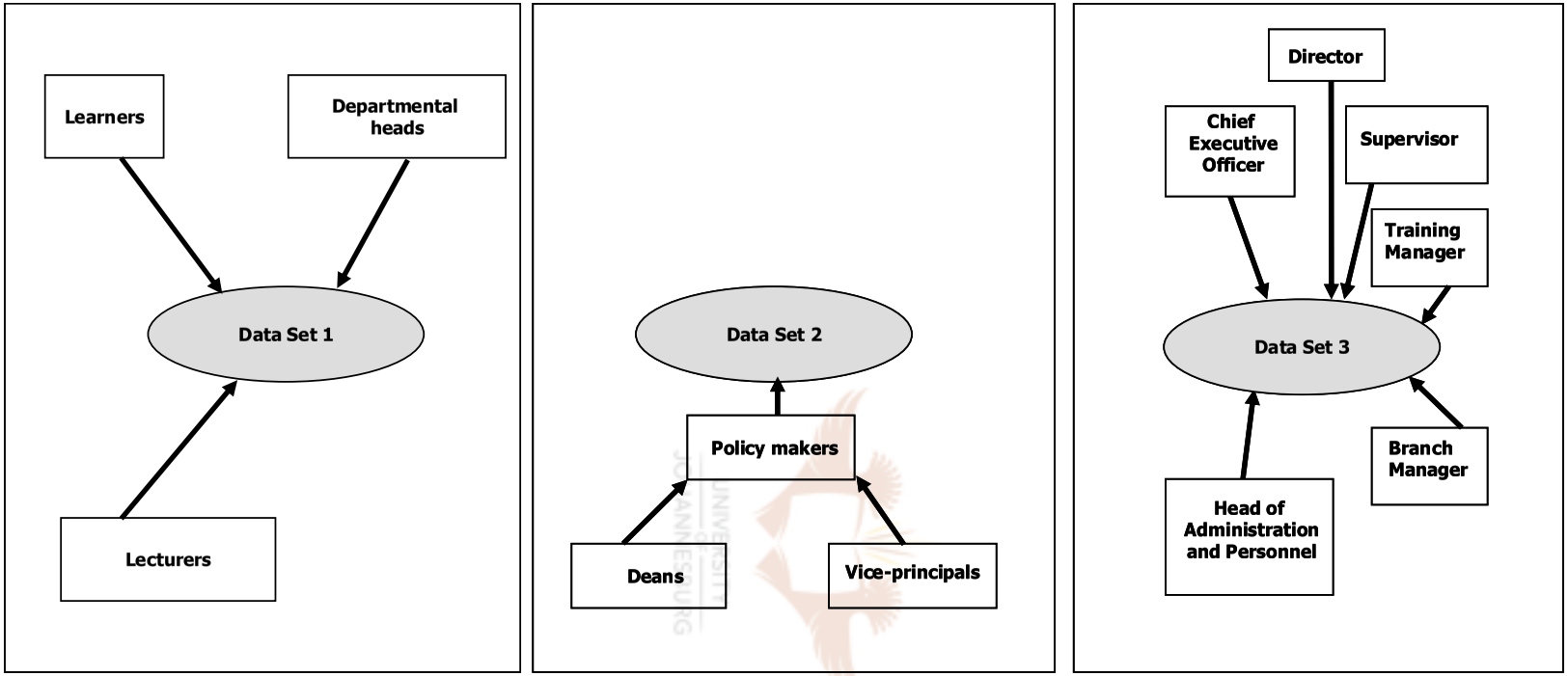
Data Set	Target group	Interview questions	Protocol for data explicitation	Chapter
Data Set 1.	Learners, lecturers and departmental heads.	Questions 1-5.	Steps 1-7.	Chapter 4.
Data Set 2.	Policy makers.	Questions 1-3.	Steps 1-7.	Chapter 4.
Data Set 3.	Participants from industry.	Questions 1-7.	Steps 1-7.	Chapter 5.
Data Sets 1-3.	Learners, lecturers and departmental heads. Policy makers. Participants from industry.	All questions.	Steps 1-8.	Chapter 6.

Figure 3.1 portrays the different sets of data schematically.

3.8 SUMMARY

A qualitative research design was considered as the most appropriate paradigm that best served the requirements of the research problem. The data-gathering methods, semi-structured individual interviews and semi-structured focus group interviews were further described. The strategies that will be employed to promote trustworthiness were discussed. A protocol for data collection and a protocol for the data explicitation were formulated.

In chapter 4 the data collected from the technikon participants will be explicitated. Chapter 5 will present the explicitation of the data gathered from industry participants. The rest of the research report deals with the research findings and the results of the integration between the assessment framework of chapter 2 and the empirical data of chapters 4 and 5.



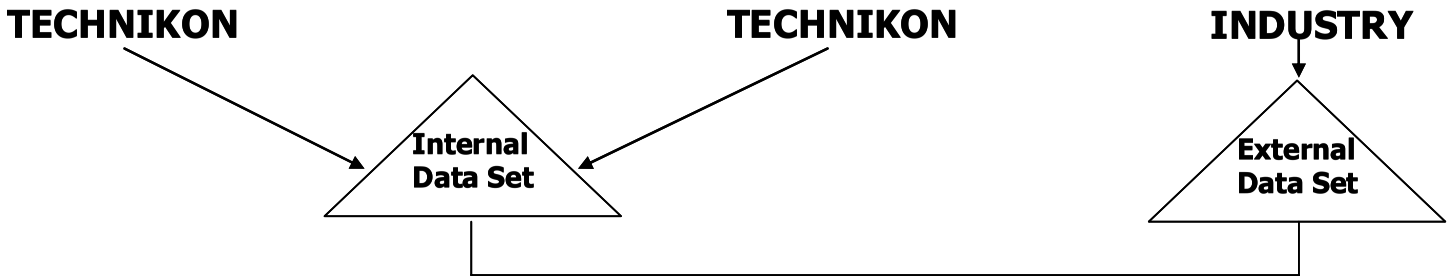


Figure 3.1: Data Sets

CHAPTER 4

DATA EXPLICITATION OF INTERVIEWS AT THE TECHNIKONS

4.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter contains an explicitation of the data of the interviews conducted with technikon representatives. Two sets of data will be discussed. Data Set 1 covers questions 1-5 as displayed in Table 3.3 (section 3.4.7) and involves the technikon *learners, lecturers and departmental heads*. Due to the similarity of the questions for these three target groups, the data were integrated and categories and sub-categories developed.

Data Set 2 entails questions 1-3 for the *policy makers* at technikons as displayed in Table 3.3 (section 3.4.7). Question 1 for the policy makers differs from other questions posed to the learners, lecturers and departmental heads. Thus, the data cannot all be integrated and Data Set 2 is kept separate.

The results of discussions with the research participants and the consensus achieved between the coder and the researcher with regard to the categories, are provided for each question per Data Set. Chapter 5 will present an explicitation of the data gathered in *industry*. The data from these interviews are Data set 3. More specifically the following aspects are dealt with in this chapter: the proceedings of the pilot studies, an overview of the interviews with technikon participants, data explicitation, an account of the perspectives of the participants with supporting quotations and a literature control.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEWS

The six technikons are indicated from A to F. In Table 4.1 they are described as historically black or historically white according to a Council on Higher Education

or CHE (1999/2000: 12-13) report. Technikons B and C represent the Gauteng region. The remaining technikons are each from a different province. In total, technikons from five provinces which extended permission to conduct research, were included. In order to ensure confidentiality and prevent easy identification of technikons in provinces other than Gauteng, only the latter province is mentioned, since more than one technikon is situated in Gauteng.

Table 4.1: Description of technikons

Techni-kons	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
Descrip-tion.	Histori-cally black.	Histori-cally white.	Histori-cally white.	Histori-cally white.	Histori-cally black.	Histori-cally black.
Location.	Rural.	Urban.	Urban.	Urban.	Rural.	Urban.

4.2.1 Pilot interviews

Two pilot interviews were conducted as set out in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews	**Pilot interview 1**	**Pilot interview 2**
Technikon	Technikon E	Technikon A
Venue.	Boardroom.	Conference room.
Target group.	Lecturers.	Learners.
Interviewer.	Researcher.	Independent interviewer 1.
Medium.	English.	English.
Duration of interview.	45 minutes.	45 minutes.

Pilot Interview 1 revealed that the questions were functional. Although it seems that the participants could not express themselves very well in English, as it is not their primary language, they understood the questions, but provided vague answers. The researcher interviewed one participant, who was absent that day due to transport problems, one month later and incorporated only new data,

which was lacking in the interview with the other lecturers. Pilot Interview 2 at another technikon in a different province was scheduled, since there were no more lecturers at that stage to interview at this technikon.

For Pilot Interview 2, the researcher accompanied the Independent Interviewer 1 to the technikon, but was not present during the interview in case the participants felt intimidated. Although the interviewer encouraged the participants to interact freely, one participant in the group did not participate. A lecturer also interrupted the interview twice, despite a “do not disturb” sign, but it did not seem to distract or inhibit the learners. The researcher listened to the tape from the second pilot study, transcribed the data and read the transcription afterwards in order to find out how the Independent Interviewer 2 probed. Both pilot interviews were approved without any changes to the questions and form part of the data analysis.

4.2.2 Focus group interviews with the learners

In total, six focus group interviews with learners were conducted, either in English or Afrikaans, in a conference room or boardroom around a table. The interviews proceeded as planned.

Table 4.3 indicates the learners in terms of racial groups and gender. The majority of the participants were females and the majority of the learners were black. The participants voluntarily took part in the interview. From Table 4.3 it is evident that Asian participants are lacking, but manipulation did not take place. The learners were randomly chosen and consequently, the participants consisted of the other racial groups as represented in Table 4.3.

Overall, the participants could give information about all the questions and spoke mostly positively about their assessment. The interviews with the learners lasted approximately from 45 minutes to an hour and 10 minutes, except for the

interview at Technikon F, which lasted 30 minutes. At Technikon C, the participants at times talked simultaneously, which made the facilitation process difficult.

Table 4.3: Gender and racial group of the learners, lecturers, departmental heads and policy makers

Target groups	**Demo-graph-ics**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
Learners.	**Gen-der.**	Male: 6. Female: 4.	Male: 3. Female: 7.	Male: 3. Female: 7.	Male: 4. Female: 6.	Male: 3. Female: 2.	Male: 3. Female: 7.
	Racial group.	Black: 10.	Black: 10.	Black: 6. White: 4.	Black: 7. White: 3.	Black: 5.	Black: 5. Coloured: 5.
	TOTAL.	10	10	10	10	5	10
Lecturers.	**Gen-der.**	Male: 2. Female: 2.	Male: 2. Female: 3.	Male: 3. Female: 1.	Male: 2. Female: 0.	Male: 2. Female: 2.	Male: 2. Female: 0.
	Racial group.	White: 4.	White: 5.	White: 4.	White: 2.	Black: 4.	White: 2.
	TOTAL.	4	5	4	2	4	2
Depart-mental heads.	**Gen-der.**	Male: 1.	Male: 1.	Female: 1.	Male: 1.	Partici-pant not available.	Female: 1.
	Racial group.	Black: 1.	White: 1.	White: 1.	White: 1.	Partici-pant not available.	White: 1.
	TOTAL.	1	1	1	1	0	1
Policy makers.	**Gen-der.**	Male: 1.	Male: 1.	Male: 1.	Male: 1.	Male: 1.	Male: 1.
	Racial group.	Black: 1.	White: 1.	White: 1.	White: 1.	White: 1.	White: 1.
	TOTAL.	1	1	1	1	1	1

Member checking with regard to all participants was applied as explained in chapter 3 (see section 3.3.4). The participants did not produce any new information.

4.2.3 Focus group interviews with the lecturers

The researcher conducted four interviews in English or Afrikaans with the lecturers in conference rooms at Technikons A, B, C, D and E, of which the one at Technikon E was used as a pilot study. Independent Interviewer 1 facilitated the interview at Technikon A and the Independent Interviewer 2 conducted the focus group interview at Technikon F (for reasons mentioned in section 3.4.5). The lecturers at Technikon A were a bit reserved at the beginning, but, after a while, became involved and participated fully, giving relevant examples from subjects of Human Resource Management. They understood the questions. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour, except for the one at Technikon F, which lasted 15 minutes.

From Table 4.3 it is clear that most of the participants are white, except those from Technikon E, which is situated in a traditionally black area. The participants may not seem representative, but manipulation did not occur and the participants were volunteers. Black indicates black persons only and does not include Coloureds and Indians in this study. Since the other lecturers at Technikon F were not interested in participating, the group consisted of two participants.

Overall, the first question about the applied assessment methods and techniques, and the fourth question about the role of industry, overlapped, depending on whether the participants indicated co-operative education or experiential learning as an assessment method or technique. If they had already touched upon the role of industry in the assessment of their learners, they did not feel inclined to repeat the same information. Overlapping also occurred when

participants referred to the problems experienced with co-operative education previously in questions 1 and 3 and the last question thus became irrelevant. Apart from these problems, the participants participated spontaneously.

4.2.4 Individual interviews with the departmental heads

All the interviews took place in the offices of the participants in the morning or afternoon in either English or Afrikaans. The same independent interviewers were used to conduct interviews at Technikons A and F respectively due to reasons mentioned in section 4.2.1. The interviews lasted from 41 minutes to usually about an hour. Due to the enthusiastic responses of the departmental head at Technikon D, that particular interview extended to an hour and a half. The departmental head at Technikon F was late and had very little to say in response to the questions. Therefore, the interview lasted only 15 minutes.

Table 4.3 provides the gender and racial group of the departmental heads interviewed in this study. The majority of the participants are white males. Manipulation did not take place and the participants were volunteers.

Some difficulties were experienced in interviews with departmental heads. A lecturer interrupted the interview with the departmental head at Technikon A twice, despite a “Do not disturb” sign. The departmental head is more fluent in French than English and the interviewer had to listen very carefully to the accent in order to understand what the departmental head was saying. He did not always answer the question posed.

Overall, the participants answered questions in a professional and enthusiastic manner. The participant at Technikon C referred the interviewer to the relevant lecturers for more details about the different assessment methods and techniques.

4.2.5 Individual interviews with the policy makers

The policy makers who were approached, consisted of Vice-principals: Academic, or an acting Vice-principal: Academic, or a Dean of the Faculty of Business Management at Technikon C. The interviews were conducted in the offices of the participants in either English or Afrikaans and lasted about 45 minutes. Table 4.3 summarises the gender and racial group of policy makers. Mainly white male policy makers were interviewed. Manipulation did not occur and participants, who were willing to participate, were involved.

The interviews with policy makers did not produce any new information, since they are not at ground level involved with co-operative education.

4.3 DATA EXPLICITATION OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE LEARNERS, LECTURERS AND DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

The data of the interviews with the *learners, lecturers and departmental heads* (Data Set 1) cover questions 1-5 (section 3.4.7). The data were saturated i.e. no new ideas were forthcoming after conducting interviews at six technikons. Integration took place between these three groups on the category and sub-category levels due to the similarity of the questions as set out in Table 4.4. The research data are presented according to the interview questions, categories and discussion of the data according to the established categories. The categories and sub-categories are derived from the responses of the participants. Only the less obvious categories and sub-categories are defined.

Table 4.4: Integration of interview questions of Data Set 1

Learners	Lecturers	Departmental heads
1. Which assessment methods and techniques do the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply when assessing you?	1. Which assessment methods and techniques do you apply when assessing your learners?	1. Which assessment methods and techniques do you apply when assessing your learners?
2. Why do you think the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing you?	2. Why do you apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing your learners?	2. Why do you apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing your learners?
3. How effective are these assessment methods and techniques, which the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply, when assessing you?	3. How effective are these assessment methods and techniques, which you apply when assessing your learners in Human Resource Management?	3. How effective are these assessment methods and techniques, which you apply when assessing your learners in Human Resource Management?
4. What role does industry play in your assessment in Human Resource Management?	4. What role does industry play in the assessment of your learners in Human Resource Management?	4. What role does industry play in the assessment of your learners in Human Resource Management?
5. How effective is the involvement of industry in your assessment in Human Resource Management?	5. How effective is the involvement of industry in the assessment of your learners in Human Resource Management?	5. How effective is the involvement of industry in the assessment of your learners in Human Resource Management?

4.3.1 Assessment methods and techniques

Data Set 1 covers questions 1-5 (section 3.4.7) and involves the technikon *learners, lecturers and departmental heads*. Due to the similarity of the questions for these three target groups, the data were integrated and categories and sub-categories developed.

The learners, lecturers and departmental heads answered the following questions:

Question 1:

To the learners: Which assessment methods and techniques do the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply when assessing you?

To the lecturers and departmental heads: Which assessment methods and techniques do you apply when assessing your learners?

The researcher and independent coder established the following categories from the data seen in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5: Assessment methods and techniques

Categories	Sub-categories
(a) Tests and examinations.	(i) Quiz tests/spot tests. (ii) Case studies. (iii) Open book examinations. (iv) Multiple choice questions.
(b) Case studies and presentations.	
(c) Experiential learning.	

(a) Tests and examinations

The learners and lecturers admit that the method mostly used is tests as suggested in “ons skryf geweldig baie toetse”. For example “four tests” in most cases or “three formal tests” are conducted and the fourth mark is achieved by means of presentations, case studies or assignments. In other cases there are “two tests and an assignment” or “three major tests, 30-30-30% and then the class test will assign whatever 10%” in some cases. The tests and examinations are theory-based with less focus on practical questions. The lecturers conclude that the learners do well in tests (“ons tipe student doen baie, baie goed in hulle toetse”), since they apply rote learning. This perspective is also supported by “as jy nou kom met feitekennis wat jy toets, dan memoriseer hy dit”. They think that

the learners have difficulty in applying that theory to the case studies and receive less in a presentation, since they lack presentation skills (“sodra ek vir hulle sê, doen ‘n presentation, … dan kry hulle 47%”).

For the lecturers it is “easier to compile a test and let them all write (simultaneously) in one venue than to give assignments”. One institution has a “shortage of venues and cannot accommodate so many learners” all at once for tests. The result is that the lecturers end up with “four or five different tests” and eventually they “run out of questions”. Unforeseen social events announced by top management interfere when test dates and test halls are arranged and complicate the scheduling of assessment. This view is reflected in “dan kom bestuur en dan kondig hulle allerhande dae af … dan moet jy nou skielik rondval en ander reëlings tref … as die goed sommer links en regs verander word”.

For the learners, some courses contain too many modules and in other modules less work is covered. Therefore, some tests require more content to study than others do. This is corroborated in “you have to study four modules for one test and you have to study eight modules for another test”. The learners have problems with the workload and make statements like “we read too much”, and “the workload is also too much”. The learners point out that the modules “should be balanced”, then “you won’t fail”. They want a “system” that will force them to “perform equally” in all tests.

Tests and examinations include techniques like long questions/essays, short questions, multiple questions and case studies. Examinations count 60% of the final marks. Examinations consist of 100% theory for first year learners and thereafter 50% theory and 50% application. Supporting quotations are: “a major exam in June, July 60% of the year mark, two presentations 20% each” and “final examination is 50% theory and 50% uh ... case study”. The “one paper is theory, the other one case study”. The lecturers are of the opinion that the examination assesses application skills, initiative, cognitive reasoning, practical and realistic

thought processes. The lecturers also distribute previous examination papers for the learners to complete in tutorials as in “I had to give them the whole of the past paper, question paper” with the purpose “to assess them if they are well prepared for the examination”.

It is their opinion that due to learner pressure the learners have four opportunities to write the examinations that lead to lecturers marking all the time as stated in “ons moet maar net opstel en merk, opstel en merk, opstel en merk”. Sometimes a total of eight papers are compiled for every examination when a new text book is used, since the learners can still apply to write the paper dealing with the previous material. This is evident in “jy moet agt vraestelle per vak opstel vir elke eksamen, as jy ‘n nuwe boek aanbeveel”.

One institution is moving away from the retention type of assessment and the application type questions have become more important: “ons is besig om weg te beweeg van daardie toetspunt, of streng retensie … en weergawe”. In addition, the lecturers claim that they have moved from a quantitative approach to a qualitative approach in their assessment.

(i) Quiz tests/spot tests

The focus in the curriculum is to “know the theory more”. The learners at one institution indicate that they “read over a chapter and the following day, we’ll do a spot test or a quiz” that counts towards their year mark. These tests enable them to gain “an understanding of the work that we have to do, and guidelines from the lecturers to … what to focus on”.

(ii) Case studies

At times videos that depict case studies are shown followed by questions and summaries of the case studies. Case studies are further shown on video in class

for a test. One departmental head cautions that it is difficult to set a memorandum for case studies, since there are so many interpretations as in “jy kan nie eintlik 'n memo hê nie, want elke student antwoord hom anders” and case studies may also be more relevant to the American environment. He contends that the learners “het hoegenaamd tog nie daai blootstelling nie” and “hulle weet nie waarvan ons praat nie”.

Some lecturers claim that the “norm” for the learners is to argue about their marks in tests as in the statement “studente is geneig om jou eerder aan te vat as dit by ‘n fisiese toets kom”. However, the learners do not argue about their marks as is evident in “as dit ‘n gevallestudie is, dan vat hulle jou nie aan nie … omdat 'n mens geneig is om meer te skryf by wyse van kritiek … so hy kry beter kommunikasie terug na sy kant toe”.

(iii) Open book examinations

The integrated open book examination of four hours deals with a case study that is a total integration of everything about Human Resources (“dis 'n totale integrasie van … alles wat per ‘HR’ gaan”). While the lecturers find open book examinations integrated, since all modules are covered in that exam, the learners find open book tests/examinations “'n bietjie oneffektief … want nou gaan jy jou drie handboeke moet saamvat” and “’n bietjie baie moet swot”.

(iv) Multiple choice questions

Some lecturers claim that at their institution “we've got large numbers of students … no one of us has got less than 300”. At one other institution there are 800 learners in the first year and at another campus there are 250 first year learners and 300 third year learners. Every year there are 150-200 learners who complete their diplomas. Due to the learner numbers, time saving and economic factors, they apply these tests. Supporting quotations in this regard are: “ meervoudige

keuse vrae wat tydbesparing en ekonomiese beginsels behels", "dit is 'n maklike manier om almal afgehandel te kry", "a monkey-puzzle … for the reason that I've got a lot of students", and "so that the marking it doesn't unduly overload me".

The first test will consist only of multiple choice questions. In other cases, four multiple choice tests are required. One institution administers "agt meervoudige keusetoetse waarvan die beste ses tel". In the examination half of the marks have been allocated to multiple choice questions and, in some cases, 60 marks and the rest to essay type questions. At another institution in the examination paper a quarter of the marks are allocated to multiple choice questions. According to the lecturers, multiple-choice tests include true/false questions and completion type sentences.

The learners and departmental heads agree that multiple-choice questions are too easy and lead to guessing. The lecturers are aware that the learners do not like multiple choice questions as in "baie reageer baie negatief op die meervoudige keuse vrae". However, they profess the multiple choice questions to be a good method as in "'n goeie manier om hulle te toets veral as 'n mens so baie studente het". Some lecturers state that "ons sal seker nog anderste wil assesseer as jy minder getalle gaan hê". Other lecturers have a different experience in that the learners "leer baie keer soos pappegaaie en die oomblik wat jy dit nou vir hulle 'n bietjie anders vra, dan kan hulle dit nie doen nie". They think the learners learn the question and answer as it appears in the book. In one institution, final year learners are excluded from multiple choice questions. The learners are of the opinion that the lecturers prefer to assess them in a more challenging way and a way that will prepare them for the corporate world.

(b) Case studies and presentations

According to the lecturers, progressively more application questions are asked in case studies as the learners master the theoretical knowledge that serves as a

prerequisite for analytical abilities. Borrowing from the answers or approaches from different groups in class may enlarge the case study.

The learners profess they enjoy the practical assessment methods like presentations and case studies ("we get to enjoy case studies"). They think that presentations add to the development of self-confidence and freedom to talk. When doing case studies, they feel as if they "are in a company". According to the learners there are no right or wrong answers, as long as they can support their answers.

The lecturers allocate marks in the following way: "50% of the marks for the actual assignment itself … and then 50% for the presentation and the explanation. And then I allocate them a mark … constitutes again 10% of the year mark". Since there "is not 100% continuous evaluation", the learners regard it as important to attend classes regularly, participate in class, hand in assignments, and do tests as it all adds to their year mark.

The lecturers provide feedback on individual or group presentations and role-plays. According to the lecturers, some learners ask not to receive their feedback out loud in front of the class. All members of the group receive the same mark. A third year learner from one technikon assists the lecturer by assessing the learners informally and comparing marks with the lecturer. At another technikon multiple assessors assess two to three subjects in HRM during presentations. The learners and lecturers will also question the presenters/role players. The evaluation form/check sheet for presentations indicates assessment criteria like communication, body language, preparation, media and content. A written document may be handed in at the same time of the presentation. When conducting interviews, a panel may assess the learners. According to the lecturers, the learners experience difficulty in expressing themselves clearly during presentations/role plays.

Due to the large numbers of learners, presentations take a long time, according to the lecturers and departmental heads, as in “I just can't do that... with the number of my students … that takes a lot of time. … and you're caught in it”. As one lecturer puts it: “I can’t even be sick, because then I'll miss out and it, it just runs away with the whole thing” and he may fall behind. The rest of the class gives their opinion on where the presenter can improve. Some lecturers think it is a good method, because the learners “compete with each other” to do better.

While most lecturers deem presentations less effective, the departmental heads are in favour of presentations “om die verskillende kultuurverskille en die verskillende vlakke van rypheid te akkommodeer … met interpersoonlike kommunikasie” and “rolspel en veral die sogenaamde aanbiedings … en jou gevallestudies ook, dit genereer of aktiveer gesprekvoer in die klas”.

According to the lecturer and learners, the learners work in groups of eight and each group receives a task to complete. The way they deal with assignments and projects simulate the work environment, since they act as a business and receive marks instead of money. The topics for the assignments relate to the work environment. At times they need to interview people in industry as part of their assignment. A report or the assignment is handed to the lecturer in the end. For assignments the learners need to obtain more information from the library than what is in the textbook only. The learners assume that the lecturers assess their capabilities and willingness to obtain other sources from the library.

The lecturers believe that “buddy-rating” or peer assessments will not work because everybody will receive the same rating: “all average-average” or all “top-top” and will therefore “never be honest” in their rating. Even in presentations the rest of the class will agree with the presenter. This is supported by the quotations “dit wat hy sê, is totaal in teenstelling met wat sy ‘brother’ gesê het, maar hy ‘agree with’ hom” and “hulle stem met mekaar saam … dit maak nie saak hoe ver die ou van die bol af is nie”. The learners admit they will also not reveal a

member who does not contribute to the completion of an assignment as in "… gaan jy nie regtig hierdie ou uitskuif as hy nie iets doen nie … jy sal maar eerder stilbly". Where group assessment is used, the lecturers prefer it if the group decides about the mark among themselves in order for the lecturer not to appear as the "bad guy" or "die vark in die verhaal" ("hulle self besluit: die ene kry 100%, die een kry 80% en die een kry 20% … en dit werk baie goed uit"). According to certain criteria some lecturers will add or subtract the marks so the learners receive the overall marks individually ("elke een kry op die ou einde, 'n verskillende punt vir dieselfde taak").

According to the learners, the lecturers can assess the assignments by "reading it in class". Upon probing they could not provide further details. When assignments are handed in, they present them to practise their presentation skills. Some learners claim they do not know the way the lecturers assess their assignments and how they allocate the marks as in "die manier waarop dit geassesseer word, dit weet ons glad nie … wat's die kritieke punte wat hulle na kyk? Jy kry net jou ding terug". The learners find that the lecturers do not provide a model answer or "solution" of the assignment as in "the lecturer may not give you solution for the assignment, so you won't know whether what you were supposed to write".

The lecturers find it difficult to mark assignments and "be objective". According to the lecturers the learners "hand in 20 pages and others two pages and then they expect to get 100% for it". The lecturers dislike giving assignments, since the learners "submit late" or they "do not hand it in" at all or "copy" from each other. A few lecturers use group assignments or projects in which the topic relates to the working environment. In one instance the lecturers use assignments formatively by commenting on the learners' progress while they are writing it before the learners hand in the final product.

(c) Experiential learning

Placing large numbers of learners in experiential learning is a big problem. According to the lecturers, “60% cannot find workstations”. The learners are mostly responsible for their own experiential learning placements in industry. The time period varies at the different technikons from three weeks to two months. In most cases the learners do not receive a mark for experiential learning and can receive their qualification without the experience in industry. The learners are observed by a mentor/supervisor in industry. According to the lecturers and learners at one institution, the lecturers also visit the learners.

The learners look for placements where they will also receive remuneration. Employers are reluctant to pay and if the learners do get placement, they reject the offer if it does not accompany payment. According to the lecturers the learners do not regard experiential learning as a privilege or as an opportunity to gain experience. The lecturers and departmental heads think industry is unwilling and uninterested or does not have the time to provide opportunities for experiential learning for 200 learners.

The assessment of experiential learning consists of a logbook or reports by the learners and the organisation’s confidential report and an individual interview by the departmental head and lecturers on campus afterwards. The learners as in “they give us logbooks where we write down what we’ve done there”, support this. The lecturers and departmental heads state that, at the technikon, the departmental head interviews the learners about their experience and they receive feedback about their report. The learners also compile a report. According to the lecturers and departmental heads the purpose of the interview is to provide feedback, identify developmental areas and weaknesses and establish the knowledge level and skills level of the learners. The lecturers indicate that they strive to keep the logbook simple in order to obtain placements in industry (“ons kan nie die ouens na 'n werkgewer toe stuur met 'n ‘file’ van goed wat die

werkgewer moet invul nie, want hulle is nie bereid om daardie studente in diens te neem nie"). At times the learners give verbal reports or feedback about their experiences in class afterwards ("hulle moet dan gaan staan en vir die klas vertel, wat het hulle geleer daar"). However, the assessment poses problems. The lecturers say they are not convinced that what the mentor has written is a true reflection. Some confidential reports by industry are filled in too quickly and lack written comments ("die vertroulike verslag is so vinnig ingevul, hulle skryf nie eers kommentaar by nie").

4.3.2 Reasons for the assessment methods and techniques

The following questions that the learners, lecturers and departmental heads answered, deal with the selection of assessment methods and techniques:

Question 2:
To the learners: Why do you think the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing you?
To the lecturers and departmental heads: Why do you apply these assessment methods and techniques, when assessing your learners?

Only one category emerged from the data: Preparation for the work environment.

(a) Preparation for the work environment

The learners enjoy the methods and find them "interesting" and "exciting". Apart from assessing their understanding, the learners think the methods are used to assess "if we deserve to be in the level that we are in, for instance like being third years". The lecturers have certain expectations of what the learners should be able to do and the methods "give the student a broader idea on what is happening on the outside".

In general, the methods are meant to develop certain skills and knowledge that are aimed at the work environment as revealed in “of ons darem in 'n organisasie kan gaan werk”. According to the learners the lecturers choose presentations in order to develop the learners’ interpersonal skills (“voordragte is maar meeste van die tyd om die kommunikasie ‘skills’ beter te maak”) and confidence and it prepares them for the working environment. This is revealed in their statements like “we must learn now to express ourselves”, “we must be able to stand in front of many people”, “we learn how to talk to people” and gain “self-confidence”. Other supporting statements are “one day we'll be the managers” and “the lecturers have to be sure that we know the job before we go to the work environment”. In experiential training the learners think they “applied what we have learnt here at the technikon in the work environment”.

Case studies enable them to apply insight, problem solving and application of the theory. The learners profess that once they have done practical work, they do not need to study for a test, since the work is familiar. Case studies are also to “measure our understanding on what I am going to be expected to do when we are qualified to Human Resources officers or managers”, while the assignments help them “to do research” and seek information in the library.

The learners claim that tests enable them to “make mistakes”, “rectify mistakes” so that they “can be ready for the exams”. They think the lecturers want to find out whether they can “capture the content” and “they want to check if we know our work”.

For the learners, it seems the choice of methods depends on participation in class, feedback, outcomes-based education, learning from others, the development of knowledge and skills, preparation for industry (“it gives you that experience of how it feels to be in a work situation”), practical focus, application,

the level of the learners, provision of information, the simplicity, and the examination readiness of the learners.

For the lecturers, factors which influence the choice of the assessment methods and techniques are: convenience, due to the large numbers of learners; the unique nature of the subject; level of the learners; achievement of the outcomes; prescription by the technikons and their departments; time problems; preparation for industry; the development of knowledge and skills; enjoyment; learning from others; the outcomes-based paradigm; learner profile; participation and the practical nature of the institution or technikon philosophy ("dit is wat ons verskillend maak van 'n universiteit ook, omdat ons meer prakties georiënteerd is"). Prescribed assessment methods and techniques cause frustration. They do not always follow the prescribed methods ("maar ons verneuk so 'n bietjie") and techniques and the lecturers would like to do practical work only. This is corroborated in "ons vak … hy leen hom daarin toe om meer prakties te wees … ek sal baie meer soos presentations, baie meer groepwerk en sulke praktiese goed laat doen as 'n toets". According to the lecturers the learners would still prefer text-based methods. The reasons for the choice of assessment methods and techniques are reflected in "dis voorgeskryf … ja, ek dink dit is die begin en einde", "our course is very competency-based", "to test their ability to apply the basic theory to real-life like situations" and "whether the students … achieve the outcomes, the learning outcomes".

The departmental heads concentrate on what the government, OBE and SERTEC require. To give the new South African learner confidence in the class situation, interpersonal communication is important. Therefore, role-plays, assignments and case studies, which generate discussion in class, are applied. The huge number of learners, past successful experience, level of application, development of knowledge and skills, participation, a movement away from the monotony and predictability of past methods, preparation for industry and technikon philosophy of being more practical as the justification for the existence

of technikons, further influence their choice of the assessment methods. Departmental heads also apply assessment methods to break the monotony and the predictability of tests. The following quotations contain the reasons for the choice of the departmental heads: “that is sort of a prescribed way”, “we are coming from knowing to doing”, “dis in die verlede vir ons bewys dat dit wel suksesvol is”, “ek het genoeg ervaring“, “om vir die handel en nywerheid te gaan werk of die industrie”, “baie van ons studente kom uit 'n milieu uit van townships … waar absoluut, daar is 'n geweldige groot mate van opvoeding wat ook moet plaasvind” and “om die verskillende kultuurverskille en die verskillende vlakke van rypheid te akkommodeer met die nuwe Suid-Afrikaanse student”.

4.3.3 Effectiveness of the assessment methods and techniques

The learners, lecturers and departmental heads answered the following question about the effectiveness of the selected assessment methods and techniques.

Question 3:

To the learners: How effective are these assessment methods and techniques, which the lecturers in Human Resource Management apply, when assessing you?

To the lecturers and departmental heads: How effective are these assessment methods and techniques, which you apply when assessing your learners?

Categories established are:

(a) Indicators of effectiveness.
(b) Effective methods.
(c) Indicators of ineffectiveness.
(d) Ineffective methods.

(a) Indicators of effectiveness

"Indicators" are signs that point to the effectiveness of the assessment methods and techniques. "Effectiveness" refers to the assessment methods and techniques that are applied well and in a purposeful manner. The perceptions range from relatively "effective" to "very effective". According to the lecturers "the methods are not effective in isolation" and "met evaluering is dit altyd moeilik as jy net een aspek toets".

The lecturers regard the assessment methods and techniques effective as long as the learners do not cheat. They recommended that the learners be more involved in their own assessment. The learners could suggest how they want to be assessed and what assessment they think will benefit them. This will improve their self-perception and help them to lessen their seeing the lecturers "as an answer to everything or be afraid of things like tests or in the tasks they have to do". Another indicator of effectiveness is when the group decides about the marks and the lecturer is not to blame.

The indicators of the effectiveness of the assessment methods and techniques correspond with the reasons for the selection of those methods and techniques. The learners base their perceptions on the variety, enjoyment and excitement of the methods; the regular attendance and forced participation in class; exposure and practicality of the methods and the movement away from lecturing.

The lecturers base their perceptions on the validity of the test; the integration between theory and practice and the purpose of assessment; large size of the classes and subject matter; positive feedback from learners; maturity levels of the learners and the employment of learners after their experiential period.

The departmental heads base their perceptions on the past "for the last couple of years, 50, 60 years, tertiaries … made use of this" and "so êrens doen ons iets

reg … ons moet maar net daarop voortbou", the availability of only one system, good feedback from industry and feedback when learners are later in jobs. The departmental heads suggest that the internal quality assurance mechanisms would help the academic staff to improve on their assessment methods and techniques. The departmental heads recommend a variety of the assessment methods used. The methods should be based on industry requirements.

(b) Effective methods

The departmental heads acknowledge the importance to innovate and bring in new techniques as in "it's never hundred percent, we're always developing". They recommend new and better assessment methods like in-basket exercises, simulated situations and a project in the work situation.

The learners and lecturers view the presentations as effective overall ("the presentations and the case studies also are very effective"). Some lecturers assert that the learners who are very theoretically inclined shy away from practical situations like role-plays. The departmental heads believe role-plays should only be applied to mature learners so that they will not laugh at each other during the presentation.

Methods are proclaimed effective when working in small groups, but when 200 learners have to watch two learners in a role-play they lose concentration. It is easier to assess the learners in smaller groups where the interaction and stimulation of ideas can take place and use practical or application assessment methods or ask short questions. In larger classes of 200 learners the assessment is theoretically based by means of tests and examinations.

The learners further regard the practical methods like presentations and case studies as the most effective. This is corroborated in "we get to enjoy case studies … you become very inventive … and you never forget them". The

learners can apply the theory. Case studies enable them to be creative in solving problems, as long as they can motivate their answers. The presentations help to build “confidence” and enable them to “work with people”. The learners find case studies relevant, but topics for presentations may be irrelevant. One learner disagreed with this perception and thought they were relevant. Although the learners state their enjoyment of the practical methods, the lecturers believe “as jy hom die keuse gee, dan sal hy eerder sê**:** Ek wil uit die boek uit swot”.

Some learners find the assignments enjoyable and “wonderful”, since they enable them to obtain a broader perspective and they are a break from the lectures. It teaches them how to seek information in the library “It’s sometimes boring that we come to class and we just sit and listen to the lecturer … looking for the sources and compiling your bibliography and the whole assignment, it gives you a good feeling”. Assignments will teach them “how to write a report … if you go out in the work place” and “it prepares us for the future”.

(c) Indicators of ineffectiveness

“Indicators” are signs that point to the ineffectiveness of the assessment methods and techniques. “Ineffectiveness” refers to the assessment methods and techniques that are not applied well and not in a purposeful manner. Tests have a negative effect on the learners. Contrasting experiences with regard to tests exist between the lecturers and the learners.

The effectiveness of tests depends on the lecturer. The latter wants the learners to “criticise their prescribed book” and “they must think for themselves” and give their own opinion. Other corroborating statements are: “the answer of the case study, 20% of the answer is whether it’s the right or wrong answer. But 80% of the answer I am looking at, is whether the student is busy thinking for himself... whenever he gives his own opinion, motivating himself … applying it in practice and giving your own opinion and that's very important for me. The student can

give his own opinion, whether it's right or wrong and motivate that" and "I always tell them: 'Think for yourself … I like to teach the students to criticise even their own prescribed book … forcing them to think for themselves". Experiences differ. The learners have a different view in that they say the lecturers want them to "answer it just like it's from the book, you must answer directly what is written" and "you are not allowed to use open mandate".

Multiple choice questions in tests for the learners are "ineffective", since "they don't challenge you like essay type of questions which you have to think deeply" and "you don't have to give a reason" for the chosen answer. It causes them "to be lazy to think" and "to guess". Rather they believe the lecturers "have to give you something that will challenge you, your reasoning capacity". They believe multiple choice questions "must not be used in higher institutions". Instead, the learners think the lecturers should apply more practical assessment methods as in "you have to do a lot of practical and a little bit of theory". The learners would like multiple choice questions to be phased out altogether.

Some departmental heads admit the need to change the assessment methods, since they are currently in contradiction of the nature of technikons that are supposed to be more practically inclined. The departmental heads would like the present ratio of "75% theory" and "25% application" to change to the opposite ratio. When referring to the balance between theory and practice, the learners admit that book knowledge does not indicate the ability to apply. The learners admit that the test is not totally negative, since it is the way the lecturers ask the questions. It also depends on the individual learner and the lecturer. The volume of content and time to study pose further problems for the learners. The learners want the lecturers to communicate with each other about test dates ("hulle moet met mekaar kommunikeer aan die begin van die jaar oor toetsdatums en dit uitsprei as wat hulle net datums gee en dis opmekaar"). The lecturers at one institution doubt whether the learners are ready for the world of work.

In view of the large numbers of learners the lecturers cannot pay so much individual time and attention to each learner with respect to application. Although the lecturers may prepare well, the doing part (practical application) is not always realised and they do not receive feedback, interest or co-operation from their own learners.

The learners find open book examinations ineffective, since they have to consult too many books and would need to study more for this type of examination.

Other learners take a long time to understand the assignment topic and after assessment they still do not know what they were supposed to write. The learners do not understand afterwards. This perspective is supported by “you don’t have time to study what you have written out there … submit it without knowing exactly what is taking place … you understand the moment you are writing, that’s all.” The lecturers experience problems with the learners copying from the textbooks or from each other, or submitting too late, or not submitting at all.

The learners further want the administration and communication and feedback of their marks to improve. They want their marks “as early as possible after maybe doing an interview or after the presentation” because “if you do it after a long time, you find that you don’t remember some of the things”. In addition, they have a problem when the year marks are late as in “hulle sê dit kom 12:00 uit … dan kom dit eers 14:00 uit of die volgende dag”.

(d) Ineffective methods

The lecturers declare tests and examinations as effective, since they mark according to a set memorandum and it is an objective and valid assessment method. However, the tests have a “demoralising” effect on the learners. For the learners “tests is not that much effective, because it doesn't prove actually what

you know". They claim, "you might find that someone fails, but she knows her work very much".

The learners' approaches to learning can be detected in statements like "I just like read for the sake of passing the test, not for the sake of getting knowledge", "some people just study to get marks" and "if you just study to pass a test, then you just grunt anything". Other statements from the learners corroborate this approach "you don't like have the full information in your head, so you can't like present it or apply it elsewhere" and the effectiveness of tests depends on the learner "if you just study to get marks or you just study to know your work". According to the learners and lecturers the learners focus only on passing the examination and obtaining their diploma and do not think what is going to happen afterwards.

Some lecturers think the learners dislike reading the textbook. They declare the learners would like to know which pages they must learn for the test, what important parts they must underline for the test and they even ask the lecturers to read from the text book only instead of talking too much ("toe sê hulle ek praat te veel in die klas … ek moet net uit die boek uit lees"). In contrast, other learners emphasise the application process in one module in that "you read the theory from the book, but you don't get the theory back", because "you take the theory and you apply practical knowledge". Under such circumstances tests are then deemed effective.

4.3.4 Role of industry in the assessment of the learners

The learners, lecturers and departmental heads answered the following questions that focused on the role of industry:

Question 4:

To the learners: What role does industry play in your assessment in Human Resource Management?

To the lecturers and departmental heads: What role does industry play in the assessment of your learners?

The following categories were established:

(a) Provides placements for experiential learning in order to be assessed.
(b) Part time lecturers from industry provide a practical focus.
(c) Moderates examination papers.

(a) Provides placements for experiential learning in order to be assessed

The lecturers and departmental heads acknowledge that industry plays a role in placing the learners for experiential learning as indicated in “offering us some experiential training”. When this happens, a mentor is assigned to the learner and, according to the lecturers, “we evaluate the student himself”. Mentors do not give the learners the necessary attention and the lecturers lack the capacity and time to assess or assist them further. The lecturers at times visit industry to ask “Hoe gaan dit met die outjie? Is daar probleme? Kan ons help met iets? Nee? ‘Oraait, thanks, good bye’. Daar gaan jy . The only role all learners refer to is to provide experiential learning opportunities.

The perceptions of the learners vary from co-operative education as being most effective, important and very helpful to a waste of time and a lack of co-operative education at their particular institution. Their perceptions are revealed in “they are not playing any role”, ”they don't even give you a chance to talk to them”, “for theory subjects it’s that belief, that is a waste of time for them” and “they just look for an excuse to get rid of you”. They claim that the technikon does not go out to

companies to invite them. They think it is easier to get placement in the government sector than other organisations. Other organisations tell them the information is confidential. Placement is also easier if you “really know who is working there”.

According to the learners some of their co-learners were expected to fulfil mundane tasks during co-operative education and did not really do meaningful work as stated in “they sat there for that full month … they did nothing and “what they had to do, was just keep on filing” and “I think now it is not effective, because they didn’t establish a link (with industry)”. At times the organisation does not keep to the aspects to be covered and the learners have to fall in with what the organisation wants.

At the moment they can graduate without having this experience of experiential learning. The learners think “it was better if the Tech, if it was a part of our study”. Those who have had the experience pose a further problem as in “when we all graduate or get our diplomas, then we don't have something like same knowledge… because at the end we didn't do the same thing”.

Although the learners experience problems, according to them co-operative education still offers the advantages of employment opportunities, character building and familiarisation with the world of work. This is motioned in “we now know what to expect when we go into the work place” and “dis net ‘n ‘eye opener’ vir wat jy volgende jaar gaan kry”. However, the lack of qualified people in Human Resources to assist them and unwillingness to help them, create problems. In contrast, the learners express the hope that the extent of the involvement may change due to the Skills Development Act. The learners think industry should have a “vested interest” in wanting to develop the learners, since they are the future HRM practitioners and industry should be put under an obligation to make an effort to offer experiential learning opportunities.

Although the lecturers indicate that they would like to involve industry more ("nie net in assessering nie, maar in samesteling van leerplanne, voorskrywing van bronne"), they find a lack of enthusiasm on their part. The departmental heads think they will not achieve their vision if industry is not involved ("dan kan ons maar net sowel toemaak, want ons bereik dan nie ons visie nie"). According to the departmental heads, industry "gee vir ons half die kompas, waarnatoe moet ons gaan, maar hulle is nie baie betrokke altyd by die detail van hoe ons daar kom nie".

On the other hand, the lecturers have a perception of the ideal role of industry in which a partnership between the technikons and industry is envisaged. In reality, the lecturers think more involvement of industry is not possible as in "hierdie ouens gaan sê**:** 'Jis, maar dis julle 'job'. Moenie julle 'job' my 'job' maak nie". The lecturers think the employers are of the opinion that the learners bother them and are wasting their time amid a busy schedule. The lecturers further caution against a difference in criteria between technikons and industry in that "hulle maatstawwe waarteen hulle meet, miskien baie strenger gaan wees as die maatstawwe waarteen ons meet. … Dit gaan vir hom oor rand en sent. Hulle gaan blatant wees…. Hierdie ouens gaan sê daai ou kan nie die 'job' doen …. Einde. Volgende een. Dit gaan op die student 'n negatiewe invloed hê". The lecturers even go so far as to say that with regard to industry they should avoid them ("ons moet maar wegbly van hulle af"). Therefore, the lecturers describe the role as small or lacking with regard to experiential learning.

The lecturers, departmental heads and learners mention problems concerning selection and placement and the big groups of learners as revealed in "there's no way how we can place these students at these five or six industries". The learners and lecturers both indicate other problems like confidentiality of information, too little time or inappropriate timing when experiential learning takes place, a lack of payment to the learners, a lack of qualified industry staff and unstructured feedback/a lack of visits by the lecturers/negative feedback from

industry after the experiential period (“die ou het die goed verkeerd ge’file’ of iets”). The lecturers and departmental heads mention further problems like the physical environment that is characterised by a lack of employers in the vicinity. The lecturers experience additional problems: a lack of clear requirements, assistance from mentors, formal structures and finances.

From the data it seems as if the majority of the participants experience the role of industry as lacking, especially with regard to experiential learning. Despite the learners experiencing several problems, the learners acknowledge the benefits of experiential learning as well. Assessment of experiential learning needs to be addressed. Although the lecturers mention that they assess the learners in industry, experiences of other participants differ in that the learners do not obtain placement at all.

(b) Part time lecturers from industry provide a practical focus

According to the lecturers the members of industry lecture part time as stated in “mense uit die industrie, wat betrokke is hier by deeltydse klasse” and “deeltydse dosente kom natuurlik uit die industrie uit”. These lecturers use their practical experiences in class as described in “ek gebruik gevallestudies baie gevalle wat direk 'n saak is wat kom ons sê ek by betrokke was”.

From the data it is clear that industry participants serve as part time lecturers. One participant from industry that lectures part time, mentions that he uses real case studies in his classes that are assessed.

(c) Moderates examination papers

Members from industry moderate examination papers as in “hulle word ook gebruik as moderatore”. They approve the papers beforehand “in terms of certain

criteria, especially practical application". It is clear that industry has an examining role.

In conclusion, the role of industry is minimal, indirect, unstructured and artificial. They advise the lecturers about the course content and sponsor a competition for the best third year learners. In view of the problems the learners and the lecturers think industry displays a lack of will or interest to get involved.

4.3.5 Effectiveness of industry in the assessment of the learners

The following questions dealing with the effectiveness of industry involvement in the assessment were addressed to the learners, lecturers and departmental heads:

Question 5:
To the learners: How effective is the involvement of industry in your assessment in Human Resource Management?
To the lecturers and departmental heads: How effective is the involvement of industry in the assessment of your learners?

Categories are:

(a) Indicators of effectiveness.
(b) Indicators of ineffectiveness.
(c) Improved assessment practice.

(a) Indicators of effectiveness

"Effectiveness" refers to industry delivering good results and being purposeful when providing experiential learning. "Indicators" are signs that point to the effectiveness of industry. The lecturers and departmental heads find the advisory

committees overall effective, although one lecturer remarks that “daar is 'n invloed, ja, maar die invloed is miskien nie so groot nie” and asserts that they are “nie effektief nie”. The effectiveness is due to their close involvement; feedback opportunity and the lecturers receiving the latest information. Moderators are also regarded as effective. Upon their recommendations, the lecturers will adapt courses accordingly.

For the learners the value of experiential learning is corroborated in “after in-service you actually feel you are ready to go out … you feel that you can do it” and “I saw that there is a correlation between what I did in class and the work environment”.

(b) Indicators of ineffectiveness

“Ineffectiveness” refers to industry not delivering good results and not being purposeful when providing experiential learning. “Indicators” are signs that point to the ineffectiveness of industry. The lecturers and departmental heads find the advisory committees ineffective. Most learners acknowledge that co-operative education in its current role is deficient as in “most of the companies think it is just a waste of time” and “it is not effective”, but still regard it as necessary or essential and important.

Departmental heads have different opinions. On the one hand they regard the involvement of industry as “'n speletjie, omdat hy nie regtigwaar vereis word deur SERTEC nie”. Other departmental heads find the involvement effective, essential and an absolute necessity. They base their perceptions on the performance or outcome of the learners, feedback from industry and industry expectations.

According to the lecturers, industry does not seem to understand its role. Industry has not taken as much interest in technikon education as they should. Industry should be more involved in the design of courses. Since industry is not involved

in the final assessment of learners, they, therefore, cannot look at its effectiveness. Apart from what the lecturers have discussed, the role of industry is “non existent “.

Some learners also do not get feedback from the technikons about the report, which they find demotivating. They do not know how they were assessed after their experiential learning period. Even if they tell industry they do not have to pay them during experiential learning, it is still difficult to get placements. In other cases the non-payment makes it easier to get placements, but then industry does not think much of the experiential learning period.

(c) Improved assessment practice

“Improved assessment practice” refers to assessment practice becoming better. The learners want more assessment and co-operative education should be made compulsory. They learners recommend assistance with placements, an extension of the time period, an introduction of the co-operative education period earlier in their courses, active involvement from SERTEC and professional bodies and more feedback to the departmental head. Workshops should be conducted so that companies may visit the technikon to discuss problems with regard to co-operative education.

The lecturers recommend that guest lecturers should also assess learners, since their way of assessing might be different because of their practical application. They advocate that criteria may be set with industry before and after assessment, but not during the assessment process. Although the lecturers believe “we should be partners with industry”, at present they are in agreement with the departmental heads in doubting whether the involvement can be enhanced further.

4.4 SUMMARY OF DATA SET 1

The previous discussion deals with Data Set 1. It concerns questions 1-5 and the target group consists of the learners, lecturers and departmental heads. Figure 4.1 on the next page displays the categories and sub-categories of Data Set 1. The key to the figure indicates what each symbol represents.

4.5 DATA EXPLICITATION OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE POLICY MAKERS

The data explicitation of interviews with policy makers represents Data Set 2 and covers questions 1-3 as set out in Table 3.3 (see section 3.4.7). The current data set is not integrated at this stage with the Data Set 1 as the first question of Data Set 2 is different from the other questions that the learners, lecturers and departmental heads answered. The categories in the explicitation of the data are identified per question followed by a discussion thereof with supporting suitable quotations and the literature control.

4.5.1 Factors in the formulation of the assessment policy

The policy makers answered the following question that deals with influential factors in policy formulation:

Question 1:
Which factors play a role in the formulation of the assessment policy for this technikon?

The categories are:

(a) External requirements.
(b) Institutional policy.
(c) Subject and lecturer requirements

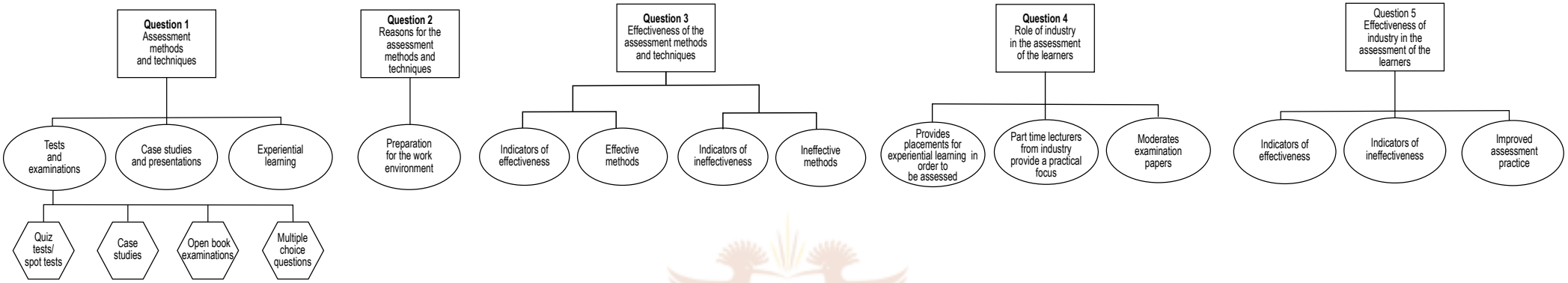


Figure 4.1: Data Set 1

(a) External requirements

One of the factors, which play a role in the broad formulation of the assessment policy, is alignment with the government's policy. This is reflected in "we actually don't operate outside the government's policy" and "we do it in line with the government policy". The White Paper in Education, SAQA, the Higher Education Act and OBE form part of the government's policy and further influence the formulation of an assessment policy.

Other influential factors include the input of stakeholders, especially SERTEC that consists of industry members among other members, and industry requirements with regard to the skills and outcomes of graduates and teaching. Members from industry that serve on advisory committees provide inputs about the quality and relevance of course content. The involvement and agreement of the stakeholders makes the implementation of the assessment policy easier. The technikons do not want industry to dictate too much to them as academic institutions that have an educational task to fulfil. However, they acknowledge that "hoe kan jy aan die vereistes van die handel en nywerheid voldoen, as jy hulle nie vra wat dink hulle van ons opleiding nie?".

The policy makers further assert that the technikons inform industry of the co-operative education programme content, guidelines with regard to that content, and assessment forms "'n integrale deel van die onderrigprogram van die diploma in baie van ons programme en daarom moet dit behoorlik geëvalueer word". The policy makers claim that "daar werk die technikon en die betrokke werkgewers, wat dit aanbied, ten nouste saam". They assert that the outcomes are determined with industry. The participants maintain that with regard to experiential learning the technikons "moet ook daar die betrokke werkgewers akkrediteer".

Contrasting experiences exist. The policy makers regard SERTEC as a watchdog and are in favour of SERTEC which ensures compliance with the policy as suggested by “ek nogal 'n sterk voorstaander is van SERTEK”; “we'll actually work everything according to SERTEC's rule when it comes to assessment”. However, according to the policy makers, “personeel wil nie hou by daardie riglyne soos gestel deur die Sertifiseringsraad nie” and “dosente pas nie altyd hierdie dinge toe, soos wat die beleid bepaal nie”.

Despite the requirements of SERTEC, the policy makers try to avoid CASS to a greater degree and regard it as a nuisance, since they do not have control over it. This is supported by “probeer ek wegkom van deurlopende evaluering tot 'n groot mate … 'n lastigheid, want jy het nie werklik beheer daaroor nie, alhoewel die Sertifiseringsrade nou dit vir ons baie duidelik stel”. SERTEC views assessment as continuous if it is not followed by a summative assessment.

(b) Institutional policy

Academic staff and the examination departments from various disciplines serve on several committees to provide their input in the formulation of the assessment policy as stated in “alle akademici die geleentheid om insette te maak”. The departmental policy is subordinate to the overall policy. Each technikon may specify further their own details about assessment as long as it complies with SERTEC requirements. The lecturer as the primary person decides about assessment further. The senate and council of the various technikons approve the final assessment policy that forms part of the teaching policy. The technikon policy considers further the examination regulations and the implications of, for example, CASS for the finances.

(c) Subject and lecturer requirements

The policy makers declare CASS to be only applicable to subjects that are practical in nature. They view the nature of Management studies as theoretical and find it difficult to apply CASS in this field as revealed in the quotation “in bestuur, sou ek sê dis nie maklik om deurlopende evaluering daar van toepassing te maak nie”. It is also easier for them to apply CASS to assignments, role-play and interviewing. Due to the large groups of learners in the theoretical subjects they profess it is difficult to pay individual attention to these learners and administer 12-15 assessment sessions per year as indicated in “om aan elkeen van hierdie outjies werklik individueel aandag te gee, dit is jou groot probleem” and “jy sal feitlik net deurgaans sit met deurlopende evaluering”. Consequently, academic staff award marks as the discussion sessions progress, a method which constitutes a subjective way of assessing. This is corroborated in “gee die mense net eenvoudig dan punte soos wat die besprekingsklasse vorder … dit is 'n baie subjektiewe manier”. On the other hand, in practical sessions, the learners complete tasks, where it is easier to assess.

Young and inexperienced departmental heads have a heavy workload. Tests are not written as scheduled as stated in “toetse word nie eintlik altyd dan ook afgeneem nie, soos geskeduleer”. The other lecturers are their friends, since they have come from that circle themselves recently. This is supported in “hulle kom ook uit die milieu van 'n klomp dosente uit en hulle was hulle pêlle gewees”. Marks are changed without the departmental heads being aware of this modification as viewed in “word daar aan die punte getorring … die departementshoofde is nie eens bewus daarvan nie”. Although SERTEC detects it during their visits to the examination department, the policy makers feel the change in marks should be limited in the policy, and departmental heads should take responsibility for the assessment policy.

Although these interviews took place before the issue of mergers and before the new name for technikons was announced, the participant of one technikon mentions that it aspires to becoming a technological university that will serve industry. Its revised teaching and assessment policy focus on more CASS; more independent study as in “hulle moet baie meer self studeer”; less dependency on notes; discussion groups which involve group work; more assignments and the use of electronic media like the internet and videos. Some lecturers do not adhere to the policy that the lecturers should not provide notes to the learners, since they do not support the new paradigm of teaching. This is supported in “sommige dosente wat dit nogtans doen, omdat hulle nie die nuwe paradigma van onderrig reeds ondersteun nie”. Implementation of the new system is not easy: “dis bietjie moeilik om mense te oortuig dat dit kan werk”.

4.5.2 Role of industry in the assessment of the learners

The policy makers answered the following question dealing with the role of industry:

Question 2: What role does industry play in the assessment of your learners?

The following categories were established:

(a) Provides experiential learning in order to be assessed.
(b) Moderating and examining.
(c) Part time lecturers from industry and exchange technikon lecturers provide a practical focus.

(a) Provides experiential learning in order to be assessed

Industry provides experiential learning as part of co-operative education that serves as a reality check for the learners “so that they actually don't get this

shock that now they are not aware of what is going on". Afterwards, the learners "are able to advise" the technikons. The policy makers believe that co-operative education contributes to job readiness and being productive once the learners are qualified. The learners who have completed co-operative education find employment relatively quickly. The policy makers refer to the Netherlands model of co-operative education as an example of how closely industry and the technikons should work. The policy makers also refer to subjects like Food Hygiene, Engineering and Nursing as examples where experiential learning is effective and structured and formal assessment occurs.

Contrasting experiences with learner placements exist. At times the policy makers believe that they get a good response with placements, which is in contrast with the experiences of the learner, lecturers and industry. Other policy makers assert that large groups of learners, in softer technology subjects like management sciences, complicates learner placement ("die groot probleem in die Bestuurswetenskappe, is natuurlik die groot getalle"), a claim that concurs with the experiences of the learner, lecturers and industry. Also, logistical problems occur when the rest of the learners refuse to attend class while their co-learners are away.

The learners also expect payment during co-operative education ("wanneer hy uitgeplaas word vir koöperatiewe onderwys, verwag hy al klaar 'n salaris"). They believe that the learners see co-operative education as a way to earn money and obtain employment rather than an opportunity to learn ("jy moet hom betaal om opgelei te word" and "nie om regtig te gaan leer wat daar plaasvind … maar hulle sien dit as 'n geleentheid om geld te verdien en natuurlik om 'n permanente werk te kry"). The lecturers corroborate this by stating that the learners want payment instead of seeing co-operative education as a privilege or opportunity to get more experience.

The policy makers experience problems with some lecturers who lack industry experience and industry knowledge. They are a bit scared to liaise with industry as is evident in “personeel wat half bang is, om te skakel met industrie” and “hulle weet nie wat gaan aan in industrie nie”, since they train the learners according to textbooks. However, the textbooks are outdated, as much as 10 years old in some cases (“handboeke wat 10 jaar oud is”). The low level of training of the lecturers in some cases contributes to further resistance to industry (“jy het 'n weerstand amper van personeelkant af teen industrie”). The lecturers that are seconded to the co-operative education department or unit, teach less and become so involved with industry that they resign and take employment in industry. The policy makers become suspicious of this unit (“mens moet egter versigtig wees by so iets”) and believe that reliable people are needed (“jy moet natuurlik besonder betroubare mense hê in daardie poste”), since it is difficult to monitor the lecturers during industry visits and their reports are not forthcoming.

(b) Moderating and examining

Industry provides examiners and moderators, since the learners “are training here for the commerce and industry” and “if they moderate us, then we'll be doing something you'll see in line with what they are doing outside”.

(c) Part time lecturers from industry and exchange technikon lecturers provide a practical focus

Further liaison includes part time or guest lecturers as well as members of SERTEC and advisory committees, since “they must advise us of what is relevant in the field”. One technikon requests the advisory committee members to be present during presentations and case study analyses to assess the learners. Some policy makers send the lecturers to work in industry. The lecturers sent by the policy makers to work in industry during long leave receive credit from the technikon and are able to pass on their practical experience to the learners.

4.5.3 Effectiveness of industry in the assessment of the learners

The policy makers answered the following question:

Question 3: How effective is the involvement of industry in the assessment of your learners?

The categories are:

(a) Improved assessment practice.
(b) Effectiveness.

(a) Improved assessment practice

"Improved assessment practice" refers to assessment practice becoming better. The policy makers infer close liaison with industry as in "we, actually as a technikon, work closely with industry, commerce and industry" and "they are a big (emphasis) stakeholder", because "we are training for industry". In contrast, policy makers further believe that the involvement of industry in assessment has always been neglected and wonders how industry can absorb the products or qualified learners of the technikons if they are not involved in assessment. This is corroborated by "die industrie nie betrokke is by assessering nie … en as hulle nie betrokke is by die assessering nie, hoe kan hulle dan uiteindelik ons produkte opneem?". The policy makers think industry needs to be involved in the assessment process, otherwise technikons will not succeed in implementing assessment according to OBA.

The policy makers do not value courses that do not include co-operative education: "in economics - management and we do what we are doing, so to me that is as good as nothing". They would like to extend co-operative education to

other programmes: “I would love to see this component of co-operative education as we call it, being strengthened and we actually have to enforce it and make sure that now, whatever programme is offered at technikons is actually based on the co-operative education” and “we would love to do that” and “I would love to see all the programmes being industry - commerce orientated”. Co-operative education as an integral part of the requirements of the course would serve to justify the existence of the technikons in “that we actually would be able to claim the unique aspect of it, that now we are not like universities”. The policy makers think that industry members of the advisory committees avert experiential learning from becoming a compulsory component in the programme, because then industry would have to be involved in the training process.

They think that co-operative education should be part of every programme. The policy makers base their perceptions on employment for learners, the positive response and documentation of industry, especially in moderators’ reports. On the other hand, they contend that the technikons cannot allow industry to prescribe too much, since it has its educational task. A balance between the two is necessary.

(b) Effectiveness

“Effectiveness” refers to industry delivering good results. Although difficult to measure the effectiveness of the involvement of industry, as revealed in “ons vind dit baie effektief, maar ek kan nie vir jou sê persentasie gewys nie”, it is the revelation of the policy makers that the involvement is effective, active, positive and essential. However, room for improvements exists.

The policy makers regard advisory committees as very effective and important, and claim that a technikon that does not use advisory committees is foolish (“maar 'n technikon wat dit nie gebruik nie, is dom”).

The advisory committees provide valuable input ('n goeie advieskomitee, wat goeie insette lewer vir die kursus"). Feedback from industry enables the technikons to implement curriculum changes more effectively. However, according to one policy maker, at times their advisory committee meetings occur irregularly.

4.6 LITERATURE CONTROL

Data Set 1 (*learners, lecturers and departmental heads*) and Data Set 2 (*policy makers*) are verified together.

Boniface (1985) found in open book examinations that weaker candidates spent more time to look for information in their sources than did stronger candidates who used their own summaries and notes. Clopton (1992) corroborated the research of Boniface (1985). Although the study of Boniface (1985) is dated, the data in the current study reveal a similar problem. The learners refer to all the textbooks they have to carry and that they have to study a lot for open book examinations.

Dochy and Segers (1999: 331) reviewed several research reports about self-assessment and peer-assessment. Their research reported positive findings concerning the use of self-assessment in educational practice. The accuracy in the use of self-assessment improved over time, especially when the learners received feedback. In the current study formal self-assessment does not take place.

A study by Conway (1993) indicated that the learners found group projects more interesting than traditional methods of teaching. This supports the data in the current study that the learners find tests and examinations ineffective, but they enjoy practical methods and assignments. Moreover, Rushton (1993) developed a computerised assessment tool and found that the marks awarded by the peers

were remarkably similar to those awarded by the tutors. According to research by Pond et al. (1995) friendship marking and collusive marking can be overcome by combining peer assessment and self-assessment. The data in this study discloses a lack of confidence in peer assessment by the lecturers. They think everyone will receive the same mark. Peer assessment is thus not applied.

Using action research in first year Geography modules at the University of Natal, Ellery (2001) found that the learners were critical when marking an anonymous peer. In general, they felt they had a beneficial experience in peer assessment and self-assessment. These results contradict the perceptions of the lecturers in the current study that the marks will be the same for all the learners.

Although Papo (1997) did not focus on assessment, his quantitative investigation found that the lecturers perceive large classes as a problem. Papo (1997) also found that teaching strategies are affected by large classes The data in the present study reveal that the academic staff find the assessment of large classes problematic and they choose assessment methods that are convenient for them.

Groenewald (2003) conducted qualitative research on talent management. He found that experiential learning in some organisations consists of haphazard exposure through menial work, rather than structured experiential learning. The data in this study reveal that the learners perform mundane tasks during experiential learning in industry. Experiential learning occurs in an unstructured manner mostly.

Research by Wessels and Pumphrey (1995: 43) on the benefits of experiential learning confirm the interview data in the present study. They established that those learners who were placed with their co-operative employers had reduced search times to find their first job. The benefit of experiential learning for the learners in the present study is that they can obtain employment afterwards. The

policy makers further believe that co-operative education contributes to job readiness and being productive once qualified.

In a qualitative study Jacob, Luckett and Webbstock (1999) analysed learner expectations and perceptions about the way their learning is assessed in a variety of disciplines and faculties at the University of Natal over a five year period. Their findings refer to a failure to make assessment criteria explicit, failure to give clear instructions in the assessment tasks, failure to provide the learners with detailed and meaningful feedback and a failure to provide the learners with formative opportunities to practise the forms of assessment used summatively. Despite contextual and policy changes leading to small areas of reform and innovation, the traditional paradigm remains dominant. Their findings support the data in this study. The learners do not know how to complete their assignments and do not know how the lecturers assess their assignments. In one instance they receive formative feedback on their assignments. According to the lecturers the learners argue about their test marks, but in case studies they receive more written feedback and therefore, do not argue about their marks. The learners and lecturers agree that the method mostly used is tests. Furthermore, the learners do not always receive feedback on their experiential learning period.

From a study by Groenewald (2002: 103) it is evident that the CTP ideals with regard to the functioning of advisory committees do not necessarily materialise. The CTP asserts that industry is directly involved in the planning of technikon programmes by means of programme advisory committees. His findings suggest that the functioning of advisory committees leaves a lot to be desired. This contrasts with the perceptions of the lecturers, departmental heads and the policy makers in the current study. These participants regard the advisory committees as being effective.

4.7 SUMMARY OF DATA SET 2

The foregoing discussion deals with Data Set 2 and involves the interview questions 1-3 that the policy makers had to answer. Figure 4.2 on the next page displays Data Set 2. The key to the figure explains what the symbols represent.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter reported on the explicitation of the data collected by means of focus group interviews with the *learners, lecturers and departmental heads* (Data set 1) as well as individual interviews with the *policy makers* (Data Set 2). Chapter 5 will deal with the data explicitation of interviews with participants in industry.

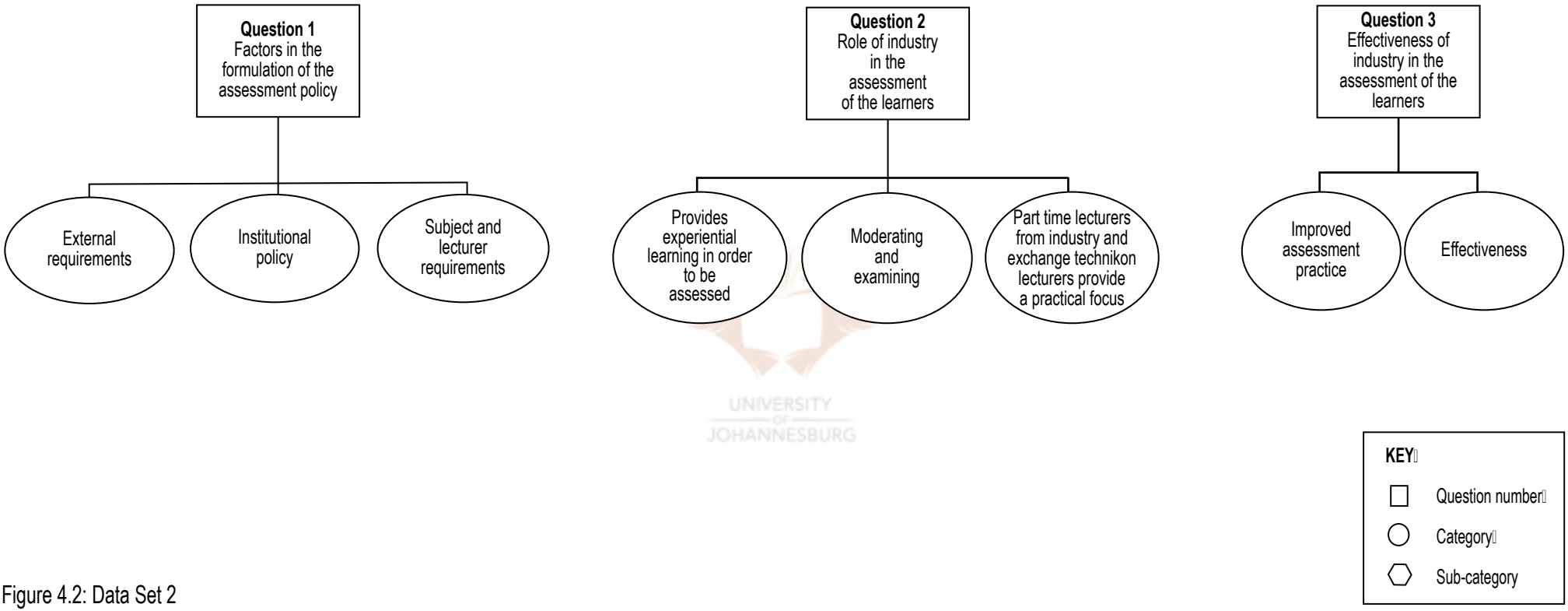


Figure 4.2: Data Set 2

CHAPTER 5

DATA EXPLICITATION OF INTERVIEWS IN INDUSTRY

5.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presents an explicitation of the data gathered by means of individual interviews with representatives from industry, supervisors or mentors, so that the findings and implications for the assessment framework will emerge clearly. An overview of these interviews is presented. From the explicitation of the collected data, categories and sub-categories will be developed, followed by the literature control. The data forms Data Set 3 and includes questions 1-7 (section 3.4.7). Except for question 2, the interview questions differ largely from the questions in Data Sets 1 (*learners, lecturers and departmental heads*) and 2 (*policy makers*). Due to this difference Data Set 3 is treated separately.

In chapter 6 the different sets of data from chapters 4 and 5 will be integrated separately with the theoretical assessment framework that was compiled in chapter 2. This integration will enable the researcher to develop a learner assessment framework for HRM.

5.2 IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Extreme difficulties were experienced to find suitable participants from industry. Not all technikons approached for participation in the interviews described in chapter 4, applied experiential training in HRM. Databases on experiential learning were non-existent in the majority of those technikons that applied experiential training in their programmes of HRM. In most cases the enquiry was referred from pillar to post without a viable contact name. According to some departmental heads and lecturers, their learners mostly approached industries on their own initiative in which instance the technikons only provided them with an

official letter of request for co-operative education. Some organisations admitted that the unions prevent them from extending experiential learning opportunities to the technikons, since the unions prefer that the unemployed youth be given employment opportunities rather.

Those industry representatives indicated by the technikons that did partake of experiential learning in HRM, were contacted telephonically.

5.3 RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS

The researcher interviewed participants from seven industries/organisations in urban areas in Gauteng, who trained and assessed the learners, separately. Due to constraints of different time schedules, confidentiality of information, considerations as to the competitiveness and niche markets of different industries, individual interviews seemed more appropriate than focus group interviews. At one organisation two participants were interviewed, since both acted as assessors of the learners. The range of participants is presented in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Range of participants

Industry	Type of industry	Job title
Government Health Department.	State.	Director: Human Resources.
Hospital.	State.	Supervisor.
Hospital.	State.	Chief Executive Officer.
Hospital.	State.	Supervisor: Human Resources.
Bank.	Private.	Human Resource Officer: People Management.
Quality Institution.	State.	Head: Administration and Personnel.
Electric company (Retail).	Private.	Branch Manager.
Transport.	Private.	Training manager.

From Table 5.1 it is evident that semi-state organisations are lacking, but there was no manipulation in the selection of participants. The distribution of gender

consists of four males and four females. Black participants are in the majority and the participants of the other racial groups are in the minority as represented in the table. The job titles represent a variety of employees who assisted and/or assessed the learners. The majority of those interviewed are on a senior level.

5.4 OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEWS

The purpose of the pilot interview was to determine the applicability of the questions and the participant's understanding thereof, as well as the interview techniques of the researcher as the interviewer.

5.4.1 Pilot interview

The Human Resources Director of a health division of a government organisation declined to be interviewed at his office in a pressurised environment due to his busy schedule. Therefore, the interview, lasting an hour, took place in the participant's house in the sitting room after work hours when he was more relaxed. He displayed a positive attitude and understood all the questions. The pilot study was retained without any changes to the questions posed and forms part of the data explicitation.

5.4.2 Individual interviews

The interviews lasted from 45 minutes or one hour to an hour and a half. The venues varied from offices of the participants to meeting rooms or boardrooms, which were isolated from noise. In two interviews, knowledgeable employees who also assisted and/or assessed the learner, substituted for the intended participants who could not make it at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances at work.

In general, the participants understood the questions, but overlapping of responses to questions occurred in some instances. For instance, in describing the current co-operation between the technikon and industry, three participants related the ideal situation as well, thereby providing some relevant details of the responses to question 6 already in question 5. Appendix A contains an example of an interview in industry.

5.5 DATA EXPLICITATION OF INTERVIEWS IN INDUSTRY

The data collected from interviews in industry are Data Set 3 and cover questions 1-7.

The same independent coder, mentioned in chapter 4, and the researcher, explicitated the data independently after consulting the transcriptions, protocol for the data explicitation in section 3.6, as well as the research aim and objectives.

The data of the industrial interviews were saturated. The responses to questions overlapped and supported the responses to the next question. The independent coder and researcher agreed on the main category and sub-categories. The researcher suggested a replacement of the word “agreement” with “partnership”, since it indicates a co-responsibility and the researcher added “mentoring” to the subcategories as part of the guidance role of industries. In both instances participants referred to these terms in interviews. The final refined categories and sub-categories are discussed per interview question followed by a literature control.

5.5.1 Training role of industry

Question 1: What role does your industry/organisation play with regard to the training of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?

The categories that emerged are:

(a) Nature and extent of the training role.
(b) Training activities.

(a) Nature and extent of the training role

"Nature" refers to the qualities or characteristics of the training role of industry during experiential learning, while extent refers to the size of that role. The participants emphasise that their role with regard to co-operative education is completely lacking or minor, since "this is our first time", "onse proeflopie" and they "are not playing a very big role". There is "less focus" on co-operative education. The reason for their small role is that "there is no formal framework" and "there is no formal thing between us and the technikons". Another participant declares, "we are developing a framework". Other corroborating responses state that "these are the internal arrangements which were made with students who are coming every day asking for, you know, the experiential training" and that they are often "approached by one of the learners" and "students come to our organisation to ask for experiential training".

Not all organisations seem willing to place the learners. A participant from a financial institution declares that the people in her organisation "are trying to save the company", since they "work with people's money". Therefore, it "is a dangerous environment to have people come in and out", since the learners may know "syndicates who might use that person to get information from the bank".

Although a formal framework does not exist, some participants express enthusiasm for a partnership. This is supported in the statement "let's get into this public-private partnership, because the skills that the students are acquiring from the technikons help us to bridge the gaps in terms of our systems". It will be "good" for them, because "we are trying to bridge the gap between experience and the appointments in public service". They acknowledge the importance of a

formal framework, since “the world needs so much, you know, expertise” and “we need to get learners to come in public service”. Other participants perceive the process to be “long” and therefore, “we have to negotiate with the technikon that it can’t be two days” for experiential learning. One participant was cautious and said the process would be “like guiding a six-year-old”.

(b) Training activities

“Training activities” refers to the instruction and activities by the trainers, supervisors or mentors with regard to the learners in order for them to complete certain job-specific tasks. The learners need to be placed before they can receive instruction. One participant’s organisation allows placement of learners as is evident in “allows the students to come into our training department”. Only one participant initiated contact for experiential training. Prior to learner placement he checked the learner’s curriculum vitae for her career prospects and requested a recommendation from the specific technikon. His organisation exchanges information with technikons to promote the HRM profession. In the majority of cases, the learners approach industry first for experiential learning. The learners are then placed according to available mentors and “according to their interested field of learning”.

The participants express a need to know the requirements of the technikon. This emerged from the response “die technikon … moet vir ons spesifiek aandui wat hulle wil hê ons moet vir die student spesifiek leer”. Other organisations have a different experience in that “the technikons provide content areas to cover with the learners” and industry will assist by “putting together a programme to ensure that they meet the criteria that is set by the technikon and they do cover the issues that the technikon outline in their programme”. Other participants say that “students tell us their needs”. One participant is of the opinion that the learners themselves are uncertain about what to do and that leaves her “a bit confused as to what I should be showing them”.

Although the policy makers in their interviews assert that the technikons inform industry of the co-operative education programme content, guidelines with regard to that content, and assessment, this is not supported by the data collected from industry in this study. In the absence of criteria or an indication of the content areas in the compilation of an experiential learning programme, the organisations cover related areas. They “outline when will the students be participating in that area, at what time students will be and which days and who will be accompanying or assisting the students and mentoring them”. Top management has to approve the placement and programme. This is followed by discussions between top management and the supervisors and discussions between the supervisors and the learners during the learning process.

Several tasks are provided for the learner to complete and the learners observe (shadow) employees while they are working, as is evident in “she sat in with me, she asked me questions”. Furthermore, the learners summarise relevant legislation, conduct workshops, assist with the preparation and binding of training material, complete administrative tasks like filing and conduct a needs analysis. These activities are supported by quotations like “ek het vir hom al die wette gegee om te lees”, “sy doen ook ‘n behoeftebepaling”, “waar sy met hulle sit en vir hulle … deur ‘n ‘workshop’ vat”, “they would help with just some of the admin stuff like binding”, and “ons het vir hom liassering laat doen”. The training activities consist of supervision, mentoring, discussions, clarification of questions, explanations, demonstrations and the provision of feedback.

The participants claim the time of the experiential learning period is too short for example “it can’t be two days”. The programme duration differs, in some cases, from approximately one week, “two or three or four weeks” or “three to four weeks”. Some participants deem an appropriate period as “it could be a month “, but others believe a longer time is required: “eight weeks would be appropriate” and a “more extended programme” is required. They state “hulle moet rêrig lank

sit, want ek meen daar is baie om te leer in ‘n personeelafdeling” and “hy was maar ‘n maand by ons … jy kan nie personeel in ‘n maand leer nie”. One organisation experiences problems with a small staff complement and the inability to train the learners on computers, since they need a number to gain access to confidential information.

5.5.2 Assessment role of industry

Question 2: What role does your industry/organisation play with regard to the assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?

The categories are:

(a) Nature and extent of the assessment role.
(b) Oral and written assessment methods and assessment tools.
(c) Assessment problems.

(a) Nature and extent of the assessment role

“Nature” refers to the qualities or characteristics of the assessment role of industry during experiential learning, while “extent” refers to the size of that role. Industry recognises the importance of assessment in statements such as “did they learn anything?” and “there has to be some kind of assessment, otherwise it’s just like watching a movie”. However, their assessment role is minor or characterised by a lack of any role in this regard. This is reflected in “absolutely none”, “we are not asked to assess them” and “there isn’t much role that we play in terms of assessment”. Experiences from other industry participants differ and they refer to the assessment methods they use to assess the learners.

(b) Oral and written assessment methods and assessment tools

Industry uses oral (spoken) and written (paper-driven) assessment methods when assessing the learners. The tools are instruments to support them when applying assessment. The assessment methods consist of a “confidential evaluation report” or ”letter”, “questionnaire” and interviews between top management and supervisors, interviews with a technikon representative as well as interviews between the supervisors or top management and the learners. These interviews aim to determine the learners’ achievement of objectives and their application of the theory. These assessment methods are revealed in “I would sit with the students and talk about what they have learned”, “we would talk to the person who was assisting them” and “there was a gentleman from the technikon … he asked me a few questions”.

The questionnaire contains a rating scale for ticking and blank spaces for additional comments as indicated in: “rating on an excellent to poor scale”; “we just tick”; “it’s just our opinion at the end of the week” and “look at the questionnaire and tick and give my comments”. The participants mention that “the questionnaire is already set by the technikon”. Questionnaire items assess the learners on their participation, adherence to organisational rules, interpersonal skills, punctuality, willingness to learn, knowledge and understanding, accuracy, efficiency, behaviour, responsibility and attitudes. Industry also has devised its own way to assess the learners in the absence of assessment criteria. Upon probing, the participants mention that they do it by “setting objectives” for the learners.

Finally, one participant mentions that the learners keep a daily diary of what they do, although industry does not use this method to assess the learners. Presumably, it goes to the technikons for assessment One participant adds further that where additional practical training is required after assessment, a co-supervisor will further render assistance depending on the available time left.

(c) Assessment problems

"Assessment problems" refers to difficulties experienced during the assessment of the learners. Uncertainty and a lack of knowledge about the assessment are evident in a statement such as "we don't necessarily have an assessment technique" and "we don't have an assessment tool". When the assessors do not work closely with the learners they rely on the people that the learner worked with as stated in "dan het ek maar staat gemaak op die mense wat hy by gewees het".

Some participants mention that the learners do not have access to their confidential reports as stated in "you can't give it to the student", while other participants hand it to the learner themselves as can be seen by **"**what he does with it after that, I've got no idea, you know, tippexes out all of my answers and put different ones". The participants seem vague about the value of the confidential report and questionnaire. One participant cannot even remember what the questionnaire consisted of. Overall, the employers want the technikons to provide clear direction with regard to the assessment of the learners as reflected in "if the technikon can give us the parameters". In the absence of such parameters, industry devises its own.

5.5.3 Effectiveness of industry

Question 3: How effective is the involvement of your industry/organisation with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?

(a) Indicators of effectiveness.
(b) Indicators of ineffectiveness.

(a) Indicators of effectiveness

"Effectiveness" refers to the organisations' delivering good results and being purposeful when providing experiential learning. The participants have different experiences. They profess their involvement to be "very effective" and, in other cases, "not effective".

The participants take preparation for the world of work, the placement of more than one learner in their organisation, employment of those learners afterwards, the contextualisation of systems and the learners being "able to integrate theory and practice" as indicators for effectiveness of their involvement. They reflect these opinions in quotations like "what systems do you use currently in industry, that is what they learn" and "they find it easy to adjust".

The participants recognise the benefits of experiential learning to the learners and employers. They claim that experiential learning bridges "the gap between experience and the appointments" of new employees, bridges the skills gap, supplies expertise, provides direct exposure to work, leads to job readiness, and easier adjustment to the job, provides recommendations or testimonials for the learners and finally, "the technikon could then assist employers in this recruiting students".

(b) Indicators of ineffectiveness

"Ineffectiveness" refers to the organisations' delivering poor results and not being purposeful when providing experiential learning. Some participants claim "dit gaan nooit effektief wees nie" and others contend they are not very effective as in "I don't think very".

The participants find placements “difficult, at the moment, because of the number of students, especially HRM learners that we get, are very high at the moment, more especially for those who are interested in Human Resource Management”. The participants look at certain indicators for their perceived ineffectiveness of their involvement in experiential learning. They refer to a “distance relationship” and claim that the learner wastes his time (“hy’t sy tyd kom mors”). The participants are uncertain how to “measure effectiveness”. They do not have “any assessment in place” and argue that “you can only assess the effectiveness if there is some kind of feedback or follow up and there isn’t”. The lack of a formal relationship and lack of assessment criteria or parameters are further indicators of ineffectiveness. One participant wants to know from the learners what their opinions about the organisation are as reflected in: “let them rate us” and think that will give them a better idea of their effectiveness.

In view of the unique circumstances in those organisations offering experiential learning, the learners emerge from their experience at different levels. For instance, some are exposed to arbitration cases that are current in the organisation. The large number of HRM learners leads to placement problems, and the perception of co-operative education as elitist exists in that “only the fortunate ones” get that experience.

Given the foregoing, the participants view the learners as “diligent” and “willing to learn” during their co-operative education period. Industry does not want the learners to feel they have not gained from this experience and industry is just “using” them.

Although the learners and academic staff do not mention travelling costs as a problem, industry thinks that the learners incur a lot of effort and probably have travelling costs to get to industry for their experiential training.

5.5.4 Involvement and co-operation

Categories for questions 4, 5 and 6 are grouped together due to the relationship between the responses. Conditions for potential involvement between the technikons and industry (question 4) refer to the problems or weaknesses experienced in the current co-operation (question 5) and the way industry describes more effective co-operation (question 6). The responses complement and support each other and are discussed together.

Question 4: How would your industry/organisation like to become involved with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?

Question 5: How would you describe the current co-operation between your industry/organisation and the technikon with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?

Question 6: How would you describe more effective co-operation between your industry/organisation and the technikon with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?

Table 5.2: Involvement and co-operation with the technikons

Categories	Sub-categories
(a) Conditional involvement.	
(b) Theory and practice integration.	
(c) Formalisation of a partnership between the technikons and industry based on outcomes.	(i) Co-ordination. (ii) Communication. (iii) Co-operation. (iv) Mentoring.

(a) Conditional involvement

"Conditional involvement" refers to involvement that has to meet certain requirements. Although some participants express that they are "happy" and "willing" to offer experiential learning and "dis iets wat baie na aan my is as individu", they are uncertain about how industry should become involved. Some participants say they would like to "continue having learners". In contrast, one participant reacted negatively by saying that there is pressure on employees and a lack of time.

They state certain conditions or requirements for more involvement: "sufficient time", "beneficial co-operation" and "interactive co-operation", co-ordination, "better organisation", "formal agreements", a "contact person", "meetings with the technikons", and the intake of manageable numbers. The technikons must indicate the need and they will respond. The participants recognise the need for co-operative education, but they suggest that the technikons help them "to plan how we are going to give the training" and be "aware how many we can take at the time." They need prior notice "so we're also prepared". Due to "teaching interference with production", they need better synchronisation of "time to teach and production to move".

(b) Theory and practice integration

"Theory and practice integration" refers to the theory of HRM as a technikon programme and the practice of HRM in the work environment that need to work together. According to the participants the learners "are all theory". The participants view the theory as general and the learners "put that theory now into practice". At first they know nothing. Gradually they see how it is in the real business world and become familiar with "things you don't get out of a textbook" as they experience it in practice. The participants acknowledged the importance of bridging the gap between theory, which is learnt at the technikons and practice

in the work environment in order to prepare learners for work.

(c) Formalisation of a partnership between the technikons and industry based on outcomes

"Formalisation of a partnership based on outcomes" refers to an official relationship between the technikons and industry that are involved in the same activity, namely experiential learning. Outcomes will give an indication of what is expected of the learners. Although outcomes should be determined together with industry as in the quotation from the policy makers "uitkomste wat bepaal moet word, in samewerking met industrie", industry participants reveal that this does not take place with regard to co-operative education.

A formal relationship between the technikons and the industries offers the advantages of the knowledge about the availability of learnerships to learners in HRM, enhanced industry awareness and understanding by technikons, employment opportunities for learners, better co-ordination, a source of recruitment and less advertisement costs for industries.

The benefits of experiential learning for the learners in terms of operational outcomes like better jobs and more rapid advancement is well established.

(i) Co-ordination

"Co-ordination" refers to planning between the technikons and industry with regard to experiential learning. The industries want better organisation, direction and synchronisation from the technikons. The working environment should be investigated to ensure training would be able to take place as revealed in "hulle moet darem wraggies eers kom kyk of ons dit rêrig kan doen … vir hulle oplei." They reveal that the technikons do not check the organisations out beforehand as in "there was no checking was I a valid company and will the student get any

benefit from me". The participants find that "there is no planning" and the process is "a bit vague" and "I don't think it's organised".

(ii) Communication

"Communication" refers to an exchange of information, verbally or written, between the technikons and industry. The participants request regular or daily, two-way communication from the technikons, which includes a contact person to keep them informed and respond to their concerns during co-operative education. The need for communication has emerged in the following quotations: "you do not actually get to interact a lot with the co-ordinater or maybe to interact with the lecturers themselves … it is sort of something that you work out on your own".

The need for regular communication is supported by the quotations: "not only come here once when we are doing the evaluation at the end … keep into contact with us all the time"; "it would have been better, yes, if somebody from the technikon approached us and explained us exactly what the student is studying towards" and "geen interaksie tussen ons en die professor nie". The lack of communication with a contact person is further evident in "ons sien hom nie … hy's nooit daar nie … dis net die student wat ons mee interaksie het".
Communication problems for the industries are of a verbal and non-verbal nature: the participants remark that the learners "don't even have documents to prove that they are from there". The participants find the covering letter from the technikons problematic in the sense that it is "a bit vague in terms of it doesn't say what the person should accomplish during the week with us". They express the need for "outcomes-based guidelines" or an indication of what the technikons want them to teach/train the learners. They would like to work with the technikons and not only the learners. A lack of feedback and communication leads to uncertainty about the training and improvement in the learners' performances and effectiveness of industrial involvement, and causes difficulty in measuring

the effectiveness of co-operative education. It is left up to the industries to decide about the kind of training to deliver. Follow-up as to how the learner is performing in his job is desirable. Despite these problems, technikons are regarded as more experienced than universities with regard to co-operative education.

Communication from the technikons about the learners afterwards is not forthcoming: “Never heard from the technikon again. I don’t get a follow-up call or a letter or an e-mail saying the learner is useless or the learner was brilliant or they gained something or they didn’t gain something. There is no feedback”.

(iii) Co-operation

Co-operation with the technikons ranges from little co-operation to a lack of co-operation. Supporting quotations in this regard are “There isn’t a lot of co-operation”; “I don’t think I am co-operating with them, because they haven’t given me parameters and I haven’t given them parameters” and I don’t think we are working together at all. We are co-operating with the students, not with the technikon at this stage”.

The current co-operation between industry and the technikons is “glad nie goed nie”. It is also informal as illustrated by: “there is no formal thing between ourselves and the technikons”. The co-operation seems to be blurred as there is “no base“ for the relationship and” we haven’t defined it clearly”. The participants say that industry works the relationship out on its own and internal arrangements are made with the learners who approach industry. They realise “there is a need to formalise it” (the relationship) particularly in view of learnerships. They express interest in this relationship and admit that it can be done, but want improvements in the areas of communication, co-operation and co-ordination.

Current co-operation with the technikons is characterised by a lack of the following: feedback, communication, interaction, and understanding about the

technikon requirements. One participant mentions that several learners in one office can cause congestion and noise or disruption to the production process. This issue is referred to in the following quotation: "… if you have two or three students in one office, … it can have an adverse effect on the production itself or the progress of the service delivered and you can't always treat these people like small children: 'Uh, stop making noise … ' ".

Confusion as to what should be done during experiential learning exists from the points of view of the learners and the industries, which reflects on a lack of co-operation. Corroborating statements in this regard are: "I said to him: 'Well, what do you want to do?' He says: 'No, you can just give me jobs' and "they'll just do anything I ask them to, which was why I joked and one guy said: 'Well, you can make tea' ". Their experiences underline further uncertainty as in: "I was not sure as to what I should be exposing them to", "We didn't know what to show her and then you don't know what to do" and "whatever we do, we do". They need to know if they are having an impact, otherwise they feel that they are wasting their time. They need an indication from the technikons as to "what they would like the students to know".

The participants view more co-operation between the technikons and industry as necessary for involvement in the future. Co-operation is also required between management in the organisation and other employees dealing with experiential learning, since "at all levels we should be aware of that … that there is co-operation".

Furthermore, industry wants better and flexible co-operation from the technikons to aid their preparation beforehand. Due to a lot of pressure on employers, co-operative education has to fit in with their schedule. The participants would not like more pressure to be placed on them within their busy schedules to assist the learners. They are also unclear as to whether a training situation or an assessment situation is required. They emphasise the need for a customised

South African model for co-operative education and benchmarking to improve its practice.

The participants recommend guidelines, feedback, information about the programme of HRM and an indication of “what the student is studying” and technikon assistance with the placements of learners. Meetings between the technikons and industry are necessary to reach an agreement and the participants think that co-operative education should form part of the curriculum. The needs of the learners, technikons and industries should be defined. In the current situation industry and the technikons are involved, but they exclude the learner as reflected in “hulle vergeet van die leerder”. Government pressure on the industries to rectify the current situation was suggested.

(iv) Mentoring

The participants refer to a contact person at the technikons as a mentor as they state “we need to be able to can talk to the mentor at the technikon”. They further admit that the learners require guidance from a trained person or mentor at work “who will be accompanying or assisting the students and mentoring them in that area”. Not all participants feel comfortable working with the learners as can be detected from “ek’s nie ‘n opleidings … wat sal ek sê, persoon nie”.

The mentor fulfils certain tasks. This is revealed in statements such as “the evaluation report that the mentor should then complete after the training and submit to the technikon” and “we had a mentors’ meeting so we were able to send them to that, so that they can get the feeling what are mentors, how are they trained, what should they cover” and “assisting the students and mentoring them from time to time”. The mentor “would sit with the students and talk about what they have learned … and how well were they able to apply the theory … what additional practical training would they want to receive”.

5.5.5 Compulsory experiential learning

Question 7: What is your viewpoint about compulsory experiential learning/co-operative education of technikon learners in Human Resource Management?

(a) Conditional acceptance of compulsory experiential learning.
(b) Non-acceptance of compulsory experiential learning.
(c) Benefits of experiential learning.

(a) Conditional acceptance of compulsory experiential learning

The participants regard co-operative education as very “important”, “absolutely” necessary and “essential” – in essence a “very brilliant idea”. The practice of co-operative education should be encouraged, since the learners are “out in the real world and experience situations which they haven’t done at technikon itself”. Those who have not had this experience “come with their theory and they find it more difficult to adjust”.

They express a willingness and openness to share with learners and would prefer it if learners could experience co-operative education in order to enhance readiness for work. Their responses stem from the culture of their industries. Those who have a learning culture in their organisations, are in favour of compulsory co-operative education.

(b) Non-acceptance of compulsory experiential learning

Some participants who approves compulsory co-operative education overall, conclude that it should not be compulsory if placements of learners are difficult. This is evident in “if no company wants to open their doors to you … then you are frustrated” and “if it was me in their shoes, I won’t be able to get my qualification”. They would like it to be “compulsory if it’s easy for the students to get through” to

organisations, but “if it’s going to be difficult or extremely difficult to get through, then maybe not”.

(c) Benefits of experiential learning

In general the benefits of co-operative education amount to an improvement in the knowledge of learners, easier adjustment to new jobs and growth in personal development and maturity in the working environment.

They set out certain conditions or requirements such as a customised model, better communication, including feedback beforehand and afterwards to know if an impact has been made on the learners, “concrete guidelines”, co-operation, planning and an extended time period.

The participants support the inclusion of assessment in the co-operative education period: “If you can not assess the training, how do you know that the learning has taken place?” They need to know that “there is reflection back on no, they didn’t learn a damn thing or yes, they learnt this”.

5.6 LITERATURE CONTROL

Although Bartkus and Stull (1997: 7-16) report that research in co-operative education has shortcomings with regard to scientific enquiry, the following serves as literature control:

Research by Van der Merwe (1988) about the experiential learning of Office Management learners at a technikon revealed that teaching in a practicum room on campus (as a training environment) did not provide all the necessary knowledge and skills that the secretarial profession required. This resulted in a gap between theory and practice. Co-operative training can successfully bridge the shortcomings associated with practicum room training. These findings point to the urgency of implementing experiential learning for learners. In the present

study industry participants realise the importance of theory and practice integration and would like to become involved with technikons and experiential learning. They think that the learners in industry familiarise themselves with matters that they do not obtain from the textbook.

Wessels and Pumphrey (1995) established in a quantitative study that the learners who are placed with their co-operative employers had reduced search times to find their first job. They further speculated that a co-operative education program enabled employers to gain more knowledge of the quality of the learners. In the current study industry participants regard the employment of the learners after completing experiential learning as an indicator of effectiveness of industrial involvement. The learners during experiential learning are regarded as a source of recruitment and less advertisement costs for industries.

Fowler (1984) reported in a quantitative study that trainee technicians during their co-operative education period become involved with mundane and routine tasks and questioned the way the theory was integrated with the practice. Their co-operative education was not structured and planned sufficiently. The data in this study reveal that the assessment role of industry is lacking or minor. Since the technikons do not communicate their requirements, industry is unclear what is expected of the learners and what must be done with them during experiential learning.

In a quantitative study Swart (1991) established that environmental health graduates continually require retraining upon entering into employment and that the educational philosophy of technikons is unfounded. He found that industry acknowledged the importance integrating the theory and practice, but in effect that did not take place. The target group also indicated that the technikon and authorities should share responsibility for the evaluation of co-operative education and a formal experiential learning programme is required to bridge the gap between theory and practice. In the present study industry participants prefer

a formal relationship or partnership with the technikons. Industry participants emphasised that the learners as one of the role players should be involved in the whole process.

Forrester (1994) conducted research on the involvement of industry in curriculum development for the building related subjects. He found that industry and education sectors operate in isolation and an agreement or partnership to co-operate is absent. Little or no contact exists between the two sectors. His findings concur with the informal relationship, lack of co-operation, co-ordination and communication between the technikons and industry in the current study. Feedback problems are experienced.

Pienaar (1990) conducted a comparative study of co-operative education in the commercial sciences in various countries including South Africa. The researcher examined several co-operative education programmes and conducted interviews. The study revealed various weaknesses in the local application of co-operative education, for example, the lack of manpower that influenced among other areas co-ordination. In the present study not all industry participants have the time to assist the learners during experiential learning. Industry participants do not have a contact person in the technikons with whom to liaise. A lack of planning leads to co-ordination problems.

A quantitative study by Tromp (1990) determined to what extent co-operative education was needed in the commercial sciences. Tromp (1990) concluded that the lecturers and employers shared the opinion that co-operative education should be incorporated in the commercial sciences. In the current study industry participants regard co-operative education as essential. They are in favour of the assessment of co-operative education. Industry participants, learners and policy makers are in favour of experiential learning.

Researchers like Apostilides (1997) as well as Apostilides and Looye (1997) and

Jensen (1987) contend that co-operative education should be planned, guided and controlled by assessing the learning outcomes properly. The data in the present study reveal that the assessment role of industry is minor or completely lacking. However, industry participants support the assessment of co-operative education.

The preceding discussion in this chapter holds several implications for the framework to be developed in chapter 6.

5.7 SUMMARY OF DATA SET 3

The foregoing discussion has been based on Data Set 3 that involves interviews with industry representatives and covers questions 1-7 (section 3.4.7). Figure 5.1 on the next page displays Data Set 3. A key to the figure explains what the different shapes represent.

5.8 SUMMARY

This chapter presented a discussion of the data obtained from interviews with participants in industry. The data are taken from Data Set 3. Categories were identified in a consensus decision by the researcher and the coder. The difficulties encountered by the participants suggest shortcomings with regard to the practice of co-operative education. Chapter 6 will provide interpretations of the collected data of chapters 4 and 5 and a final framework.

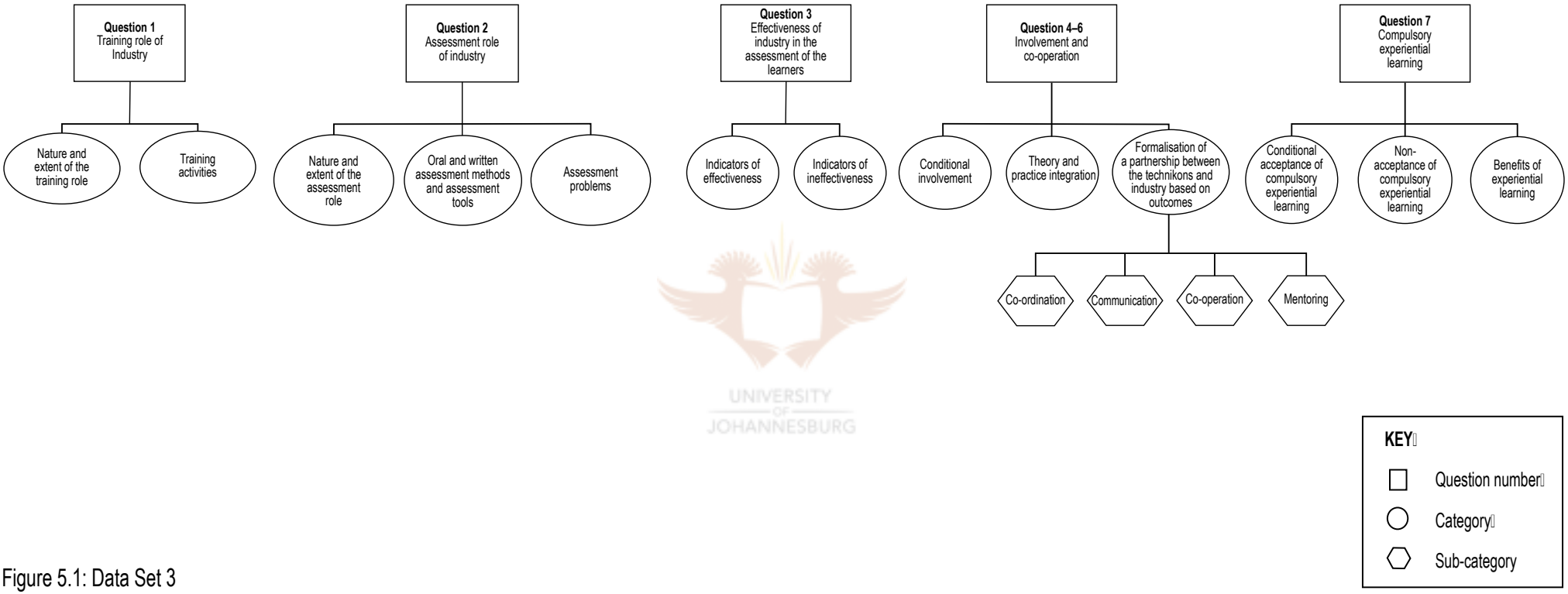


Figure 5.1: Data Set 3

CHAPTER 6

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK IN HRM

6.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

In the present chapter, a relevant assessment framework for HRM at technikons (now known as universities of technology) will be developed and described. To this purpose, the literature review in chapter 2 was undertaken with regard to the assessment of learning that served as a theoretical foundation for the assessment framework. The empirical study was based on qualitative research principles, since it allows for flexible research methods like interviews to explore phenomena. In this qualitative study, individual interviews and focus group interviews with participants from technikons and industry were conducted. These interviews were conducted in order to obtain their perceptions, views and opinions about the practice of assessment of the learners and the role of industry in the teaching and assessment of the learners. The main purposes of the interviews were to describe the practice dealing with assessment and to identify the strengths and problems thereof in order to inform and develop an assessment framework.

The interviews were transcribed and explicitated according to the interview questions in chapter 4 that presents Data Sets 1 and 2 and chapter 5 that presents Data Set 3. The data will be integrated further in chapter 6 in order to make the data more manageable and, taking the theoretical discussion in chapter 2 into consideration, easier to interpret in terms of the implications for the assessment framework. These implications will be represented as a number of interrelated and broader themes across the data sets. From this integration an assessment framework for HRM will be developed.

6.2 INTEGRATION, INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

Across the data sets the following themes have emerged: assessment policy implementation; traditional and content-based assessment; large numbers of learners; communication, feedback and transparent assessment; assessment criteria and finally, industrial involvement and partnership building. The data are interpreted against the literature study in chapter 2. The integration, interpretation and conclusions and preliminary recommendations will now be discussed.

6.2.1 Assessment policy implementation

Different aspects under assessment policy implementation emanate: misconceptions about CASS, reliance on practical competence, misconjecture about the nature of HRM, resistance and functioning of advisory committees.

6.2.1.1 Misconceptions about CASS

A problem is that the policy makers and academic staff do not implement CASS as one of the influencing factors in the formulation of the assessment policy due to several reasons (section 4.5.1). Since the framework incorporates CASS, the challenge is to implement CASS. The latter should become part of the teaching and learning culture at the technikons.

The participants claim that CASS is only applicable to subjects that are practical in nature and they experience difficulty in applying it to management studies that they perceive as being too theoretical (section 4.5.1). They find it easier in practical sessions that involve assignments, role-play and interviewing to assess the tasks the learners complete (section 4.5.1). Although the literature and the non-negotiable assessment principles have indicated a shift in the assessment paradigm toward CASS and formative assessment (sections 2.2; 2.4.4 and 2.4.5.2), the participants see CASS as a subjective way to assess (section 4.5.1).

Due to the problem of large groups of learners in HRM, the policy makers find it difficult to give individual attention to these learners (section 4.5.1). The perception is that they will constantly just be doing CASS (section 4.5.1).

From the data, it seems that a further misconception about CASS exists and that it is limited to certain methods. Although the policy makers view assignments as appropriate for CASS (section 4.5.1), assignments are not an assessment method. Assessors may use interviews, case studies and essay type questions in assignments. The lack of knowledge by the policy makers and academic staff is evident and constitutes a problem. Another perception of the participants is that CASS consists of group work, independent study and less dependency on notes (section 4.5.1). The assessment principle advocates that assessment needs to be continuous (section 2.4.4). The literature maintains that CASS is an ongoing assessment process and feedback from each assessment informs the construction of the next assessment (section 2.4.4). The strength is that CASS can be applied in any subject, using a variety of continuous formative and continuous summative assessment methods (sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5). The challenge is to disseminate information so that the academic staff and policy makers will be willing to implement CASS in HRM and inform them about the exact nature of the subject.

6.2.1.2 Reliance on practical competence

One of the reasons for the selection of the assessment methods lies in the justification of the technikon philosophy of having a more practical focus (section 4.3.2). Practical methods like presentations and simulations, case studies, in-basket exercises and projects are regarded as effective assessment methods (sections 4.3.3). Their focus on practical competence is important and a strength.

At the same time the weakness is that the lecturers and policy makers overemphasise practical competence (sections 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.5.1 and 4.5.2). The

assessment principle pronounces that assessment is integrated with learning (section 2.4.1). While integrated assessment according to the literature enables the learners to demonstrate applied competence that incorporates foundational, practical and reflexive competence (sections 2.3.4 and 2.6.1), the data reveals a lack of understanding about applied competence. Foundational and reflexive competence are neglected at the cost of practical competence. This perception leads to a narrow demarcation of the learners' skills. The framework gives recognition to applied competence that will be assessed. The challenge is to make the technikons aware of the other competences besides practical competence and encourage them to apply integrated assessment. The assessment methods that assess practical competence will be kept, but will need to be supplemented with assessment methods that also assess the foundational and reflexive competences.

6.2.1.3 Misconjecture about the nature of HRM

A different issue dealing with technikons' non-implementation of the assessment policy, stems from a seeming misconjecture of the participants about the nature of HRM and management disciplines. The policy makers view it as too theoretical (section 4.5.1), while in contrast the lecturers deem it to be practical (section 4.3.3). The misconception about the nature of management sciences leads to the participants not implementing CASS in HRM. The literature states that management is an applied science (section 1.9.3). Therefore, it will be possible to assess applied competence (sections 2.3.4 and 2.6.1).

A contradiction exists between the prescribed assessment methods by SERTEC and, in practice, those prescribed methods and CASS not being applied. This contradiction means that assessment will not be fully realised and will not be considered seriously. In principle policy is prescriptive in nature. If higher authority lacks the will and inclination to implement CASS, the lower level of academic staff will not implement it either. A difference in behaviour will not occur

in the rest of the academic staff. The alternative assessment paradigm will therefore not become part of the culture of the institution. The framework accepts the applied nature of HRM. The perceptions of the participants about the nature of HRM need to be addressed. The challenge is for the technikons to implement the alternative assessment paradigm.

6.2.1.4 Resistance

Another aspect about policy implementation emerges in that some resistance to assessment can be detected. Although the assessment methods are prescribed, the lecturers do not always follow them (sections 4.3.2 and 4.5.1). According to the policy makers, the lecturers do not support the new teaching paradigm as the data indicate (section 4.5.1). They may feel threatened and may not understand how assessment should be applied, especially since it appears that the learners and other role players are not fully involved in the teaching and assessment process (sections 5.5.1-5.5.4) – a major problem. Awareness of deviations from the prescribed assessment methods by the participants, is also a strength. Once the participants are aware of their deviations, these can be addressed. Their resistance to the new paradigm of teaching needs to be addressed in the framework. The lecturers implement assessment on the micro level and their support is necessary to ensure effective implementation and quality of assessment. The challenge is to still use the existing assessment methods that fit in with the alternative assessment paradigm and introduce other new methods gradually.

6.2.1.5 Functioning of the advisory committees

Policy non-implementation has relevance for the advisory committees. Although there is a reliance by the participants on the advisory committees for smooth functioning and the relevance of programmes (sections 4.3.5, 4.5.1 and 4.5.2), the literature points to a failure on the part of the advisory committees (section

4.5). The mere effort to involve industry members as committee members constitutes a strength that must be kept and shows a desire for an external focus on their teaching and assessment activities. Effective advisory committees may be a strength to support the implementation of CASS, experiential learning and a variation in the application of existing assessment methods and the assessment paradigm as a whole. The framework acknowledges the role that industry as members of the advisory committees plays. The functioning of advisory committees need to be examined. The challenge is for advisory committees to become more involved to ensure that CASS and experiential learning are implemented and monitored.

6.2.1.6 Conclusions and preliminary recommendations

Problems and weaknesses in this theme derive from the policy makers and academic staff that do not implement CASS, since they regard HRM as too theoretical and mistakenly think assignments are a more suitable assessment method to conduct CASS. Moreover, the lecturers and policy makers focus too much on practical competence, which leads to an underemphasis on applied competence. Since they already use methods to assess practical competence, methods that assess foundational and reflexive competences will be required. All three competences need to be assessed in their interaction. Another implication is that the assessors need different methods to assess applied competence. They cannot assess all the work by means of assignments, role-plays or interviews. Further problems are the resistance to the new teaching paradigm and the advisory committees that do not function effectively.

The preliminary recommendation is that opportunities for CASS and multiple assessment should be created, especially in view of the constraints of large classes, so that learning will still be improved. Any change will have to originate from top management and cascade down to the lower levels. Assessment training, including appropriate assessment methods, and orientation sessions

about assessment should incorporate a brief explanation about the nature of the subject, HRM, as an applied management science to be assessed and its influence on the assessment approach and assessment methods.

Several suggestions are made to break down the resistance of the lecturers to implementing CASS and the alternative assessment paradigm. These include awareness and information sharing sessions, assessment training in workshops, obtaining the inputs of the various key stakeholders in the process, informing the staff of the benefits of adhering to the assessment policy for them and the consequences of the contrary and providing examples of the successful implementation of alternative assessment policies in other institutions. The challenge is to implement the alternative assessment paradigm. Understanding the reasoning behind the new paradigm may ease the acceptance and implementation thereof.

The policy makers and all lecturers should be held accountable for the implementation of the policy throughout. The modification of marks should be addressed in the assessment policy and the departmental heads should take responsibility for it. In cases of non-compliance, disciplinary action ought to be taken. What is needed further, is training with regard to the implications of the assessment framework, quality assurance development and quality assurance management and accountability. Incentives and rewards for those who implement the required changes need to be introduced as part of the performance management system at the technikons.

The functioning of the advisory committees constitutes a problem. A preliminary recommendation is that all advisory committee members should be carefully selected. The advisory committee members from industry, ought to be rewarded for their efforts and involvement. Liaison of industry members with the technikons may form part of their key performance areas in their performance appraisal documents.

6.2.2 Traditional and content-based assessment

Several aspects dealing with traditional and content-based assessment emerge: assessment methods, assessment methods to assess experiential learning, different ways to administer the assessment methods, choice of the assessment methods, neglect of formative assessment, reliance on foundational competence, hidden curriculum, surface and strategic learning.

6.2.2.1 Assessment methods

The data reveal that the lecturers and departmental heads apply a variety of formal summative methods (sections 4.3.1 and 5.5.2). The fact that the lecturers apply a variety of methods and not only one or two, constitutes a strength that will form part of the framework. The practical methods that the learners, lecturers and departmental heads view as effective are included in the framework. The methods that invite active learner involvement, are a further strength to build into the framework. Another problem lies therein that alternative assessment methods like poster displays and methods that build reflexive competence like portfolios and journals are not applied. By implication, applied competence is not realised. The assessment principle supports authentic and contextualised assessment (section 2.4.3). The relation to the world of work by using portfolios provides authentic and contextual assessment (section 2.7.3.2) which may not be realised under these circumstances. The framework supports the alternative assessment paradigm and methods that build reflexive competence as part of applied competence. The challenge is to introduce assessment methods like portfolios and journals on campus and off campus. Poster displays and exhibitions within the institution should be explored as well.

6.2.2.2 Assessment methods to assess experiential learning

The lecturers have misgivings about the value of the report from industry about the learners' performance during their experiential learning period (section 4.3.1). Problems with the completion of the report may be attributed to a lack of preparation and briefing beforehand. The volume of assessment tasks may influence the placement of the learners (section 4.3.1). At some HEIs the learners have to share their experiences in industry in class upon their return (section 4.3.1). This is a strength in that the other learners can learn from it. The departmental heads also interview the learners about their experience afterwards which is a strength, since the learners' views are taken into account (section 4.3.1). Some educational institutions require experiential learning before the learners can receive their qualification (section 4.3.1). This obligation is a strength, since the institutions seem to realise the contribution and importance of experiential learning. Those universities of technology that do not require it or do not assist the learners to find placements, constitute a problem. If learners are not placed, they cannot be assessed. By implication, appropriate summative assessment methods, in consultation with industry need to be incorporated in order to meet the needs of the relevant parties. Reporting must describe the learners' progress toward achieving the outcomes and should include suggestions for improving their performance. The framework includes appropriate assessment methods to assess the learners during experiential learning.

Furthermore, the data illustrate that the effectiveness of industry in the training and assessment of the learners lies in the integration of the theory and practical side of the class room and further practice in industry (sections 5.5.3 and 5.5.4). The strength is that the learners and policy makers value the contribution of industry even though experiential learning is not implemented well in practice. By implication, industry needs to be involved in the assessment process. the strength is to build on the practical methods that the learners, lecturers and

departmental heads view as effective and include that in the framework. Moreover, formal co-operation between HEIs and industry is part of the assessment framework so that authentic and contextualised assessment can be realised.

6.2.2.3 Different ways to administer the assessment methods

How the assessment methods are applied reveals another weakness. Although there are different ways to administer specific assessment methods, the data suggest that the lecturers and departmental heads use them in the conventional way (section 4.3.1). For example, examinations are administered in the traditional way as the literature indicates (section 2.6.4.2). The academic staff does not make use of revealed examinations or one week papers. The strength is that several imaginative ways exist to apply assessment methods in order to relieve boredom and the learners may gain more value from the assessment. The aspect of variation in applying certain methods in a non-conventional way is incorporated in the framework. The challenge is to inform the lecturers and convince them to implement it.

6.2.2.4 Choice of the assessment methods

Although the departmental heads recognise the disadvantaged backgrounds of the new South African learners, one of the reasons that they give which influences their choice of assessment methods is past successful experience (section 4.3.2). However, it does not mean that a method is effective just because it has worked in the past. The literature points out that the HE landscape has changed and includes a diverse learner body with a disadvantaged background and rote learning skills, mostly (section 1.1). Therefore, assessing learning material from outdated text books also constitutes inappropriate assessment practice. The implication is to provide more learner support and apply a variety of assessment methods. The fact that they do not

adjust their assessment methods to fit realities in HE, is a weakness. The mere recognition of a different profile of the learners is not enough. The challenge is to assist the learners to apply deep learning skills and to align the curriculum with the deep learning approach.

6.2.2.5 Neglect of formative assessment

From the interviews it is clear that the academic staff neglect formative assessment, a major problem (section 4.3.1). However, the lecturers do use assignments formatively by commenting on the learners' progress while they are writing their assignments, before the learners hand in the final product (section 4.3.1). This constitutes a strength. The assessment principle states that the diagnostic, formative and summative assessment purposes should be clear and include formal and informal assessment (section 2.4.5). According to the literature, the purpose of formative assessment is to provide feedback to learners about their progress (section 2.4.5.2). If the lecturers do not apply formative assessment, the learners will not know their strengths and achievements so that they can build on it. The learners will be unable to improve their learning.

Presumably there is a lack of knowledge about OBA and assessment methods to be used when dealing with huge numbers of learners and not being empowered to do so. In addition, during one interview the lecturers remark that they use brainstorming as an assessment method that further reveals their lack of knowledge about assessment. Rapid formative assessment methods indicated in the literature can alleviate the assessment load in large classes (sections 2.6.4.1) and provide feedback opportunities. The implication is to apply these assessment methods. Rapid formative assessment methods (sections 2.4.13 & 2.7.3.7) form a crucial part of the framework. The challenge is to inform the lecturing staff to apply it, so that rapid assessment methods eventually become part of the assessment practices.

6.2.2.6 Reliance on foundational competence

The data reveal that some current assessment methods are not always in line with the practical approach of universities of technology. Besides the problems of an overemphasis on practical competence and a lack of emphasis on reflexive competence, foundational competence is also favoured. The data displays this view strongly. For example, multiple choice questions are unpopular with the learners (section 4.3.3). Examinations carry the most weighting (section 4.3.1). Tests are widely used (section 4.3.1). The participants further express the need for the methods to be based on industry requirements (section 4.3.3) which has implications for building ties with industry. Their desire is a strength to consider. The framework acknowledges assessment methods that build foundational competence, but also incorporates methods that assess other competences, too. The challenge is further to obtain inputs from industry by means of the advisory committees and involvement in experiential learning in order to ensure the relevance of programmes.

6.2.2.7 Hidden curriculum

The data affirm that the focus in the curriculum is for the learners to know the theory well (section 4.3.1). This situation leads to assessment directing the curriculum ("hidden curriculum") instead of the "true" curriculum impacting on the assessment like the literature states (section 2.4.1). The problem is that the focus of assessment under these circumstances is not applied competence, but foundational competence only. Decontextualised knowledge may be over-accentuated in this situation. By implication, the curriculum should assesses applied competence and the latter should be considered in the framework. The implication is that the learners' approach to learning, and the weighting of examinations in comparison to other assessment methods, should be addressed. The challenge is to assess contextual and decontextualised knowledge ought to be assessed and be in alignment with the curriculum.

6.2.2.8 Surface and strategic learning

Content-based assessment encourages surface and strategic learning as indicated in the interviews. This is in contrast with the assessment principle that posits that assessment is integrated with learning and should concentrate on deep, active learning that applies higher order cognitive skills (section 2.4.1): The data reveal that the learners apply rote learning (sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.3). By implication, rote learning represents a traditional paradigm about assessment. Furthermore, it seems that the learners become test wise (section 4.3.1). According to the lecturers, distributing previous examination papers ensures exam readiness (section 4.3.1). Presumably this forces the learners to be examination driven and not to learn from the assessment. The data is clear in that the focus for the learners is only on passing the test or examination (section 4.3.3). It is evident from the data that the learners experience anxiety in the face of examinations (section 4.3.3), a fact which seemingly indicates their feeling of disempowerment in content-based assessment. Holistic understanding seems to be absent in that the learners do not understand assignments after completion (section 4.3.3).

A major problem is that deep learning does not occur even when the lecturers apply a deep learning method like open book examinations in one instance. According to the data the learners find open book examinations ineffective (section 4.3.3). A strength is that the lecturers are aware of a deep learning method, but presumably the surface and strategic learning approach affect the application thereof. The framework includes deep learning methods like open book examinations. The challenge is to foster a deep approach by applying methods that lead to that approach. The learners need to develop the skills to write open book examinations.

6.2.2.9 Conclusions and preliminary recommendations

In conclusion of this theme, content-based assessment that represents the traditional paradigm, is employed. A variety of summative methods are used. Interviews, reports and logs are used to assess experiential learning. Certain methods are not applied at all: portfolios, journals and poster displays. Moreover, the learners dislike multiple choice questions and examinations are over-emphasised. The learners find open book examinations ineffective, while the lecturers neglect formative assessment that is part of the alternative assessment paradigm. The choice of assessment methods does not address the changing HE landscape. The learners apply surface and strategic learning and have rote learning skills.

Careful consideration of the relative weighting of different parts of assessment is critical. Multiple choice questions ought to form a small component of tests and examinations. Assessment methods not previously used can be applied. Different imaginative ways to administer assessment methods can be explored. The learners must receive opportunities to complete a dry run of open book examinations and case studies beforehand to practise their skills to complete these assessment activities. The lecturers must provide study guidance and learner support on how to read and summarise text and how to prepare for open book examinations e.g. the learners must mark certain areas so that they will know where certain aspects of the learning material can be located. The lecturers ought to know the profile of their learners in order to select the appropriate assessment methods. Programme and module planning must make provision for applying deep learning methods to combat rote learning skills. “Backwash” can work positively by linking assessment with the curriculum. Appropriate assessment methods to assess experiential learning in industry need to be discussed with industry so that authentic and contextualised assessment can be realised.

6.2.3 Large numbers of learners

Various aspects dealing with large numbers of learners are highlighted: multiple choice questions; assessment overload; peer assessment, self-assessment and group assessment, avoidance of assessment responsibility and placements for experiential learning.

6.2.3.1 Multiple choice questions

The data refer to the large numbers of learners to be assessed (sections 4.3.1 & 4.3.3) and class size is a decisive factor in assessing the learners. The lecturers assert that the assessment methods that they use are effective when the numbers of learners are fewer (section 4.3.1). A problem is that the large numbers of learners thus limit the choice of assessment methods. While multiple choice questions do not appeal to the learners as indicated in the interviews (section 4.3.3), the lecturers administer multiple choice questions for convenience sake to alleviate the assessment load (section 4.3.1), a further problem.

However, the literature reports that multiple choice test questions lead to surface learning (sections 2.4.1, 2.6.4.2). The assessment principle affirms that assessment should concentrate on deep, active learning that applies higher order cognitive skills (section 2.4.1). Since assessment should enhance deep learning as the literature states (section 2.7.3.1), multiple choice and other objective methods need to be used cautiously and be combined with other methods. Using multiple choice questions on their own, is too limiting to assess critical thinking and reasoning. The challenge is to use multiple choice questions in such a way so that it will lead to deep learning. The implication is that the weighting of multiple choice questions and the approach to learning that these questions encourage, should receive attention in the framework.

6.2.3.2 Assessment overload

The data indicate that the problem of an assessment overload for the lecturers and the learners is experienced (section 4.3.1). The learners experience the workload as being too much (section 4.3.3). This may presumably be attributed to the emphasis on rote learning. In addition, the test dates are set in such a way that it leaves little time in between to study for the next test (section 4.3.3). Presumably that may be the reasons that they submit assignments late (section 4.3.3). It appears from the interviews that the volume of content of modules varies (section 4.3.3).

In contrast with the data, the assessment principle emphasises that the assessment workload needs to be realistic to the learners and assessors (section 2.4.12). The implication is that, if an assessment load is unrealistic, it may lead to the repetitive use of the same assessment methods for summative purposes and it will encourage a surface approach to learning as described in the literature (section 2.7.3.6). By implication, the factual content of some modules may be reviewed and adjusted to promote deep learning. The framework should incorporate an assessment workload that is realistic to the learners and the assessors and ways to alleviate the workload should be included in the framework.

6.2.3.3 Peer assessment, self-assessment and group assessment

The interviews indicate that, due to the huge numbers of learners, the lecturers find that individual presentations take a long time (section 4.3.1). A suggestion would be to use group presentations that would presumably save time. The weakness is that they do not apply group presentations. At times the lecturers require the class to provide feedback on the presentation, which is a strength. Although the rest of the class give their opinion as to where the presenter can improve as part of formative assessment and peer assessment, the learners do

not allocate marks for it (section 4.3.1). The literature points out that peer assessment used summatively may have a negative effect (section 2.6.2.4). Seemingly, the inputs of the learners have no influence on the judgement of the lecturers and their overall assessments. The fact that the lecturers award marks, presumably neutralises the positive value that the comments of the peer group may have. The literature cautions against the learners giving marks in summative peer assessment (section 2.6.2.3). The perception of the lecturers exists that the learners compete against each other to do better in that way (section 4.3.1). However, norm-referenced assessment as part of the traditional assessment paradigm may occur, which will encourage competition with others. The framework must incorporate CRA as well as the inputs of the learners in their own assessments. In addition, the framework accepts peer assessment, self-assessment and group assessment. The challenge is to inform and prepare the lecturers and the learners to apply these assessments and decide whether to apply it in a formative or summative manner.

According to the interviews, formal group assessments occur to a lesser degree (section 4.3.1). Although the lecturers want more involvement from the learners by proposing how they would like to be assessed (section 4.3.3), the lecturers are cautious about peer and group assessments (section 4.3.1). It seems they do not trust the learners or themselves and may feel disempowered. Their perception further reveals a lack of knowledge about peer-, group- and self-assessments. However, the literature points to the benefits of peer assessments, group assessments and self-assessments: (section 2.6.2.1, 2.6.2.3 & 2.6.2.4). The desire of the lecturers for more learner involvement is a strength that needs to be considered in the appropriate application of peer assessment, self-assessment and group assessment.

While industry and a technikon representative are involved in the assessment of the learners in industry (section 5.5.2), formal self-assessment is excluded here. Industry further requests that the learners give their opinion about how the

organisation conducted the experiential learning period. By implication, who should act as assessors in industry and the weighting of those assessments should receive attention in the framework.

6.2.3.4 Avoidance of assessment responsibility

Where peer assessment or group assessment is used according to the data, the lecturers prefer it if the group decides about the mark. In one instance some lecturers will add or subtract the marks according to certain criteria so the learners receive the overall marks individually (section 4.3.1). This situation seems to be a revelation of the lecturers evading their responsibility in assessments, a problem that must be addressed in the framework. This may be the result of the lecturers lacking knowledge about their assessments of the learners and therefore they cannot defend their assessments. Moreover, the learners will not reveal a member who does not contribute to the group (section 4.3.1). It seems they lack knowledge as to how to deal with conflict in the group in this regard and may also side step responsibility, another weakness.

Although self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment have a place in the assessment of the learners as a strength, the assessors cannot leave everything up to the learners. By implication, the lecturers may not abdicate their responsibility as the main assessors to assess. On the other hand, it is suggested that the learners who apply rote learning and consequently, surface and strategic learning approaches, may not assess reliably unless certain conditions apply that should be included in the framework. According to the literature, the assessments by the learners can be reliable if they receive sufficient guidance and assessment criteria (section 2.6.2.3). By implication the learners need to see their lecturers supporting self-assessment, group assessment and peer assessment first before they will feel confident enough to apply it. The framework acknowledges that the lecturers still need to take overall responsibility for the assessment of the learners. The challenge is for the

lecturers and the learners to accept responsibility.

6.2.3.5 Placements for experiential learning

An indirect issue impacting on the assessment of the learners, is the placement of learners for experiential learning in industry. According to the data, large groups of learners in management sciences complicate learner placement for experiential learning (sections 4.3.1, 4.3.4, 4.5.2 and 5.5.4). By implication, the problem lies in the fact that many learners will not gain the experience that the others will have had. The assessment principle points out that the learners should be exposed to real-life tasks in order to provide authentic and contextual assessment (section 2.4.3). The implication is to involve industry in the assessment of the learners. This will ensure an integration of theory and practice that will constitute a strength. The framework incorporates the role of industry as an assessor during experiential learning. The challenge is to develop a relationship with industry and formalise that relationship.

The data divulge that in the majority of cases the learners approach the organisations first for placements for experiential learning with the result that it is an internal and informal arrangement between these two parties (section 5.5.1). The concurring perception of experiential learning as elitist exists in that only the fortunate ones get that experience (section 5.5.3).

The implication is that all learners should be accommodated for experiential learning. The learners should not solely be responsible for securing placements for experiential learning. Presumably they do not have access to a database and lack the necessary negotiating skills to approach industry for possible placements. All relevant role players, technikon representatives and industry representatives, including the unions, and the learners must be involved and have their roles and responsibilities clarified. In view of wider access to education (section 1.3.1) as explained in the literature, the process needs to be seen as fair

and equitable by all concerned. There is no sense in the learners being placed for experiential learning, without knowing what they learn and whether they learn from that experience.

6.2.3.6 Conclusions and preliminary recommendations

There are large classes to be assessed, a fact which influences the selection of the assessment methods. Therefore, the lecturers choose multiple choice questions as an easy method to assess the learners. Multiple choice test questions lead to surface learning and ought to be limited in its use. The lecturers and the departmental heads also need training in the design of effective multiple choice questions.

The academic staff needs information and training about the assessment of large classes. The training must include time-saving assessment methods so that the academic staff will not experience assessment overload. The volume of content in the modules may be reviewed and adjusted to avoid overload and promote deep learning.

Group assessment occurs to a lesser degree, while the lecturers mistrust peer assessment. Formal self-assessment does not occur. It appears that the lecturers want the group to conduct the assessment, while the group members avoid exposing others who do not contribute to the group performance. Both parties need training and information to assess groups and take responsibility for their assessment.

Large groups of learners have difficulties in finding placements for experiential learning. Industry ought to become involved as an assessor. It ought to be decided among technikons and industry who should act as assessors and the weighting of that assessment should be indicated. Permanent administrative staff or co-ordinators in a separate department or unit should act as a link between the

technikon academic departments under which the programme group HRM resides and industry that deals with experiential learning. The co-ordinators must conclude agreements for experiential learning placements in HRM with industry after having investigated the suitability and willingness of the organisations. Together the lecturers in HRM and co-ordinators must stipulate the assessment tasks in those agreements to be performed in industry so that the learners can relate their placement and classroom learning. The administrative staff ought to handle the correspondence and travel arrangements for visits to industry.

6.2.4 Communication, feedback and transparent assessment

Communication, feedback and transparency problems dealing with assessment exist. Different aspects of feedback are evident from the data: a lack of feedback skills, delayed feedback, class size, scheduling of assessment and a lack of structures and mechanisms.

6.2.4.1 Lack of feedback skills

It seems that the learners are not always in favour of the way they receive feedback. Some learners want the lecturers not to provide feedback on their performance in presentations, out loud, in front of other learners (section 4.3.1). This seems to point to a lack of empowerment of the learners. Presumably they fear the laughter of their co-learners, a problem the departmental heads point out in the interviews (section 4.3.3). The assessment principle specifies that the assessment needs to provide communication and feedback to support the learning process (section 2.4.14). Although the departmental heads suggest that role-plays be used only with mature learners, the problem may lie in the way role-plays are implemented. The framework will address the preparation for role-plays and the feedback skills of the learners. The challenge is to implement role-plays and presentations effectively.

6.2.4.2 Delayed feedback

In some instances the data indicates that the learners seek early feedback. (section 4.3.3). If feedback is delayed, it could be detrimental to the learning process. The assessment principle states that assessment needs to provide communication and feedback to support the learning process (section 2.4.14). Management ought to ensure that the administrative processes are streamlined and that suitable technology is used to disseminate the results. The framework includes feedback and communication that is in good time and technology which can assist in this regard.

6.2.4.3 Class size

Class size affects the assessment of the learners, feedback and communication. Although the learners omit any comment about the assessment problems of large classes in their interviews, the big groups make it difficult for the lecturers to assess the understanding of the learners and give feedback. The lecturers find it easier to assess the learners in smaller groups (section 4.3.1). According to the assessment principle, assessment needs to provide communication and feedback to support the learning process (section 2.4.14). Communication and feedback need to occur throughout the assessment process to enhance learning.

By implication if the learners do not receive adequate feedback, they may not understand their progress. Insufficient feedback will not promote learning from the assessment process. The framework includes different time-saving techniques to assess large classes.

6.2.4.4 Scheduling of assessment

The data suggest that administration and logistic problems occur that impact on the communication and transparency of the assessment of the learners (section

4.3.3). The learners also experience problems with the volume of content and insufficient time to study for tests (section 4.3.3). The learners expressed their need for the lecturers to consult each other about due dates for assessments (section 4.3.3).

By implication, if assessment is not co-ordinated, confusion about the scheduling of assessment will occur. The framework admits that faculties can schedule their own assessments, but learner needs ought to be considered as well. The framework recognises the inputs of the learners as well as the academic staff in the scheduling process.

6.2.4.5 Lack of structures and mechanisms

Feedback, communication and transparency problems are not restricted to the classroom only. The interviews disclose that the assessment of experiential learning occurs in an informal, unstructured and non-transparent manner. From the interviews in industry, it is evident that feedback and communication before, during and after the assessment of experiential learning are absent (section 5.5.3). The assessment principle states that assessment should be integrated with learning (section 2.4.1). The framework recognises formal and integrated assessment in industry.

Furthermore, according to industry participants, the technikon representatives do not communicate beforehand with industry (section 5.5.4). Industry does not have a contact person with whom to liaise (section 5.5.4). Uncertainty exists as to how industry should become involved with the technikons (section 5.5.4). However, industry is waiting for the technikons to communicate their needs (section 5.5.4). On the other hand, the lecturers that lack industry experience may find it difficult to convey their needs to industry. Industry participants would like to co-operate with the technikons and share information and expertise from their side (section 5.5.4). Those technikons that send representatives to visit the

learners and enquire from industry about the learner performance, establish more communication and feedback. This is a strength that the framework will include.

The data further reveal that in some instances the learners do not have access to their reports from industry upon completion of the experiential learning period (section 5.5.2). Uncertainty in industry reigns about what exactly happens to the assessment documentation after it has been sent to the technikons (section 5.5.2). This is in contrast with the assessment principle, which states that the assessment and assessment rights need to be transparent to learners and assessors (section 2.4.9 and 2.7.3.5). The assessment principle further makes provision for relevant criteria to be applied (section 2.4.6 and 2.7.3.4). Presumably, transparency will be enhanced if the assessment criteria are known. The framework includes transparent assessment.

6.2.4.6 Conclusions and preliminary recommendations

In conclusion, the learners experience problems in receiving feedback in front of others. The framework will address the preparation for role-plays and developing the feedback skills of the learners. Administrative procedures and technology can play a role in preventing delayed feedback. With the help of technology, certain points on the campus should be erected where the learners can see their own results on a screen. The academic staff needs information about time-saving techniques to assess large groups.

Administrative and logistical problems disrupt the scheduling of assessment. The latter at the technikon must be organised, planned and conveyed to all parties ahead of time. The learners ought to be able to address their needs through their representatives in the scheduling process and not be seen as an afterthought.

Formal communication structures and mechanisms to liaise with industry must be

established. These structures and mechanisms should include a department that handles experiential learning in HRM manned by co-ordinators who will establish regular contact with industry. Educational needs can be determined through extensive consultation between the technikons and industry. A climate of reciprocity between the parties is required.

6.2.5 Assessment criteria

An issue flowing from problems dealing with communication, feedback and transparency is the assessment criteria that seem not to be stipulated or not communicated and not to be transparent at times. According to the lecturers, the learners argue about their marks in tests (section 4.3.3), except when the lecturers provide sufficient feedback in case studies where rote learning cannot be applied. It can be argued as to whether the learners will still find their marks problematic when they understand the assessment criteria. The aggressiveness of the learners may also be seen in the light of non-transparent assessment and feedback that may not explain why they have received a particular mark. The framework recognises that the assessment criteria must be stated up front and communicated clearly to the learners.

The issue of the assessment criteria affects the departmental heads too. They caution that it is difficult to set a memorandum for case studies for which many interpretations are possible (section 4.3.3). It is inferred that their problem originates from a lack of assessment criteria. This remark also reflects a lack of knowledge and understanding as to how to compile and apply criteria. Memoranda may imply rote learning. Case studies focus on problem solving for which many interpretations may exist, but the determination of assessment criteria will help in the absence of having all the interpretations prominently available. The framework must include the formulation of criteria.

The data reveal that due to a lack of feedback the learners do not know what the correct way is to complete assignments (section 4.3.3). The cause of the problem may be a lack of awareness of the assessment criteria. This may lead to unrealistic expectations from the learners and they cannot learn from assessment under these circumstances. The assessment principle determines that assessment needs to be criterion-referenced and relevant assessment criteria need to be identified and applied (section 2.4.6):

Problems with regard to the assessment criteria occur in industry as well. From the data, it is clear that the learners and industry participants are unaware of the assessment criteria (section 5.5.1 and 5.5.2). Consequently, the learners amidst the uncertainty and absence of the assessment criteria convey their own perceived needs to industry. However, the learners may not always know their needs. They are not curriculum experts and need support and input from the technikons and industry. Moreover, the lack of assessment criteria may be the reason that the learners perform mundane tasks in industry during experiential learning (section 4.3.4). Consequently, they find experiential learning a waste of time (section 4.3.4) and industry is uncertain as to what to do with them (section 5.5.4). However, the lecturers are willing to develop criteria with industry (section 4.3.5), which is a strength to be explored. The assessment principle declares that assessment needs to be criterion-referenced and relevant assessment criteria need to be identified and applied (section 2.4.6).

6.2.5.1 Conclusions and preliminary recommendations

Generally, it appears that assessment criteria are not transparent, not stated and not communicated. Assessment criteria must be stipulated in a transparent way on campus and in industry in written format. The criteria should feature when written and oral feedback is provided to the learners. Industry needs assessment criteria to assess the learners. Consultation between industry and technikons is required to negotiate these criteria.

6.2.6 Industrial involvement and partnership building

The interviews with the policy makers do not reveal any problems with experiential learning. This can be ascribed to the fact that the policy makers are on a strategic level and are not always aware of operational problems as those experienced by the learners, lecturer and departmental heads and industry. Aspects dealing with this theme are: a lack of involvement and a lack of integration with learning.

6.2.6.1 Lack of involvement

In contrast with the policy makers' perceptions of close liaison (section 4.5.3), the role of industry in the training and assessment of learners during experiential learning is minor, indirect or characterised by a lack of involvement as is evident in the interviews (sections 4.3.1, 4.3.4, 4.3.5, 4.5.2, 4.5.3 and 5.5.2). This lack of involvement is a major problem to be addressed. It seems the assessment is mainly summative and the learners only have one opportunity to be assessed. With the exception of HRM, the involvement of industry to provide experiential learning in other sciences are effective (section 4.5.3). According to the policy makers, the assessment of experiential learning takes place in a structured and formal manner only in those programmes that incorporate compulsory experiential learning (section 4.5.2). The learners in other sciences, who do manage to obtain placement for experiential learning during recesses, are at best just exposed to industry. A formal agreement or partnership between industry and the technikons does not exist (section 5.5.1). Formal assessment must take place to determine the extent to which the outcomes have been achieved.

Presumably, the learners, policy makers and industry participants have the ideal role of industry in mind when referring to the benefits of experiential learning

(section 4.3.2, 4.3.4, 4.5.2, 4.5.3, 5.5.3 and 5.5.5). The implication is for industry and the technikons to build on the strengths of experiential learning.

Although experiential learning is not compulsory according to the teaching policy mentioned in the data (section 4.3.4) and the literature (section 1.4.1), the desirability of compulsory experiential learning is largely evident from the data and constitutes a strength (sections 4.3.5, 4.5.3 and 5.5.5). The technikons cannot educate learners if they do not receive input from industry. The current role of industry is problematic. Furthermore, according to the literature, industry provides authentic and contextual assessment (section 2.4.3).

The enthusiasm and willingness of industry implies that compulsory experiential learning should be implemented. Formal structures and processes need to be in place. It should be decided how placements should be handled and by whom.

Due to the informal nature of experiential learning, the duration of the experiential learning period differs (section 5.5.1). The different perceptions with regard to the exact duration of the experiential learning period need to be addressed in a formal training programme. The various roles should be clarified in the compilation of such a programme.

Another factor, a perception of the policy makers about the members of the advisory committees (section 4.5.3), contributes to the lack of industrial involvement. The framework accepts compulsory experiential learning. However, it is essential that all key role players be involved in the curriculum planning and development of the experiential learning programme. This will ensure more commitment and support to implement a structured programme and the latter will have a better chance of succeeding. Presently, the learners and industry, to a large extent, are ignored as revealed in the data (sections 4.3.4, 5.5.1, 5.5.2 and 5.5.4). According to the policy makers, the lecturers lack industry experience and fear industry liaison. This may be attributed to the non-compulsory nature of

experiential learning in the teaching policy. However, the implication is to address the limitations and obstacles of experiential learning in order to incorporate compulsory experiential learning and its assessment in programmes.

Experiential learning is a curriculum matter. It should be decided whether the experiential learning curriculum forms a component of the overall curriculum. Another decision includes whether the academic component supports and complements the experiential learning component and whether both components comply with the quality assurance standards. It seems that the needs of all role players must be established before any programme of experiential learning can be planned. Their responsibilities must be clarified and formalised in a proper agreement or contract. Already industry participants are wary that the learners may think they are just using them (section 5.5.3). Addressing the needs of the learners during experiential learning will prevent perceptions forming of exploitation of the learners by industry. This brings the question of payment of the learners to the fore.

The framework presents the learners, technikon representatives and industry representatives and unions as stakeholders. Although the policy makers do not regard the unions as stakeholders with whom to consult, the latter has impacted on the decisions of organisations as to whether to accept the learners for experiential learning or not (section 5.2) and should also be included in the framework.

Industry wants more involvement (section 5.5.4) and conditionally accepts compulsory experiential learning in HRM (section 5.5.5). More co-operation, better planning and co-ordination as well as a formalised and structured relationship will enhance the success of experiential learning (section 5.5.5) and its concurring assessment. To synchronise experiential learning and production seems to be a matter of planning between the two parties. These conditions need to form part of the framework.

Some industry participants are uncomfortable in the role of trainer (section 5.5.4). By implication, mentors that are trained are required to conduct experiential learning and interview the learners afterwards about their progress.

While the policy makers do not want industry to prescribe too much to them, on the other hand, industry does not want the technikons to dictate too much to them (section 4.5.3, 5.5.4). The roles and responsibilities of all role players should be clarified in writing.

The aforementioned discussion impacts on assessment. The major problem is a lack of industrial involvement. If the relationship remains informal, nobody is obliged to do anything. If there is no feedback, the relevant parties remain unaware of the performance of the learners and where and how they can improve on the programme in future. There is no purpose in involving the learners in experiential learning if the learning remains obscure. By implication, compulsory experiential learning should be established and integrated with other technikon teaching and assessment policies. The framework recognises formal involvement of industry and official agreements in this regard need to be established.

6.2.6.2 Lack of integration with learning

Another problem is that where assessment does take place, it does not seem to be integrated with learning (sections 5.5.2 & 5.5.3). This is in contrast with the assessment principle that claim that assessment is integrated with learning and should concentrate on deep, active learning that applies higher order cognitive skills (section 2.4.1). The framework proposes formal, integrated assessment throughout the experiential learning programme. Experiential learning as an integral part of programmes can be addressed in the framework by linking the outcomes of experiential learning with the assessment tasks in the curriculum.

6.2.6.3 Conclusions and preliminary recommendations

Presently the relationship between industry and the technikons is informal and there is a lack of industrial involvement. All role players are not consulted. In the interest of authentic and contextualised assessment, experiential learning should be part of the curriculum. In view of the Skills Development Act and the Skills Development Levy Act, an inquiry as to whether co-operative education should become part of the formal requirements of the programme, HRM, for all technikons is necessary. The role players that will be needed to initiate and sustain authentic and contextual assessment should be involved, namely the learners, lecturers, departmental heads, policy makers from HRM and industry representatives as well as union representatives from industry. All role players have to be orientated and prepared beforehand and provide input in the development of a structured experiential learning programme. Relevant productive and meaningful work, assessed by trained mentors as assessors, should be an integral part of the experiential learning. A participative and formal relationship must exist between the technikons and industry. All relevant parties must sign contractual agreements. They are assessment partners. Experiential learning should be compulsory given the necessary funding by the government. The needs of the relevant parties should be determined by a need analysis. The functions of the advisory committees ought to be clarified in order to support the experiential learning process. Mentors or supervisors in industry should receive a comprehensive briefing or brochure with guidelines from the technikons. The framework should include assessment methods in consultation with industry in order to meet the needs of the relevant parties.

Figure 6.1-6.6 illustrates the integration of the explicitation of the Data Sets 1-3.

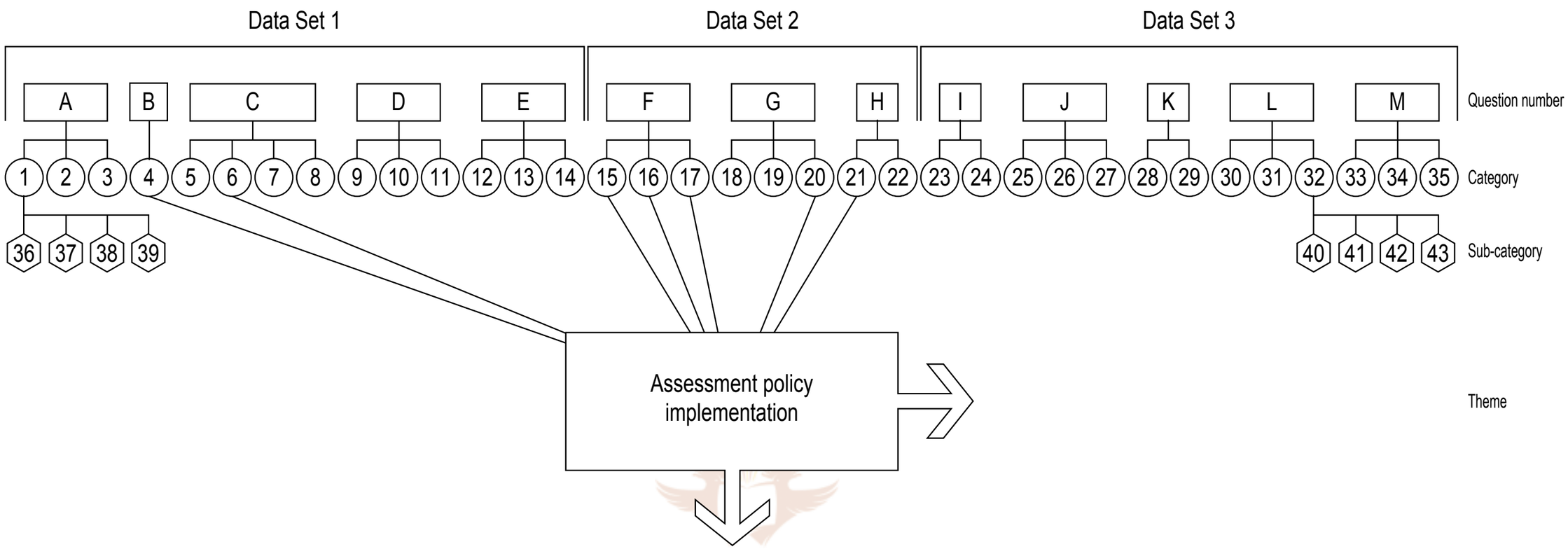


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Figure 6.1: Assessment policy implementation

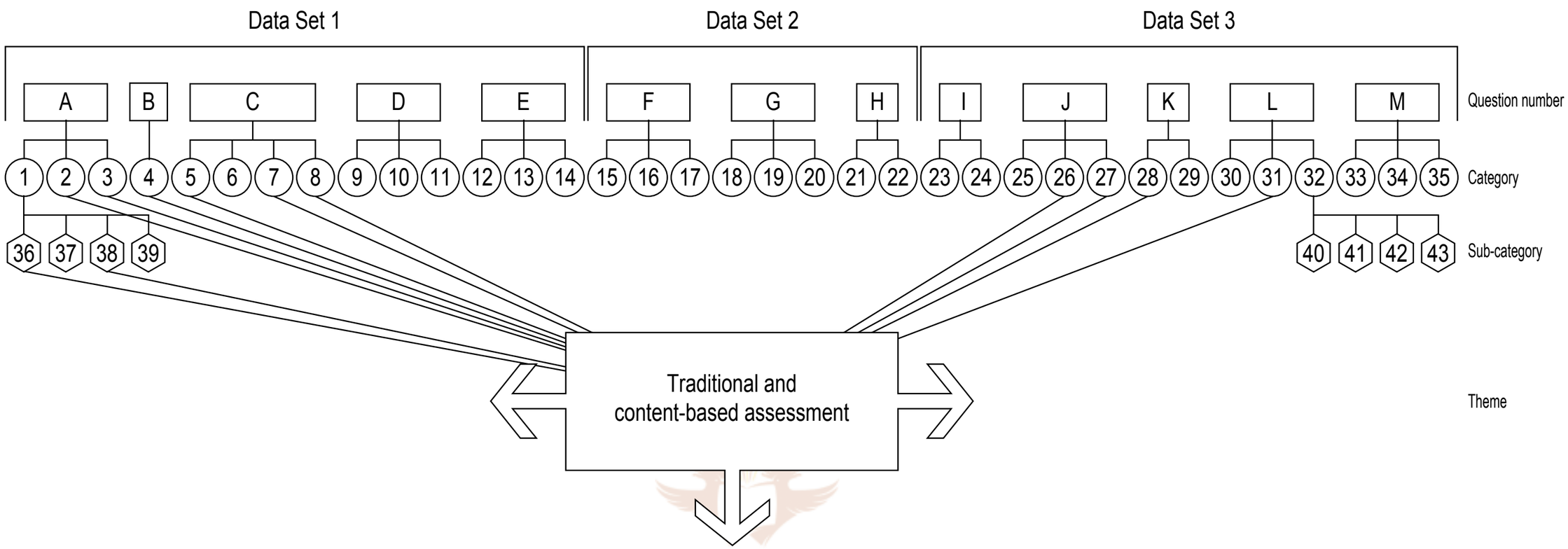

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Figure 6.2: Traditional and content-based assessment

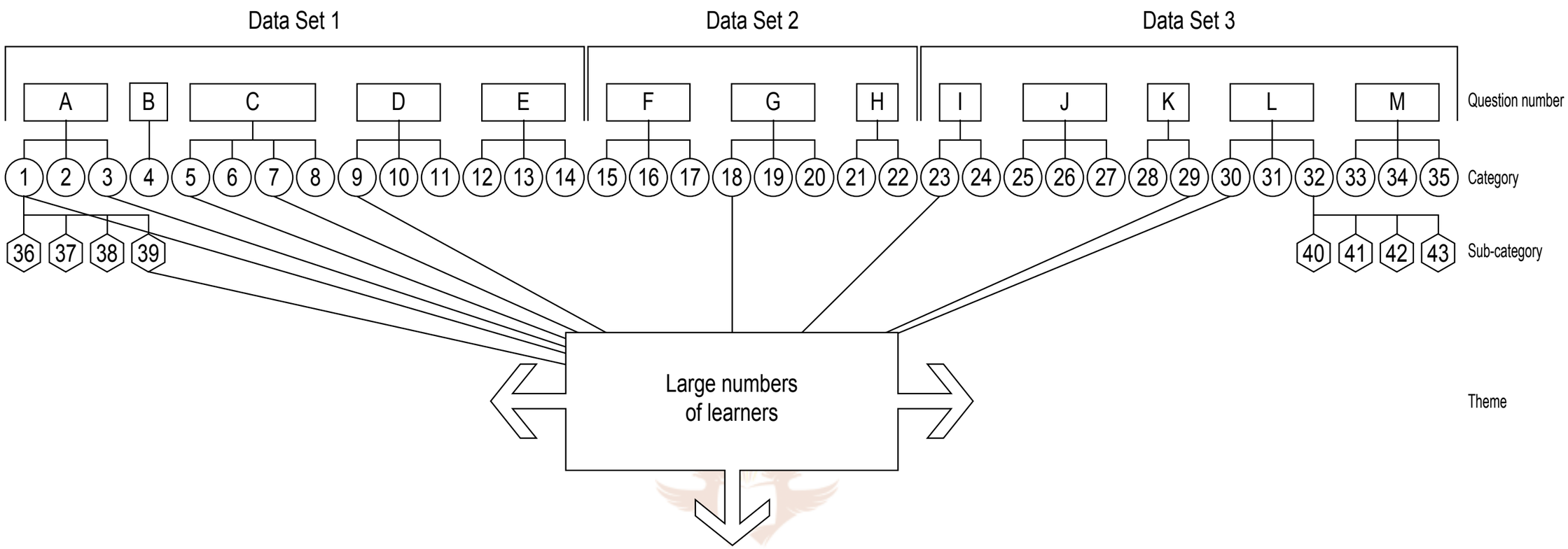

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Figure 6.3: Large numbers of learners

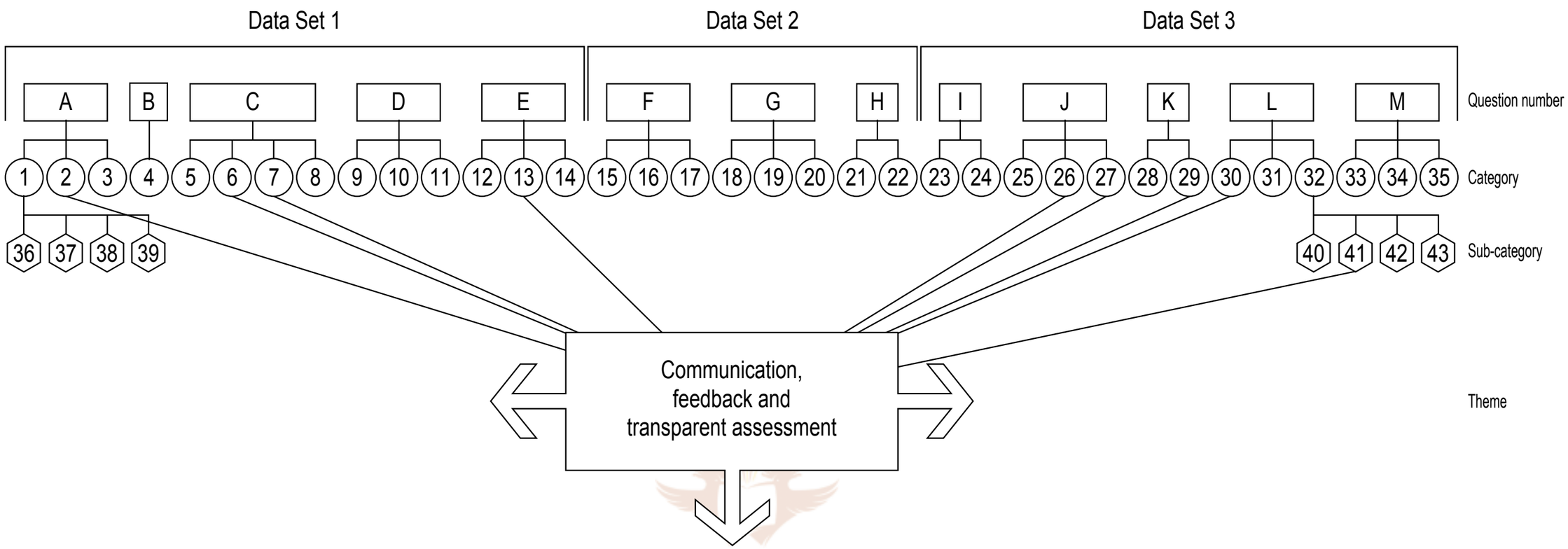

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Figure 6.4: Communication, feedback and transparent assessment

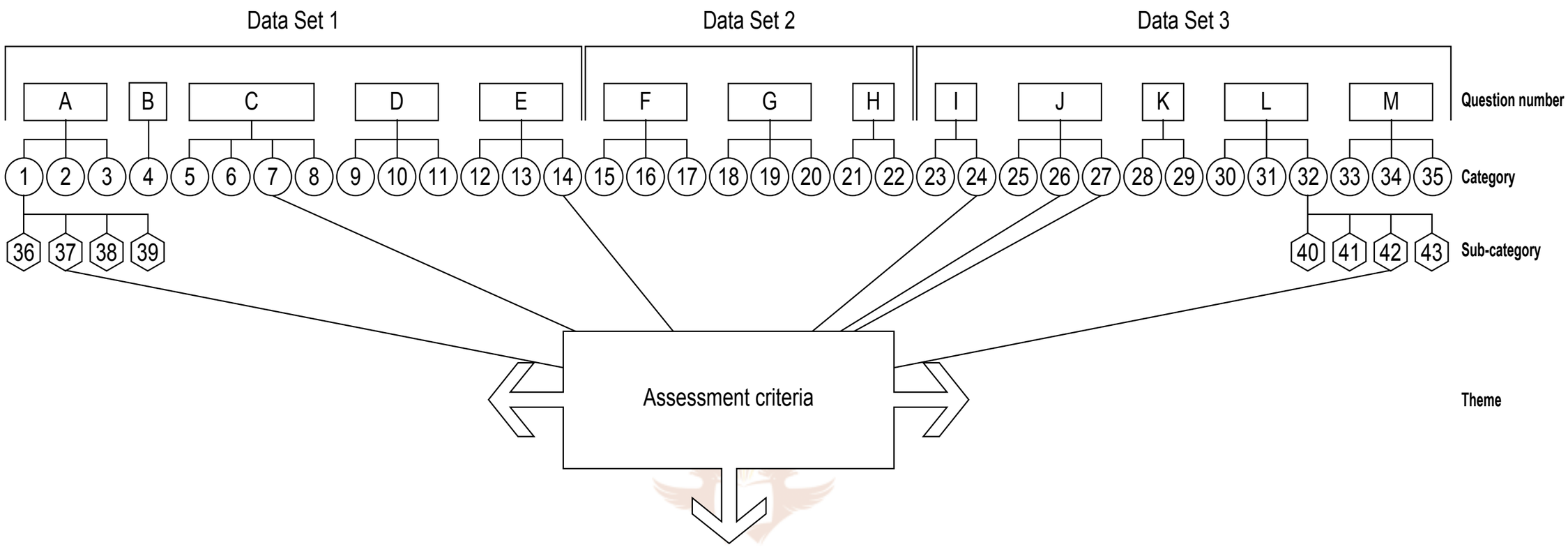

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Figure 6.5: Assessment criteria

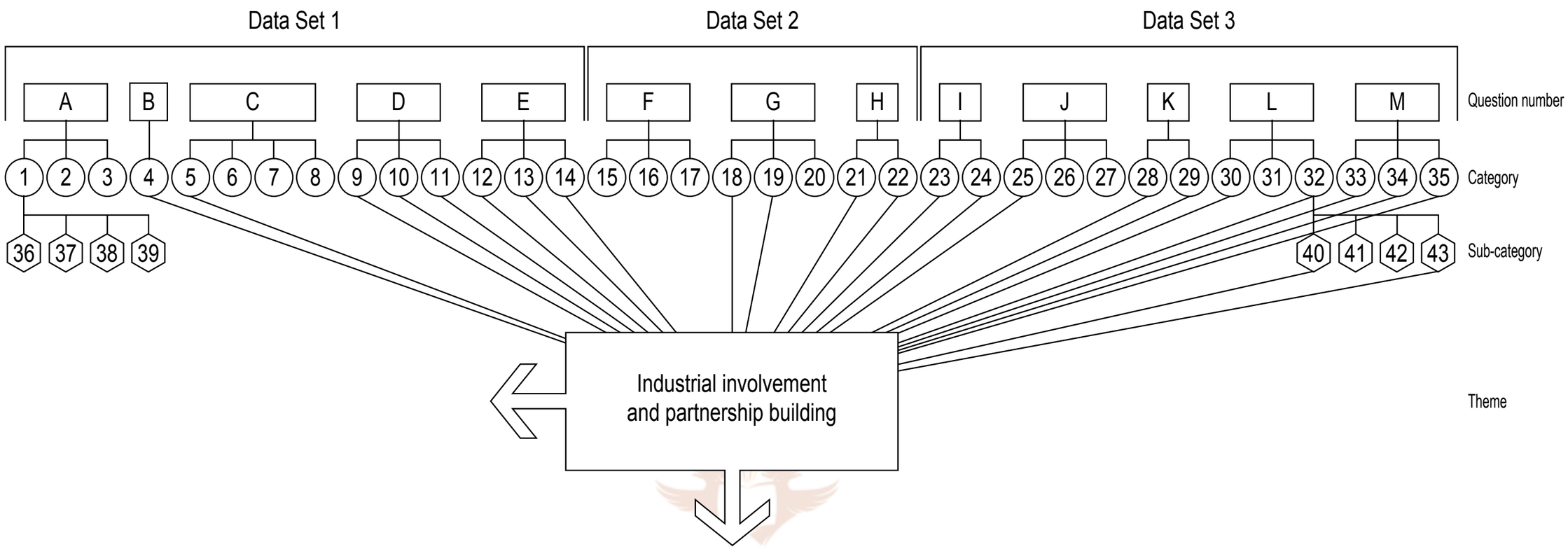

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Figure 6.6: Industrial involvement and partnership building

6.3 ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK IN HRM

The theoretical assessment framework in chapter 2 (section 2.7.3) as well as the interpretation, integration and conclusions and preliminary recommendations of the Data Sets 1-3 (section 6.2) form the foundations for the assessment framework in HRM. The framework includes the purpose and scope, rationale, key concepts, non-negotiable principles, practical implications or procedures flowing from those principles as well as prerequisites that need to be in place for the implementation of those assessment principles. The non-negotiable assessment principles are also accepted as the departure point. One principle influences another principle. Moreover, the principles offer leeway for finer interpretation, since the contexts of universities of technology differ.

6.3.1 Purpose and scope

The purpose of this framework is to inform the policy makers with respect to the current teaching and assessment policy at technikons (now known as universities of technology). It also serves to inform assessment practice for the lecturers and departmental heads in the programme group HRM. Finally, the assessment framework informs industry, a key role player, about how they can and should be involved with the training and assessment of the learners. The framework is aimed at undergraduate learners in HRM.

6.3.2 Rationale

According to the alternative assessment paradigm (section 2.2), assessment must improve learning. Assessment is no longer added on at the end of the learning. Both learning for assessment and learning from assessment ought to form part of learning programmes. Furthermore, the HE landscape has changed to provide access to more learners.

The qualitative data divulge some strengths, weaknesses and problems in the assessment practice of universities of technology in the programmme group HRM and the assessment of experiential learning in HRM in industry. The assessment framework in HRM is seen as the ideal assessment practice in order to inform current practice so that adaptations concerning assessment can be made that will support learning. The perspectives of the learners, lecturers, departmental heads and policy makers at universities of technology and participants from industry were integrated to form a new and comprehensive framework. Each target group brings a different perspective to the framework. The large numbers of the learners influence the framework.

6.3.3 Key concepts

The key concepts were defined in chapter 2. The following key concepts inform the framework:

- *Assessment* is a structured process to gather evidence and make judgements about the learners' performances (section 2.3.1).
- *Assessment criteria* are statements that describe the standard at which learners must perform the actions, roles, knowledge, understanding, skill, values and attitudes stated in the outcomes (section 2.4.6).
- An *assessment tool* is any instrument that the educators use when assessing and it is appropriate to the assessment method (section 2.6.4.3).
- *Authentic assessment* deals with the assessment of complex performances and higher-order skills in real life contexts and is therefore contextualised (section 2.4.3).
- *Continuous assessment* means assessing the learners regularly in a way that integrates teaching and assessment. It employs feedback from each assessment to inform further teaching and the construction of the next assessment (section 2.4.4).

- *Criterion-referenced assessment* means that the learner's performance is assessed in terms of a particular description of the performance (section 2.4.6).
- In *deep learning*, the intention is to understand, with active learners maintaining the task structure (section 2.4.1).
- *Diagnostic assessment* diagnoses the strengths and weaknesses of learners (section 2.4.5.1); the learners' prior knowledge to plan learning experiences based on existing knowledge; whether the learners have the potential to gain access to a specific learning programme and informs the required remedial action to enable the progress of the learners.
- *Formal assessment* is agreed upon assessment events between assessors and the learners (section 2.4.5.3).
- *Formative assessment* aims to provide feedback to the learners about their progress (section 2. 4.5.2).
- *Group assessment* means that the learners are required to work in teams and they may be assessed as a group or individually (section 2. 6.2.4).
- *Informal assessment* happens spontaneously and incidentally. There is no formal plan for the collection of evidence (section 2.4.5.3).
- *Integrated assessment* assesses applied competence, which is a combination of practical competence, foundational competence and reflexive competence (section 2.3.4).
- *Peer assessment* refers to assessment of the learners by their peers (section 2. 6.2.3).
- *Self-assessment* means that the learners assess themselves (section 2. 6.2.1).
- *Summative assessment* aims to provide judgement on the learner's achievement (section 2. 4.5.3).

6.3.4 Principles

The assessment principles followed by their practical implications, procedures and prerequisites are discussed:

6.3.4.1 Assessment is integrated with learning and should concentrate on deep, active learning that applies higher order cognitive skills

Integrated assessment within and across modules must be achieved (section 2.7.4.1). Learning and assessment at universities of technology and in industry ought to be integrated as well.

Assessment affects the manner in which the learners approach their learning. A deep approach is necessary for meaningful learning, understanding, relation of ideas and higher order thinking skills like critical thinking to occur. The assessment tasks and the learning outcomes are related. The assessment design ought to be included in programme and module development. Those involved in delivering the programme and module should consent to the assessment design.

The academic staff may keep the following implications and procedures in mind:

- Ensure the application of critical analysis in the assessment tasks.
- Guard against an overload of assessment tasks and assessment methods that involve memorisation. The learners and academic staff should not feel overwhelmed by all the assessment at the cost of understanding. Faculties and departments may clarify the number of assessment sessions.
- Interaction with co-learners by means of group work and problem solving activities will lead to more insight and stimulation of ideas and the relation thereof, and less focus on being fact-bound.

- Use appropriate assessment methods and explicit assessment to promote deep learning criteria that focus on the assessment requirements.
- Match the lecturer feedback with the deep learning approach. Convey to the learners the importance of understanding, application and critical thought in learning and use corresponding assessment criteria. Explain the assessment requirements clearly and guide the learners in the process of completing the tasks.
- Include opportunities for depth of learning in programme and module planning, assessment and feedback.
- Apply assessment methods that promote deep learning like case studies, open book examinations, portfolios, journals and projects.
- As a prerequisite, assessment is not considered to be an add-on at the completion of an undergraduate HRM qualification. Assessment supports learning and is undertaken to determine the applied competence achieved in authentic situations. The assessment of experiential learning should be part of the curriculum and learning programme development.

6.3.4.2 Assessment needs to be authentic and contextualised

The learners actively perform real-life tasks and apply higher order thinking skills. Authentic assessment is contextualised (2.7.4.2). Depending on the purpose of the assessment, decontextualised knowledge is still in order to be assessed as well. Authentic and contextualised assessment takes place at the universities of technology and in industry. Although it has its limitations, simulated situations, projects, reports and case studies may be introduced in the class-room. These methods can be relevant for the real world.

By implication the assessors need to consider assessment contexts that relate to real life situations. All learning activities do not have to be authentic and it is not necessary to assess all authentic tasks. Experiential learning realises several benefits for the different role players (section 2.4.3). The implication is for

industry to provide authentic and contextual assessment of the learners. They learn work place behaviours and skills that they will not learn on campus.

Guidelines and procedures that may be implemented are:

- Use typical South African case studies as far as possible. Adapt existing overseas case studies or compile new case studies to incorporate SA situations and relevant legislation.
- Choose topics for simulations that are relevant to the work environment and HRM.
- Build a partnership between the universities of technology and industry by means of mutual co-operation, communication and co-ordination, so that the learners can be exposed to experiential learning. Communicate openly all aspects regarding the assessment of the experiential learning programme. Provide regular feedback reports. Arrange meetings before and after experiential learning programmes to discuss the assessment needs and expectations. Conduct effective planning and project management. A project plan, including the outcomes expected, assessment criteria, resources needed, responsible assessors and target dates is of the utmost importance.
- Involve all the role players required to initiate and sustain authentic and contextual assessment, namely the learners, lecturers, departmental heads, policy makers from HRM and industry representatives as well as union representatives from industry. An infrastructure is necessary so that administrative staff attends to the administrative dimension and academic staff supports the academic component. The learners should attend the experiential learning programme and complete all the assessment tasks under the guidance and supervision of the mentors. The academic staff should plan and review the assessment of the experiential learning programme and where possible, with the necessary resources, visit the learners in the work place. The policy makers need to support the implementation of the experiential learning programme and forward the

resources for it. It is desirable for the unions to attend all meetings so that they will be aware of what experiential learning entails and its benefits and not feel threatened by it. A code of conduct for all parties needs to be stipulated for legal protection and to create a safe and conducive environment for learning.

- As a prerequisite, the recruitment policy of universities of technology may make provision for the appointment of lecturers with some industry experience so that they will be able to assess experiential learning.

6.3.4.3 Assessment needs to be continuous

The lecturers should avoid continual assessment. The lecturers are not always the only judges of the quality of the learning. CASS applies different approaches and the feedback from one assessment advises the construction of the next (section 2.7.4.3). The lecturers must combine different assessment methods to collect evidence.

The implication is to apply continuous formative and summative assessment methods.

The following procedures may be applied:

- Motivate CASS on educational grounds. Top management must approve it.
- Include in the learning guides the motivation for CASS.
- Apply formative and summative assessment methods in a continuous way.

6.3.4.4 Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment purposes should be clear and include formal and informal assessment

The learners must know whether the lecturers will assess them in a formative or summative manner. The consent of the learners is required before the results

originally gathered for formative assessment are used for summative assessment (2.7.4.4) Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment purposes must include formal and informal assessments. The academic staff must communicate the purposes to the learners.

Some implications flow forth from this principle:

- Consider the data from diagnostic assessment when planning programmes and modules and organising supplementary learner support.
- Include diagnostic, summative and formative purposes in the assessment practices/activities and announce these to the learners.
- Plan the assessment methods and the timing of the assessment in accordance with the different assessment purposes.
- Award more priority to teaching that is in alignment with formative assessment.
- Keep formative and summative purposes separate, otherwise learning for assessment will dominate.
- Limit the number of summative assessments. The move is away from the traditional, summative approach to formative and integrated assessment that has greater educational value.

In view of large classes, the lecturers and departmental heads may choose from the following options as procedures for this principle:

- Convey the different purposes of assessment by means of learning guides, class discussions and the web-learning environment to the learners.
- In large classes formative assessment does not have to be time-consuming. Apply rapid formative assessment methods.
- Finally, learner participation in the assessment process is desirable. The learners may apply peer-assessment, group assessment and self-assessment. The ideal is to start these assessments informally and in a less

structured way till the learners become familiar with the situation. Apply group assessments formatively and summatively. The learners can also apply self-assessment of experiential learning in order to prevent a top-down approach to assessment.

The prerequisite for this principle is that the lecturers and the learners need knowledge about the administering of rapid formative assessment methods. They must understand how to prepare and implement self- assessment, group assessment and peer assessment and corresponding assessment criteria.

6.3.4.5 Assessment needs to be criterion-referenced and relevant assessment criteria need to be identified and applied

Assessment is criterion-referenced (2.7.4.5). The criteria are derived from the learning outcomes. The criteria must be explicitly stated, clear, transparent, understandable, exact and at the right level. The criteria are essential to apply self-assessment and peer assessment.

The implications are to negotiate the criteria between the learners and the assessors at the universities of technology and in industry or the assessors at both places should develop them. Clearly communicate the criteria to the learners.

The following procedures may be followed:

- Make the assessment criteria explicit by incorporating it in written format in the learning guides of the learners. It is an assessment right of the learners to know these criteria before attempting tasks.
- Draw the attention of the learners to these criteria by reading them out loud in class. Stipulate the assessment criteria for every assessment task in writing after negotiation thereof between the learners and lecturers in class. The

parties can reach agreement verbally in class and the lecturer can finalise the criteria in a document. Although time-consuming, the learners can generate criteria in groups or individually on flipcharts posted in the class for all to see and to comment on. Rather spend more time on the compiling of the assessment criteria, so that the learners will understand better how to apply them.

- Award a small portion of the marks for submitting assessment criteria in groups and another small portion for clear formulation of those criteria. Where assessment criteria are not easily understood, explain the concepts or terminology so that both parties reach a common understanding. Assessment criteria mentioned up front will reduce unrealistic expectations by the learners or the lecturers.

Feedback on any assessment tasks must include reference as to how the learners complied with the outcomes and assessment criteria. In large classes written feedback may occur on a pro forma sheet and verbal feedback may occur by discussing general mistakes that occurred.

After consultation with industry about the curriculum and criteria of the experiential learning programme, university representatives ought to convey, discuss and present those criteria in writing to the learners in an orientation session and guide for experiential learning before they go to industry. Weighting can be done according to the frequency, importance and level of complexity of the tasks in HRM to be performed. The idea is to avoid isolated assessment. Sound assessment criteria will prevent the learners performing mundane tasks.

As a prerequisite, relevant criteria need to be applied and set by all parties. A department whose sole purpose is to handle experiential learning and formal communication structures must be in place to enable consultation with industry with respect to the assessment criteria.

6.3.4.6 Assessment and assessment rights need to be transparent to learners and assessors

The assessment rights (2.7.4.6) of the learners need to be respected. It must be transparent to all parties in the assessment process. The assessment rights are:

- The learners have the right to be assessed by a trained and competent assessor. No-one who is not familiar with the theory and practice of assessment, should be allowed to assess.
- The learners have the right to be informed of assessment requirements (for example the standards, expectations, outcomes, assessment criteria, time and date and venues). They also have to be assisted in their preparation for the assessment session.
- The learners have the right not to be subjected to excessive assessment for the record only. The lecturers should apply continuous and more informal formative assessment.
- The learners have the right to relevant assessment: applied competence remains the focus of assessment. The assessment should also be oriented towards the vocation for which they are preparing themselves.
- The learners have the right to constructive feedback and to view scripts or receive a memorandum. The lecturers should take into account providing the learners with a memorandum as the leave the examination venue or shortly thereafter.
- The learners have the right to be protected against improper disclosure of results. Confidentiality needs to be maintained in order to prevent embarrassment about unflattering remarks in the presence of others.
- The learners have the right to formally lodge a complaint. A grievance or appeals procedure should be in place to resolve assessment disputes. The procedure should include an indication of how many re-assessments will take place.

The implications are:

- Each right should expand on the responsibilities involved for all the relevant stakeholders in the assessment process.
- These rights and resultant responsibilities ought to be incorporated in the assessment policy and assessment strategy of the universities of technology and industry.
- The rights and responsibilities are applicable to the university of technology environment and the work environment during experiential learning.

The following procedural guidelines may be used:

- Include the learners' rights in the learning guide for the programme or module as well as the experiential learning material.
- Incorporate a reference in the mission and vision statement of the HRM department or programme group that these rights will be respected. The statement could hang on a wall or appear on notice boards in the department or relevant faculty where all parties can see it and the academic staff setting an example should demonstrate it.
- Discuss these rights with the academic staff and the learners and their representatives in an orientation session. The rights as well as concurring responsibilities of all parties in the assessment process must be conveyed to the learners.

The learners ought to have access to their assessment results on campus as well as in industry before the latter submits them to the universities of technology. The learners could sign a statement in this regard.

The prerequisite is for an enabling, accessible, assessment process and quality assurance of the assessment practice to be in place.

6.3.4.7 Assessment workload needs to be realistic to learners and assessors

The assessment workload must be realistic (2.7.4.7) and fair to all parties in the assessment process. The lecturers and departmental heads face the realities of big groups of learners, lots of marking and a specific time allocation to the module of the subject. The learners encounter the volume of content to study, due dates for assessment sessions and a timetable. What is realistic to them may differ from what is realistic to the academic staff. Faculties and departments need to stipulate in their teaching and assessment policy what all the concepts mean, taking big groups of learners into consideration.

The implications are:

- Modify assessment practices so that the workload will be realistic and fair.
- Communicate with other lecturing colleagues in the same department about due dates for assessments.
- Distribute the workload uniformly across the set of modules in the department.

Increasing learner numbers lead to assessment overload. The following procedures are recommended to alleviate the assessment overload:

- Implement staggered deadlines.
- Co-ordinate assessment timetables. The lecturers may submit their due dates for assessment sessions in a departmental meeting for everyone to comment on and reach consensus. Academic calendars must be heeded in the planning process.
- Publish assessment schedules beforehand. The learners may receive in their learning guides at the beginning of each module or semester their due dates for assessment sessions.

- Implement supportive administrative assessment systems. Assistant assessors may take in assessment tasks. Venues need to be booked beforehand with the written statement and understanding that these arrangements cannot be changed on impulse. Sufficient motivation for any changes must be provided and agreed to by all parties. Inputs from all levels of staff are required before any changes are made.
- Include an admission by academic managers that assessment is an integral part of an academic's workload. This acknowledgement may be stated explicitly in a departmental meeting and be reflected in the minutes of the meeting. Top management may also issue a statement in this respect. Assessment should be one of the key performance areas of the performance management system of the academic staff for which they will be held accountable.
- Streamline assessment (for example the use of technology to provide feedback individually and to the whole class, assignment reports or lists of regular comments with numbers).
- Consult with other lecturing staff about the number assessment sessions and the weighting of assessment tasks.

It is desirable to create opportunities in class for the learners to participate in setting due dates with their lecturers. Concerning large classes, the academic staff need to be more directive and give due dates after consultation with their other colleagues. When the dates are not staggered, the learners must have the chance to raise their concerns before the arrangements are finalised and sent to the faculty and the administrative department. The lecturers must apply rapid formative assessment methods. It is further recommended that they apply peer-assessment, group assessment and self-assessment that will decrease the assessment workload. All parties need to apply effective time management.

6.3.4.8 Assessment should include a wide range of methods and techniques and tools

Appropriate formative and summative assessment methods and techniques are used to assess the learners. Various assessment methods must be applied (2.7.4.8). Although methods that promote reproduction or memorisation as part of learning may still be used, the focus is not on those methods exclusively. They must be supplemented by alternative methods.

The implications are to create opportunities in which various assessment methods are applied and use multiple choice questions in combination with other assessment methods. The assessment purpose determines the methods and techniques and must be communicated to the learners beforehand.

The procedures may involve the following:

- Use open book examinations and case studies that involve all the HRM modules to achieve integrated assessment within and across modules. Share the setting and marking of the case studies and open book examinations between the lecturers, according to lecturing specialisation areas, and/or assistant assessors.
- Include HRM book reviews or article reviews as part of assignments, group presentations and tests or examinations. Well-written critical reviews are shorter in length to assess than descriptive essays that merely reproduce facts or information.
- Assess applied competence by means of continuous summative assessment and continuous formative assessment. The lecturers may sign a statement that they have received and read the assessment policy that prescribes CASS to be applied.

- Explore the possibility of using methods that have been neglected before: poster displays, exhibitions. portfolios, journals. The assessment criteria for poster displays must be clear.
- Provide reflective questions to assist the learners in their journal writing. Familiarise the academic staff and the learners in a briefing session with the compilation process of a journal. All parties should receive guidelines and have examples at hand. It is desirable to create opportunities to practise journal writing and give feedback. Co-learners may also provide feedback.
- Use case studies, role-plays and presentations for formal formative and summative purposes.
- Apply role-plays in groups that cover different modules at the same time to accomplish integrated assessment and save time in assessment.
- Establish a climate of trust before the commencement of role-plays. Negotiate the ground rules (for instance to respect each other's learning attempts) and learning outcomes. Explain the rationale behind the role-plays and how they link with the work environment. Basing the role-plays on real life will make it more realistic to the learners. The lecturers as facilitators need good facilitation and feedback skills. The facilitators must adopt a caring, sensitive approach and provide a lot of structure. Give support and praise for good points. The learners may complete a practice exercise first. The more meaningful the exercise is to the learners, the less problematic the situation will be. The learners can share their feedback in groups.
- Use authentic contextualised assessment methods in the classroom such as open book examinations, case studies, portfolios, simulations, journals, exhibits and projects. Examination questions can include problem-solving situations that reflect the real world.
- Include authentic contextualised assessment methods in industry such as portfolios, reports, logs and work samples. Portfolios may be in an electronic format. External registered assessors may assess the portfolios given the necessary government funding for their efforts. Another possibility is that the mentors or supervisors sign the completed projects and reports, while the

lecturers that have industry experience assess those projects and reports. The mentors may also assess the assessment tasks before submitting them to the universities of technology. Experiential learning should count towards the year mark and in gaining examination entry. The learners may rate the suitability of organisations by means of a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. It is recommended that the learners apply self-assessment of their experiential learning.

- Award less weighting to conventional examinations. For instance, an examination mark may not be more than 25% of the year mark. Multiple choice questions must supplement other assessment methods and, for example, may not count more than 10%.
- Explore different ways to assess specific assessment methods, for instance, revealed examinations or one week examinations. Furthermore, the learners may hand in a number of assessment tasks e.g. five book reviews of which the lecturers assess only a certain number at random. Be economical with assessment.

As a prerequisite, knowledge about how to prepare and structure peer assessments, group assessments and self-assessments will empower the lecturers and the learners to apply them without hesitation. Both parties need to understand the rationale and assessment criteria for implementing these assessments. The lecturers should inform the learners clearly about the expectations and to what purposes the self-assessments and peer assessments will be put. A gradual introduction and exposure to relevant guidelines in the application of these assessments to the learners and lecturers are required to reduce the resistance to these assessments. The learners need to see their lecturers supporting self-assessment, group assessment and peer assessment, first, before they will feel confident enough to apply them. The whole process ought to be carefully managed. The marks can be calculated in different ways.

6.3.4.9 Assessment needs to provide communication and feedback to support the learning process

Communication and constructive feedback need to occur throughout the assessment process (2.7.4.9). The learners need to know beforehand the time, venue, content to study, assessment methods, assessment requirements, outcomes to be assessed, duration of the assessment session, identity of the assessors, what type of evidence to gather and the resources. Feedback is timely, relevant, descriptive, specific and in the learners' interests. Feedback must include suggestions for improving performance.

The implications are to match the different forms of feedback with the different purposes of assessment and to communicate in a way that will enhance learning. The lecturers need to teach the learners how to give, receive and use the feedback.

In large classes it is difficult to provide feedback. Guidelines or procedures for the lecturers before the assessment include:

- Provide full briefing instructions.
- Clarify the assessment criteria.
- Reduce repetitive assessments and reduce the time spent on feedback.
- Review the modular system in order to reduce the assessment requirements.

Recommended procedures during and after the assessment include:

- Provide general rather than individual feedback.
- Use checklists, computer-based assessments, self-and peer-assessment, group assessment, statement banks and feedback sheets or a standard pro-forma to save time. Ensure that only the learner registration number appears on all feedback sheets to ensure confidentiality (an assessment right).

- Conduct and mark assignments in class. The lecturers and the learners may act as assessors. Instead of the learners asking the lecturer for feedback about their assignments while still writing them, they can consult their peers informally for their opinion. A feedback sheet issued with the assignments beforehand will enable the learners to assess themselves and to submit this sheet with their completed assignment. The self-assessment can be used formatively as feedback or count as a small percentage in the case of summative assessment.
- Provide overall feedback from industry and the universities of technology to the learners verbally, in class, about their experiential learning. A department of co-operative education must communicate with industry before, during and after the assessment of experiential learning. Administrative staff may provide a written statement that they have completed experiential learning successfully. This declaration may appear on their graduation certificates.

6.3.5 Interaction between the assessment principles

The framework includes nine assessment principles that interact. The assessment purposes (section 6.3.4.4) influence the assessment methods (section 6.3.4.8) and reflect the assessment criteria (section 6.3.4.5). The assessment purposes (section 6.3.4.4) need to be communicated (section 6.3.4.9) to the learners. The formative assessment purpose (section 6.3.4.4) leads to deep learning. (section 6.3.4.1). An assessment right is to be assessed by trained assessors (section 6.3.4.6) that apply the assessment methods (section 6.3.4.8). Certain methods (section 6.3.4.8) promote authentic and contextualised assessment (section 6.3.4.2) and deep learning (section 6.3.4.1) that links with integrated assessment (section 6.3.4.1). The assessment methods need to be communicated to the learners. CASS (section 6.3.4.3) connects with formative and summative assessment purposes (section 6.3.4.4) Communication and feedback (section 6.3.4.9) must be appropriate for deep learning (section 6.3.4.1). Assessment is criterion-referenced (section 6.3.4.5) and an assessment

right (section 6.3.4.6) is to know the assessment criteria (section 6.3.4.5). Knowledge of the criteria (section 6.3.4.5) enhances the transparency of the assessment (section 6.3.4.6) and connects with communication and feedback (section 6.3.4.9) that occur according to the outcomes and criteria (section 6.3.4.5). The assessment right not to be over-assessed (section 6.3.4.6) ties in with a realistic assessment workload (section 6.3.4.7) and deep learning (section 6.3.4.1). Having access to examination scripts is an assessment right (section 6.3.4.6) that connects with communication and feedback (section 6.3.4.9). The right to be protected against improper disclosure of results (section 6.3.4.6) links with the provision of communication and feedback (section 6.3.4.9).

The interaction of and the relationship between the principles lead to a dynamic, coherent framework. All the principles apply to the universities of technology environment and industry. The latter is an important assessment partner. The themes are further addressed in the framework.

6.4 ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Although several preliminary recommendations have been made in the foregoing assessment framework in HRM, some broad recommendations are applicable:

- Adapt assessment policies to include the assessment rights of the learners and the role of industry as an assessment partner.
- Training in assessment for the learners, lecturers, departmental heads and policy makers is essential.
- Training in how to write their own case studies that reflect the South African environment for the departmental heads must take place.
- Training and dissemination of information concerning CASS and how to implement it in HRM for the academic staff should be implemented.
- Training in the administering of rapid formative assessment methods for the lecturers is essential.

- A workshop to inform the lecturers about how to formulate learning outcomes and assessment criteria should occur. In an orientation session at the beginning of the year the learners must be told about their right to have access to the assessment criteria beforehand. All role players must be informed beforehand about the expectations and assessment requirements and receive a clear brief with indicators of satisfactory performance.
- Training on alternative assessment, a recognition of the training and assessment role of industry and the assessment policy needs to be implemented.
- Experiential learning as a component of co-operative education must become an integral part of the programme of HRM. Co-operative education practices should be monitored against approved standards. Benchmarking will enable the development of a customised model once experiential learning in HRM becomes compulsory.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Financial and time constraints limited the interviews with participants from industry to the Gauteng area. Participants from other provinces were excluded.

6.6 SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The researcher investigated a topic that concerns recent changes in HE. The theoretical perspectives were obtained by means of a thorough literature study. The empirical data were obtained in a scientific manner. The study contains an extensive and comprehensive empirical component. Perspectives from five different target groups were integrated against the background of a sound theoretical basis. The target groups were taken from industry and academic environments. The HE participants represented the higher and lower levels of staff and also the learners.

The study further investigated the role of industry in the training and assessment of the learners in HRM at universities of technology. Training is necessary to formalise the role of industry in learner assessment and to formulate and implement the policy with respect to compulsory experiential learning.

The assessment framework in HRM at universities of technology is established within a South African context that has been refined by means of empirical research and data. The framework integrated the needs, weaknesses and strengths from different perspectives of the different participants. It is a flexible framework that provides direction in terms of the assessment principles to be followed. The framework is not as prescriptive as policy although it aims to inform the assessment policy. Room for finer interpretations by the universities of technology within their contexts exists.

The findings of the present study are of importance to the following bodies:

- The universities of technology sector of HE in South Africa and their management: the former CTP's make assumptions with regard to the practice of co-operative education by former technikons, but the findings in this study give a different view. The study may further have value for comprehensive institutions. The framework indicates the direction in terms of principles to be adhered to.
- CHE, HEQC and SAQA: the findings suggest that the national process with regard to the assessment of learners at universities of technology needs further inquiry to address the needs and problems with respect to the assessment of the learners.
- Department of Labour, Department of Education, the South African Revenue Services and the National Treasury: provision for funding co-operative education programmes and its assessment needs to be considered.
- Department of Labour, the various Sectoral Education and Training Authorities and the South African Board for Personnel Practice: co-operative

education programmes can make a valuable contribution to the education, training and development of the learners at universities of technology, but need to be planned, prepared, implemented and assessed in an appropriate manner.

- Department of Labour, Department of Education and political parties with regard to the national human resource development strategy and skills development policies: co-operative education and its assessment can address inequalities of the past and play a role in the reform of HE.

6.7 FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

Some research topics and/or problem areas may be explored to supplement this study: For example, in view of the concerns the NPHE expressed about graduate outputs (section 1.3.3), universities of technology need to streamline their assessment of the learners in HRM. Formative assessment may improve throughput. An intervention and a comparative study about the impact of formative assessment in one or more programme groups are recommended. Universities of technology do not have unlimited resources and improved throughput due to formative assessment may lead to increased subsidies.

This study investigated the assessment role of industry. Further research is required concerning the role of industry within universities of technology with regard to other aspects such as programme development, and facilitation of learning. How industry can be involved should be examined from the higher levels of management to the learners.

Since only some universities of technology have co-operative education in place, the guidelines and specific assessment criteria may be formulated individually or collaboratively. A comparative study may indicate differences in this regard.

Further investigation into the value of collaborative educational initiatives or partnerships between universities of technology and industry with regard to assessment is recommended. The present study found that major difficulties are experienced in finding sufficient experiential learning placement opportunities for the learners. It appears that interested partners must be nurtured before the assessment of learning can occur.

A quantitative investigation(s) into one or more of the themes identified in the present study should be undertaken.

6.8 SUMMARY

The findings and recommendations were outlined. The themes for Data Sets 1, 2 and 3 were discussed and then integrated. The main findings are that content-based assessments take place and that the lecturers do not know how to apply rapid formative assessment methods in view of large classes. An assessment framework was developed that incorporated the data from chapters 4 and 5 as well as the theory and framework from chapter 2. Future research areas were pointed out. The contribution of this study as well as the limitations thereof, were mentioned.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CASS	Continuous assessment
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CRA	Criterion-referenced assessment
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
FBM	Faculty of Business Management
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education institutions
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HETB	Higher Education and Training Band
HRM	Human Resource Management
NRA	Norm-referenced assessment
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBA	Outcomes-based assessment
OBET	Outcomes-based education and training
SA	South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SERTEC	Certification Council for Technikon Education, now replaced by the Higher Education and Training Quality Committee (HEQC).

INTERVIEW: INDUSTRY
GAUTENG HEALTH DEPARTMENT
14 JANUARY 2002

Interviewer: Thank you for participating in this interview for research purposes about the development of an assessment framework for Human Resource Management at technikons. Are you still willing to participate in this interview?

Participant: Yes I am.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. As I mentioned the interview is anonymously. Your name and the name of your employer will not be mentioned. And there are no right or wrong answers. You can just give freely your opinion. Let's start with the first question. **What role does your industry or organisation play with regard to the training of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?**

Participant: The role that the organisation plays, is that we do accept placement for students to do their compulsory experiential training and we then also assist them putting together a programme to ensure that they meet the criteria that is set by the technikon and they do cover the issues that the technikon outline in their programme. And furthermore, we then assist the students as far as we can to … to ensure that, you know, they do cover areas, even if those areas are not included in their programme, but they do cover related areas that we provide services in.

Interviewer: Alright, thank you. You mentioned placement and then that you set up a programme. Can you tell me more about this programme?

Participant: What happens is the technikon sends the students with their own outline of the issues that they need to cover. So what we do is, we look at the

issues that … the services that we provide and develop a programme around that to ensure that the students is able to cover those areas and to outline when will the students be participating in that area, at what time students will be and which days and who will be accompanying or assisting the students and mentoring them in that area, so that we are able to place them according to the people that we have available at that time.

Interviewer: Thank you. How do you assist and mentor these students?

Participant: Well, the technikon provides what they call a confidential evaluation report that the mentor should then complete after the training and submit to the technikon that they, out of that evaluation, they then allocate a certain percentage of the marks for that particular module. So what we do, is from time to time I would sit with the students and talk about what they have learned, how does that compare with what they have learned in class in terms of the differences between the practical and the theory and how well were they able to apply the theory and what difficulties they have, and you know, what additional practical training would they want to receive in that respect, and then I would then be able to sit down and look at the questionnaire and tick and give my comments around the outcome of our assessment interview. So sort of generally the students are placed for between three to four weeks. So after every, after covering every area we would sit down and we would discuss it and we would look at how well did they do. We would talk to the person who was following them, who was assisting them in that area and we will then come up with an evaluation.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little more about this questionnaire and confidential report? Anything you would like to add?

Participant: The questionnaire covers the student's willingness to participate, the student's willingness to abide by the rules of the organisation in terms of

working times. Do they come at the same time with the rest of the employees, and their willingness to learn and participate in practical projects and it also covers their attitude and their interpersonal relations that they have had with staff during their placement there and their knowledge and understanding of certain concepts. So those are the areas that are covered there and those … that is how we do the evaluation in terms of these specific questions that the evaluation would ask and then if there is any additional information that can be given, we then give it as comments.

Interviewer: So that is the confidential report.

Participant: It is a confidential report.

Interviewer: And the questionnaire itself that you were talking about?

Participant: The questionnaire is already set by the technikon. The questions are there and you have your rating scale that has already been developed and then you only indicate there like I said, you know, furthermore. Your comments then would be the additional information that you want to give.

Interviewer: Okay. And as you mentioned you tick?

Participant: You tick.

Interviewer: On that questionnaire?

Participant: You would tick, you would tick. Then at the end of a group of questions, there would then be space for you to give comments and you would then give your comments in terms of your ticks and then either you know, explaining why you ticked that way and giving additional information in terms of

what can be done to improve in areas where you feel the student needs more support.

Interviewer: Thank you, that is clear to me. Is there anything you would like to add to question one before we proceed to question two?

Participant: No, I think I have said a lot already (laugh).

Interviewer: Okay. Question two: **What role does your industry or organisation play with regard to the assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?** I think you already mentioned a confidential report and the questionnaire. Is there anything else that you would like to add here?

Participant: There isn't much role that we play in terms of assessment except for the confidential evaluation report and other than that, it is just a question of if one as a HR Manager would have wanted to send additional comments to the co-ordinator, they would be able to do that, because we would have all the contact details of the co-ordinator. So he would be able to, if he wanted to raise something else with the co-ordinator he would be able to write and the co-ordinator may respond to some of the issues that he raised. I think that is as far as we can go.

Interviewer: You mentioned the co-ordinator. Can you just describe it to me, the co-ordinator?

Participant: What happens is, usually there would be a co-ordinator for placing students in HRM and that co-ordinator will then be responsible for ensuring that the proper documentation is supplied to the organisation, the letters of request and everything else and the confidential report that is to be submitted, all the

documents are there. Then the co-ordinator is the person who receives the report back. So that is a contact point, because you can't give it to the student.

Interviewer: Okay.

Participant: You send it straight to the co-ordinator. So if you have any issues to raise you would then write any letter from the organisation, say, in terms of the placement, these are our concerns and this is what we want to raise and then the co-ordinator would subsequently respond.

Interviewer: Thank you. Can we go on to question three? (Participant nods) **How effective is the involvement of your industry or organisation with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?**

Participant: In as far as we are involved in the process I think the involvement has proved to be very effective. Particularly in assisting students to be able to integrate theory and practice together, because you realise during the placement that what students know, is not necessary what happens in practice. For example in areas such as performance evaluation. They would find it more difficult relating to the practice, for example that area, because of, the theory would be more general and it would not specify what currently are the tools or the strategies or the methods that are being used in the industry. So you would sort of start off explaining the method that we use and the purpose of that method and how it is implemented and sort of start discussing then the different methods that you can use in terms of performance evaluation. So, you know, looking at that you would say the involvement of industry assists effectively in preparing the students for their first days at work, and I think in that manner I would say our involvement has been effective.

Interviewer: Alright. You also mentioned the integration, to integrate the theory with the practice that is important.

Participant: Very important. The technikon would tell him that there is personnel administration and this is where the salaries are done and this is where people are being paid and their pension and all the deductions are done. However, I think there isn't enough opportunity for being inviting people who are in the field in different organisations to come and explain, either the S.A.P. modules for processing salaries, either Q9 that is used by the government or any other personnel administration systems that we used up there, so that, you know, it contextualises the systems and then indicate to the students that there is different systems of doing this job. So the technikon will tell him you have to do this job, but what systems do you use currently in the industry, that is what they learn when they get to the experiential learning.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you assist and you help to integrate the theory in practice and you also gave me some examples of it. Can you just give me one more example where you integrate the theory and the practice?

Participant: In some instances students would do a module of what I think they call Management of Training. So they would learn how to put together a training programme, the different parts up to define your tasks and modules and what happens throughout the process. But then there is the actual development of programme that they experience when they get there. So what we usually do would be, I would sit with the students and show them how we actually develop the training programme, what phases do we go through, how do we put together the assessment, what do we mean by assessment. These are some of the issues that we need to cover with them, what do we mean by assessment, how does assessment happen in the actual field, presentation…. I think basically that's another part where you would find a number of students lacking in terms of the facilitation and presentation of problems (inaudible), because that is not

covered by the modules that they do at the technikon. So you would not have students going out to a … (inaudible) project and come back and present and try to practice their presentation skills and trying to get to know, you know, how good would they be presenting properly. So that's what we do. Unfortunately we don't get, because of the time limit, we do not have enough opportunity to assist them to get to maybe a dry run session where you would have them presenting, preparing just a small module and then coming to present. But, however, I think, you know, the student that usually come to us where we have opportunities, where some of our specialists or training people run modules with them, send them to accompany those people so that they can see how it is done. So that they can see what kind of supporting resources do you use, either overhead projectors or electronic data projectors or what … what is the purpose of those and how would they fit in. So that would be much of what we do.

Interviewer: Thank you for that example. Alright, can we proceed to the next question?

Participant: Are we on question four?

Interviewer: Yes. **How would your industry or organisation like to become involved with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?**

Participant: I think the current procedure that has been utilized to get students to the workplace, is that they are guests there. For example, you find that students would be given this package of documents and the letter of request and they would have to look for the placements themselves. So you would have ten, fifteen, twenty students coming to your office and they would be saying can you please come and do this here and my thinking is that (inaudible) we need (inaudible) a lot of improvement in that area, particularly with proper co-ordination where the technikon could invite employers to indicate if they want to participate

in the experiential training and how many students are they willing to take right at the beginning of the year, so that when we start preparing and the students could then be informed that, look, BP is willing to take two or Shell is willing to take three or … (inaudible) so on is willing to take five and the students can make their choices while the student is still at the technikon. Because you find that in an area where there are limited places, particularly within the immediate location of the technikon, some students would actually end up not getting any placement and then they would have to travel beyond the immediate surroundings of the technikon to get that placement. And my feeling is that if you can improve on that particular area and get it better organised, then you would have a place you are really ready and committed to assisting the students and they would tell you from year in year out that look, we are willing to take five students and the technikon would know already in terms of their numbers and they would know if there is sufficient placement or if they don't have sufficient placement, they would need to canvas additional employers to come into the scheme. So they need to sort of formalise it with specific employers that have assisted them before, rather leaving it to the students to go and search for the place.

Interviewer: So the organisation…

Participant: The co-ordination and the organisation of the whole programme could be done better.

Interviewer: Thank you. Then question five: **How would you describe the current co-operation between your industry or organisation and the technikon with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?**

Participant: I think the current co-operation is more on the informal side. Because you receive this letter that is sent by the student and you do not actually get to interact a lot with the co-ordinator or maybe to interact with the lecturers

themselves in the programme, so that you get to come up with an understanding in terms of what specifically they want the students to come up with. So it is sort of something that you work out on your own. To say this is the problem that they have given and this is what services we provide in that respect and this is what I will cover and you send your report. So the directing is the feedback, the students come, you send in their evaluation report. There isn't much feedback coming from the technikon to say, look, your assistance was rated at this point and if we work on this relationship between the two organisations, this is what we can improve on. So there is that gap, that vacuum, in terms of the organisation at the beginning and the feedback that comes after the organisation having sent the confidential report. So a lot can be done to slightly formalise their relationship. Then you would have more constructive participation. And again, HR managers to come as guest presenters and to present one or two papers there or whether to get, look, I understand some technikons do have tutors which are people who are employed with you, but I think with the support of the tutors there could be better co-ordination. They could really ensure that the students get great benefit out of this relationship.

Interviewer: But at the moment it is informal.

Participant: At the moment it's informal. And I think there is a need to formalise it. Particularly if you look at the whole issue around learnerships. Because you would find that some students could be accommodated straight from technikon into a learnership that an employer is participating in, but then we are missing this opportunity because this relationship is informal. But as I believe if I had a learnership to maybe produce Human Resource officers, the technikon would not know about because this relationship is informal, and the students would probably get to know about it because they would be there. In the practical situation they would be working in our offices, and my feeling would be, formalising the relationship, the technikon would be able to go into industry, be able to peep on what learnerships are available, what organisations are doing

and be able to ensure that the studies of the students and the support that the technikon could provide beyond the final year, could be the … this option and that option.

Interviewer: Hmm. I see.

Participant: Because then you find students they need to go off and seek employment and it is difficult. It is not easy because you walk into an HR manager's office and they tell you "Look, you have to wait for us to advertise." You see what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant: As if the relationship was formalised the organisation would be able to say at Technikon X we have so many learnerships that we do. Hey, if we formalise this co-operation then maybe the top five of your students could go to employer X, the next five could go to employer Y or any students who chooses to go there, could go this other options.

Interviewer: Thank you for that. You mentioned learnerships. How would you describe the difference between learnerships and experiential training?

Participant: The difference is experiential training for example takes place over three weeks. A learnership would take, would be implemented over a period of twelve months. It is a more of a formalised programme that is aimed at obtaining certain skills.

Interviewer: Alright.

Participant: And where the learner would acquire certain skills that would then put them in a better position for them to gain employment into that area.

Interviewer: Hmm, but at the moment you say everything is informal.

Participant: Everything is informal.

Interviewer: And you would just like to see some improvement, like it should be more formalised.

Participant: More formalised, better co-ordination. I think the programme could do wonders.

Interviewer: Thank you. Can we proceed to the next question? Question six? **How would you describe more effective co-operation between your industry or organisation and the technikon with regard to the training and assessment of the learners in Human Resource Management at the technikon?** I think you've already covered a little bit of that by saying that it should be more formalised and better co-ordination. Is there anything else you would like to add to your idea how you would describe more effective…?

Participant: Look…

Interviewer: Co-operation.

Participant: The other point that needs to be added is that, I understand the turbulence (inaudible) that the technikon would find themselves in terms of ensuring they can (inaudible). But on the other hand as an HR manager I also get this feeling look, by the time that students there could be extended a bit to enable them to cover issues in a more detailed manner. Because with the time that we have and the number of issues that we need to cover, we just sort of scratch the surface in terms of what happens in industry. You would find that one of the issues that is being put on the table would be occupational health and

safety. And then the students would not even get an opportunity to see how an injury on duty is being handled or how an investigation is being carried out or…. Even … if they do not get a placement at the Department of Labour you would not even get an opportunity to get somebody from the Department of Labour to tell them about how is the Department of Labour involved, you know, what does the inspector do and how do they fit into the whole system. So there are those issues that you can't even begin to deal with given the time limit that you have, and my feeling would be, you know, if we are serious about giving the students some practical experience we could do with a bit of extending the programme. Now it stands at three to four weeks, I think eight weeks would be somehow a little bit more helpful. I think with proper co-ordination, if they could start during their university holidays, either in September, when … (inaudible) some technikons close in September and during those three weeks they could already start with their experiential training, they could be given at least eight weeks to complete that programme.

Interviewer: Okay, so you are in favour of a more extended programme.

Participant: A more extended programme. Because I've seen what happens out there. The student comes in and you put them through a number of issues at the work place, and if they are lucky you would have a case to present, for example at the bargaining council of the CCMA. If they are lucky. In the three weeks they wouldn't even have an opportunity to get to the CCMA. See what I mean? Even if you are going to have any conciliation or arbitration sittings over the three weeks, they don't have an opportunity to get there. So you find that students would come out of the experiential training with different experiences at different levels. Fortunately the students that came this year were able to attend at least three cases, because that was the time when we were busy with these people's reconciliation (inaudible) cases. But think about the student who goes to an employer who does not have any cases during that time. So the students would not even get practical training in terms of what happens at the CCMA.

They wouldn't even know what happens at the bargaining council (inaudible) in terms of conciliation, in terms of arbitration. So those are some of the issues that we need to consider, to say really, you know, if you want to give them some practical experience, extend the periods so that you cover more. If there is a training course that, for example, where we had a programme that we cooperated on with one of the technikons for training of managers, and on that programme during the time that the students were there, we had a mentor's meeting. So we were able to send them to that, so that they can get the feeling what are mentors, how are they trained, what should they cover, what issues are being covered there, so they were fortunate against the students that came in towards that we placed there. They were fortunate this year because they were able to cover a lot of practical things that were even outside the control of the employer, for example reconciliation, arbitration and the mentoring programme and they probably came out better than the students that have come before, because, you know, those students, when they came we didn't have any cases. We didn't have any conciliation or arbitration sittings. We didn't have a lot of training programmes going on that time. So, you know, those are some of the issues that we need to consider and address. And I think with the proper formalisation of the relationship, it should be slightly more manageable to be able to organise a proper, to be able to improve on the efficiencies that we currently have.

Interviewer: Alright, and you mentioned eight weeks. You are in favour….

Participant: I think eight weeks would be appropriate. Eight weeks would be appropriate.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your comment.

Participant: Okay.

Interviewer: Can we move on to the next question? Question seven?

Participant: What is your viewpoint about compulsory experiential training?

Interviewer: Yes. **What is your viewpoint about compulsory experiential training of technikon learners in Human Resource Management?**

Participant: Look, uh, making it compulsory, I think it is a good idea, in the sense that I was a student before. I know that students would want to get themselves out of such situations if they can. And if you make it an option, you would have some students that benefit from experiential training. I think institutions that have it as a compulsory module to do a compulsory thing to do before they even get to the final exams, I think it does a lot to improve on the knowledge of the students, and that they should keep it that way and encourage other technikons to also do it that way.

Interviewer: So you approve of compulsory…

Participant: I do. I do.

Interviewer: So you think it is a good idea.

Participant: I think it's a good idea. We all at some time go through some compulsory training and look at the training of the psychologists. Some of us went through the compulsory training. We didn't think it was necessary, but afterwards you then get to understand why in certain issues you have to do the practice before you even get to the real cases. You think about a students walking into an office, today you are being appointed a HR officer and they throw the first CCM case at you. You don't even know, you've never seen a … (inaudible) form for a dispute, you know, the form that we complete to submit a dispute between the CCMA. If students don't get the practice they would not

have seen that form; they would not understand what is contained on that form. You need to understand you need to at least get that little bit of practical experience that will begin to give you some idea of what exactly happens out in the field. You need to understand how do you prepare for arbitration. Fine, you know, the notice will come to say you have arbitration on this case on this day. How do you actually prepare for it? Those are issues that are covered in the practical, where say, you need to prepare for an arbitration case, what do you look out for, how do you make your arguments. Those are some of the things you don't get out of a textbook. You get to know about it as you experience the issues.

Interviewer: Alright.

Participant: How do you do a performance evaluation? You are there; you are responsible for assisting in performance evaluation of the staff of the organisation. How does it actually happen? You know, it is fine to say you won't do a compulsory experiential training because the people can learn when they get to the jobs themselves, but I think we sort of make it more difficult for new graduates to adjust to their jobs, whereas compulsory experiential training would make it easier. Then those students that have gone through compulsory experiential training they find it easy to adjust when they get there. And the students, who haven't gone through it, they come with their theory and they find it more difficult to adjust.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant: So you get all these adjustment programmes and you know, your evaluation then says you are not as good as you know you could be. All those issues, you know, whereas you could have been assisted before you get to formal employment to understand and to get a bit of experience in terms of what really happens in HR, because, look, you won't become an HR specialist

overnight, that we accept. But we should help you along this way so that you get somewhere by the time you get to your formal employment. You get to understand certain issues.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. So you think it is a good idea and it should be encouraged.

Participant: Yes. Very good idea. Yes. It is a very brilliant idea and it should be encouraged and I think with a bit of an extension in terms of the period the technikon will achieve a lot of successes. Look, they don't have time anymore, you don't have time to be following students and assuring that, you know, people adjust to their jobs, I believe if you get a lot of organisations, you don't find a lot of training positions in HR. There aren't. Very few if you can find. When you see an advert is we want an HR officer to work in personnel administration, to assist in training and to assist in labour relations and the first day you walk through the door, people have to be paid for their labour.

Interviewer: Yes, it is true.

Participant: People have to be paid. You are the HR officer. You have to ensure that these things happen.

Interviewer: Do the job.

Participant: Do the job. There is no time to say that you can do the job in another six months, we will train you now. If you get the training, fine. But where you find the situation where you know you have got to get in and do the job and I think the employer would want somebody who has an idea how to … (inaudible).

Interviewer: Thank you very much for you input there. Is there any other issue or aspect or problem, anything you would like to mention or would like to add

anything to each of these questions? (Silence) Anything you would like to add to question one?

Participant: I don't think there is much that I would add to any questions, except that I would just want to emphasise the improvement of the relationship and take it one level higher to say let's formalise the relationship, let's look at the issues, let's look at what can be done.

Interviewer: And then as you said that will improve things.

Participant: I think that will improve….

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your participation. I really appreciate it. I know everybody is very busy, but I really appreciate it very much. Thank you very much.

Participant: Okay. (Silence) Like I have said, the technikon should begin to look at the difficulties that we experience in terms of recruiting, particularly for entry level posts in HR and because you find that you send out an advertisement, you place an advertisement in the newspaper you get hundreds and hundreds of applicants, however, and a lot of applicants that you would shortlist they … you tend to get the sense they do not exactly understand what is involved in HR. So I think, you know, if for example we had this formal relationship with the technikon, I would then go to the technikon and say Technikon X, I have two posts that I want to fill and I want to take on new graduates and the technikon could then assist employers in this recruiting students who are interested into certain jobs. That students granted that they would want to proceed and go further with their studies. Some students would want to go into the employment area before they can even think about furthering their studies. So I think, you know, much could be achieved out of this relartionship, particularly in the technikons assisting with placements of students and you know, just to add further, do you find there's

organisations like EUC - it's an organisation that recruits students for learnerships and such details are not normally … they are not broadly available - anyway you get to know about these guys by chance when they need to recruit students. So you know, such information could be better coordinated, placements could be better coordinated and I think assisting technikon graduates to find employment, those that are interested in going into the field after qualifying, would be an issue that the technikon would need to address and they would need the assistance of employers in addressing that issue, but I think, you know, formalising the relationship would have a better way of coordinating the issues. It would cut more advertising costs anyway, cause I'm spending. For example, I'm spending about three million in giving the ad doing the advertisements. I would love to cut it down, you know, and I think with regard to entry-level posts it could begin to lessen our advertisement debt. Because entry level posts we can fill them, either by going to an agency and saying to an agency: "Look, give us somebody" but we would still have to pay the agency 20% of the total package for placement of that particular individual and I think, you know, with this relationship, you know, it could also assist employers in reducing certain costs associated with the recruitment of employees, particularly entry level (inaudible) because it's difficult.

Interviewer: But you say it will cut costs for you.

Participant: Exactly. It will definitely cut costs for us.

Interviewer: As long as it's formalised, it will help you.

Participant: Exactly. Exactly.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for that comment.