

THE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF A RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

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THE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF A RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

by

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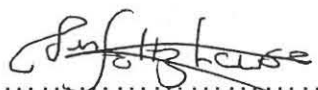
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Declaration

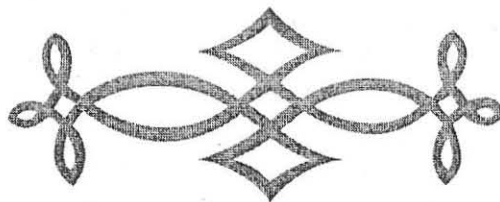
I, SOPHIA MARIA HOLTZHAUSEN, ID no. [REDACTED] hereby declare that this doctoral thesis, *The design and structure of a Resource-based Learning Academic Staff Development Model*, is my own independent work and that all the sources used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references. This thesis has not previously been submitted by me to any other higher education institution in fulfilment of requirements for the attainment of any other qualification.


.....
S.M. HOLTZHAUSEN

27/2/2003.....
Date

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to
my husband, Mauritz,
for endless love and encouragement.



Acknowledgements

*I thank the Lord, who gave me strength and
perseverance to complete this thesis.*

Soli Deo Gloria!

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List of Acronyms/ Abbreviations

CHE	Council for Higher Education
DoE	Department of Education
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MLE	Mediate Learning Experience
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NCODE	National Council of Open and Distance Education
NSDC	National Staff Development Council
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
QSR NUD*ST4	Qualitative Solutions and Research's Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising Application Software Package
RBL	Resource-based Learning
RSA MoE	Republic of South Africa. Ministry of Education
RSA MoL	Republic of South Africa. Minister of Labour
SA	South Africa
SADC	South African Development Community
SAHE	South African Higher Education
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SCOPME	Standing Committee on Postgraduate Medical Education
SPICES	Student-centred, Problem-based, Integrated, Community- based, Electives, Systematic

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organisation

UP

University of Pretoria

USWE

University of Western Cape

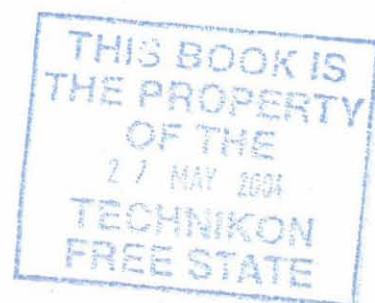


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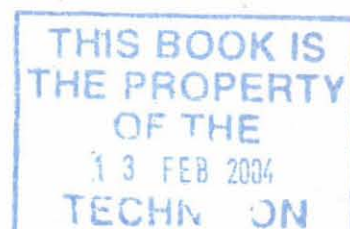
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The continual intermeshing of data collection and analysis has direct bearing on how the research is brought to a close ... [The researcher] believes in his/her own knowledgeability ... not because of an arbitrary judgement but because he/she has taken very special pains to discover what he/she thinks he/she may know, every step of the way from the beginning of his/her investigation until its publishable conclusions ...

(Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Abstract

Key words: academic, facilitator, higher education, resource-based learning, staff development, staff development model, transformation.

World-wide, including South Africa (SA), the reputation of higher education (HE) depends on its ability to recruit and retain quality staff. HE needs people with expertise and the commitment to sustain – and improve – the performance of institutions in an increasingly competitive environment. Quality human resource management will be the key to success.

Effective knowledge transmission and production are the central business of South African higher education (SAHE). The context of knowledge transmission and production is rapidly changing, because of transformation demands. One such change is the paradigm shift from knowledge transmission to learning. The key to this lies in better and different approaches to learning and guidance, e.g. not only in new forms of learning, but also in transformation of roles and new delivery modes – of which resource-based learning (RBL) is one. This study attempted to improve RBL practice in HE where it is regarded as one of the most useful, successful and acceptable approaches to curriculum delivery. RBL is also easily adapted to various styles of instruction and learning.

In order to address the above-mentioned complex challenges, the aim of this study was to design and structure a Resource-based Learning Academic Staff Development Model. This proposed model investigated three areas of staff development, namely RBL competence (i.e. knowledge, skills, attitudes and application), RBL roles and RBL improvement strategies.

Findings were based on questionnaire responses from 46 RBL academics, focus group discussions and commentary from RBL experts.

The main findings were:

- The majority of participants confirmed their lack of RBL competence, which simultaneously emphasised the need for the proposed model and identified improvement strategies.
- The majority of RBL academics reported difficulty balancing HE and governmental demands (government versus institution).
- High workloads and limited time increased the probability of stress.
- Attitudinal factors also influenced RBL performance as those who were strongly motivated demonstrated initiatives towards innovation and progress.

Finally, the proposed model targets not only the RBL academic, but also the institutional profile in a strategic and systemic way by means of a cyclical process so that RBL Performance Excellence is achieved.

Abstrak

Sleutelwoorde: akademikus, brongebaseerde leer, fasiliteerder, hoër onderwys, personeelontwikkeling, personeelontwikkelingsmodel, transformasie.

Wêreldwyd, asook in Suid-Afrika, word die reputasie van hoër onderwys bepaal deur die vermoë om gehaltepersoneel te werf en te behou. Hoër onderwys benodig dus mense met vakkundigheid en toegewydheid om die werkverrigting van instellings binne 'n kompeterende omgewing te handhaaf en te verbeter. Kwaliteit menslike hulpbronbestuur sal die sleutel tot sukses wees.

Doeltreffende kennisoordrag en -produksie is die sentrale doel van die Suid-Afrikaanse hoër onderwys. Die leerkonteks het as gevolg van transformasie-eise verander. Een so verandering is die paradigmaskuif van kennisoordrag na leer. Die sleutel in beter en verskillende benaderings tot leer en leiding lê, bv. nie slegs nuwe vorme van leer nie, maar ook transformasie van rolle en nuwe aanbiedingsmetodes – waarvan brongebaseerde leer een is. Hierdie studie het dus gepoog om die hoëronderwyspraktik te verbeter - waar brongebaseerde leer beskou word as een van die mees bruikbare, suksesvolle en aanvaarbare benaderings tot kurrikulumaanbieding. Dit is ook maklik aanpasbaar vir verskeie style van instruksie en metodes van leer.

Die doel van hierdie studie was om bogenoemde komplekse uitdagings aan te spreek, 'n brongebaseerde akademiese personeelontwikkelingsmodel te ontwerp, asook die struktuur te bepaal. Hierdie voorgestelde model ondersoek drie areas van personeelontwikkeling, naamlik brongebaseerde bekwaamhede/bevoegdhede (bv. kennis, vaardighede, houdings en toepassing), rolle en verbeteringstrategieë.

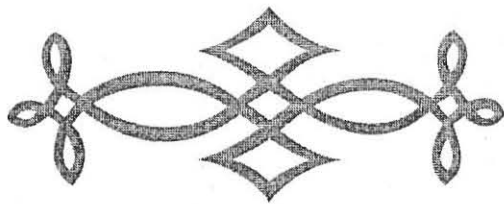
Die resultate van hierdie studie is gebaseer op vraelysresponse van 46 brongebaseerde akademici, fokusgroepe, asook kommentaar van brongebaseerde deskundiges.

Die belangrikste resultate is soos volg:

- Die meeste van die deelnemers het hul gebrek aan brongebaseerde bekwaamheid bevestig, wat die behoefte aan die voorgestelde model en geïdentifiseerde verbeteringstrategieë beklemtoon.
- Die meeste brongebaseerde akademici het probleme ondervind met die balansering van hoëronderwysdruk en druk van die regering.
- Hoë werkloadings en beperkte tyd verhoog die druk, wat die moontlikheid van stres verhoog.
- Houdingsfaktore beïnvloed ook brongebaseerde bekwaamheid. Diegene wat sterk gemotiveerd is, vertoon inisiatiewe ten opsigte van innovering en vordering.

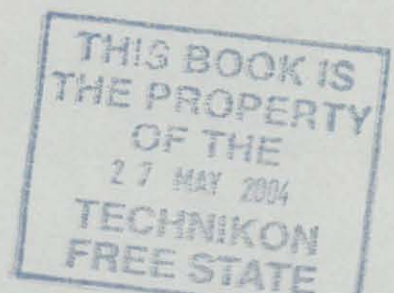
Die voorgestelde model het nie net die brongebaseerde akademikus ingesluit nie, maar ook die institusionele profiel wat op 'n strategiese en sistematiese wyse deur middel van 'n sikliese proses uitnemendheid op die gebied van brongebaseerde onderwys bereik.

**A Mind for Truth ...
a Heart for God.**



Chapter 1

ORIENTATION



*I have gone back to my roots as it were.
I have always been fascinated by the idea
that skills and talents lie within all of us,
and that learning and training do not add
- they release what is already there.*

(Stanton 1997)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

ne of the most influential transformations within the transmission of knowledge is the paradigm shift from an instruction-based towards a **learning-based approach**. In such an approach the learner is in the centre of the learning process implying that learners are accountable for managing their own learning (*vide* 1.3.2 for more detail). At individual level it entails the shifting to new ways of thinking about learning, while at the organisational level it implies mission shifts from providing instruction to stimulating student learning and operating as a learning organisation (Barr & Tagg 1995; Stanton 1997; Olivier 1998; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2002)¹. In this new learning-based approach academics have moved away from imparting meaning to enabling students to learn through various sources (Cartwright 1999). Similarly, this paradigm shift encounter a set of supplementary changes such as the following:

- The methodology has shifted from Lecturer-centred to Learner-centred.
- The role of the lecturer has moved from Transmitter to Facilitator.

¹ The Abbreviated Harvard referencing method was used.

- The emphasis has shifted from Resource-based Teaching to Resource-based Learning (RBL).
- The focus has changed from Content to Competencies and Transferable Skills.
- The assessment focus has altered from solely Product to include the Process (Cartwright 1999; Stiles 2000; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2002).

The above-mentioned changes not only imply changes in the higher education (HE) culture (*vide* detail 1.2), but also changes in the HE practice. By accommodating these changes, a more effective learning environment is created where leadership is intertwined with culture formation. However, it is not enough to enhance only the quality of the functioning of institutions, it is also necessary to address the change agents (e.g. in this study it would be RBL academics via staff development). The latter is regarded as one of the essential tools in responding to the pressures, because these changes not only encounter a shift from teaching towards learning which complicates the task of future HE academics, but also requires new forms of learning and delivery modes – of which RBL is one. In order to comprehend this complex umbrella term requires a clear and concise definition.

The researcher delineates RBL as a new method and delivery mode consisting of integrated inquiry and discovery strategies to enhance student-centred learning via resources, interactive media and technologies. Within these, learning is regarded as a social process where the provision of an effective learning environment and material is vital to facilitate the active, independent acquisition of knowledge and self-fulfilment at the learner's own pace. This social learning process occurs in a shared, participatory working relationship between learners and facilitators (*vide* 1.7, 2.3 & 2.4). Equally important are the opinions of Ryan, Scott, Freeman and Patel (2000) that it is worthwhile, if not essential for facilitators to encompass RBL, if they want to continue to

fulfil two of the fundamental aims of HE institutions, namely to offer quality knowledge transmission (i.e. teaching and learning) and knowledge production/generation (i.e. research) opportunities to learners. The reason for this is that quality RBL can "enhance and improve learning by the effective use of different media and by individualising instruction in a variety of ways" (Ryan *et al.* 2000:30). Such quality RBL is not arrived at by accident nor is it readily achieved even by the most enthusiastic 'amateurs', but is dependent on staff development as the key activity in HE institutions of the future. The above-mentioned is supported by comments from the World Bank, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) that "quality and motivated staff and a supportive professional culture are essential in building excellence" (World Bank 1994; UNESCO 1997; NSDC 2001). Consequently we are taken to the core of this study, namely **to design and structure an RBL Academic Staff Development Model for RBL practitioners focusing on the following four aspects:**

- The knowledge transmission and -production function.
- Facilitation.
- Assessment.
- Management.

To narrow down this study's research problem, the focus is on **what** aspects in the RBL knowledge transmission and -production function could be improved in order for RBL instructional improvement to take place – which could be addressed and developed in future by an RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

In addition, the consequences of the above-mentioned higher educational changes could vary extensively between unpopular/potentially traumatic versus stimulating/potentially rewarding experiences for the educators

involved (Clarke 1982; Owen 1992; Ryan *et al.* 2000). These positive and negative experiences of higher educational change could cause different emotions in different individuals, because some will associate it with anxiety and fear, whereas others will view it with hope as part of a solution (Kirkpatrick 1985; Owen 1992; Ryan *et al.* 2000). It is evident that individuals respond differently to the same event, which will also be true of RBL practitioners within the new learning-based approach. In order to ensure the quality of the knowledge transmission and -production function of the above-mentioned as part of the RBL facilitator's professional life, there is a need to search for ways to develop, train and reward this function of RBL practitioners. One way to accomplish the above-mentioned is to **design and structure an RBL Academic Staff Development Model, which is also the purpose of this study**. Such a proposed model should strive to continually strengthen and enhance the skills, roles and instructional improvement strategies of the RBL practitioners (*vide* Appendix A – also the focus elements of the questionnaire being used). Similarly this would be crucial to empower the RBL practitioners to face the challenges of national and international competitors, based not only on their competence, but also their capacity to change. In a nutshell, transformation in HE is a process in motion, which means changing the HE practice and also the HE culture.

1.2 CHANGING CULTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Recent research on the profound impact of the Information Age points to the whole HE context (Currie & Newson 1998; Eleey 1998; Jacob & Hellström 2000; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stripling 2002). In addition to studying the issues surrounding the above-mentioned impact on HE practice, it is also necessary for scholars to take into account the transformations that academics are faced within this rapidly changing environment and culture. In this environment - irrespective of what type of institution or against what rate change is taking

place - there are fundamental developments occurring which vary from access to education to the way institutions function as well as to the knowledge transmission and -production process itself (Ryan *et al.* 2000). In brief, the diversity of these developments is signposts in the direction of the inherent complexity of the transformation processes and how academics themselves are relating to these processes.

This rapidly changing higher educational context, especially changing the culture of higher educational institutions [e.g. like the new HE landscape, which is emerging in South Africa (SA)], is under tremendous pressure to transform [Council for Higher Education (CHE) Annual Report 2000/2001]. Thus the next question would be: What does the culture of a higher educational institution means? According to social anthropologists, this refers to the shared beliefs, attitudes and ways of behaving that give a social group its identity. This identity is defined by a distinct combination of values (Ryan *et al.* 2000; UNESCO 2001; Van Dyk, Nel, Loedolff & Haasbroek 2001). Traditionally, HE institutions were characterised by the following [Dolence & Norris 1995; National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; RSA MoE 2001a]:

- A homogeneous culture.
- Reasonably clearly defined roles.
- Strong community expectations about behaviour (i.e. students study, lecturers teach or do research, support staff support, administrators administrate and managers manage).

Whereas the characteristics of HE institutions are currently being transformed (i.e. building an institution's culture and shaping its evolution are the unique and essential function of leadership), educational processes and systems are not only changing, but are also being re-engineered or reconfigured where leadership is intertwined with culture formation. This is due to the impact of new technologies [e.g. the growth of the Internet and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT)] as well as the changes in HE roles and

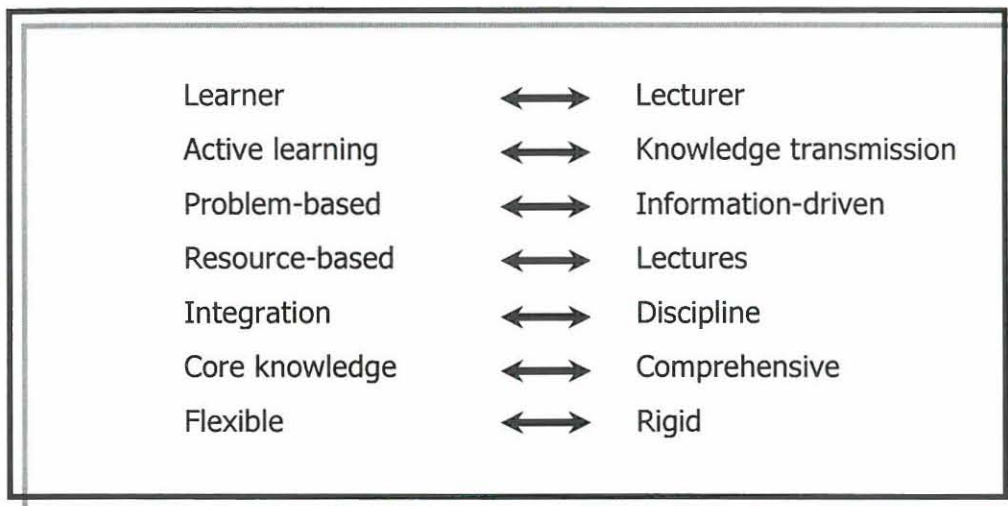
expectations such as knowledge development of not only experts, but also intellectuals (Goedegebuure & Van Vught 2000; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2000). Blair states (1998:1): "Technology has revolutionised the way work is done and is now set to transform education. Children cannot be effective in tomorrow's world if they are trained in yesterday's skills nor should academics be denied the tools that other professionals take for granted". The impact of the above-mentioned is confirmed by Ryan *et al.* (2000) who conclude that:

- New learning technologies can transform the way knowledge is packaged, delivered, accessed, acquired and measured, altering HE's core and delivery processes.
- Students will demand flexible, targeted, accessible learning methods, potentially altering HE's traditional role.
- A huge population of new learners would expand the total market for education and entice new competitors.
- Relying on technology rather than bricks and mortar, non-traditional competitors will give HE a run for its money.

Thus, accompanying the changing culture in HE is the changing practice of being an academic. The question that now arises is how the new forms of practice will look like.

1.3 INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION PRACTICE

Innovations in teaching and learning methods in HE are simultaneously being introduced at a time of rapid institutional change. An effective way to visually demonstrate the shift from the traditional curriculum pattern, is the adapted Harden's SPICES (Student-centred, Problem-based, Integrated, Community-based, Electives, Systematic) model (Harden, Sowden & Dunn 1984):



Source: Harden, Sowden & Dunn (1984)

Figure 1.1: Adapted version of Harden's SPICES model for curriculum change

It should be stated that in Figure 1.1, the arrows represent two sides of a continuum. Furthermore it is evident from this figure that there is a shift towards a learning-based approach. Its characteristics are displayed on the left-hand side of Figure 1.1. In this new approach, the learner is in the centre of the learning process (e.g. visually demonstrated in Figure 1.3) where he or she is actively involved with the RBL material (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). The learning process is no longer limited only to information transmission, but the core knowledge is integrated into problem-based case studies where the learner has to be flexible by including all available resources in order to achieve problem solutions. It also encounters a shift from comprehensive knowledge (i.e. create; capture and store; organise and transform; deploy as well as use and leverage of knowledge) towards core knowledge (i.e. specialised or expertise knowledge where procedures, operations and processes are adapted and modified to apply skills on a higher level of difficulty) (Wiig 1999).

However, it would be inappropriate for the new practice (*vide* Figure 1.1) to be on either of the extremes of the continuum. It would be better to be selective regarding what is effective in the move towards a more innovative stance - where the delivery of learning programmes should encourage problem-solving and lifelong learning. In order to achieve this goal, it requires a shift from an "instruction paradigm" towards a "learning paradigm" (Barr & Tagg 1995; Meade 1997; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2002). In this **new learning paradigm** it is essential to be aware of the following **implications for an educator**, namely:

- Students and facilitators jointly construct knowledge – this highlights the shared partnership and responsibilities involved for both parties.
- Students are active constructors, discoverers and transformers of knowledge, thus no longer only the recipients of knowledge.
- The purpose of academics is to develop students' competencies and talents and not only their knowledge base.
- The relationships are personal transactions among students as well as between facilitators and students – this stresses learning as a joint social process.
- The learning context consists of co-operative learning in the classroom and co-operative teams among staff. Hence co-operation is vital for success.
- The assumption that the learning and facilitating operation is complex emphasises the fact that this requires a considerable amount of training (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2002).

In addition, this paradigm shift and the way knowledge transmission and -production are experienced, is also demonstrated in the following questions:

- Is teaching fundamentally about transferring information from the teacher to the learner, or is it, as we would contend, about creating contexts, which make learning possible?
- Is it about the latter? What does that mean and what does it say about the way in which teachers should think about and approach learning and teaching?
- Do HE academics and learners experience learning and teaching situations in different ways, and if so, what are the different ways?

Thus the conclusion is reached that knowledge transmission and -production are fundamentally related; that knowledge transmission and -production need to be defined in terms of helping students to learn; and that it is the learning of students that needs to be the focus of knowledge transmission and -production, not the knowledge transmission and -production activities of teachers. Similarly knowledge transmission and -production are about bringing the teachers' perceptions and understanding of learning and teaching (e.g. in this study their awareness of teaching and RBL) into a closer relationship with the students. Although knowledge transmission and -production are equal to mass volume, quality learning also involves a focus on the meaning and understanding of the material students are studying (e.g. learning equals application of learning where each individual's learning curve will differ). Evidently the core task of HE is explicitly fostering the students' abilities to take evidence-based, values-grounded stands on important issues and commit themselves to act in ways that make a difference. In order to fulfil this task, innovative forms of learning are required not to replace current approaches completely, but to complement and amend these approaches to improve learning.

1.3.1 New forms of learning

Traditional forms of teaching are replaced by the greater use of RBL and new technologies (Welch 1998; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2000; Scase & Scott 2001;

Stiles 2001). Some examples of how the HE practice is changing, are the following:

- Lecturing carried out over a distance (e.g. video-conferencing).
- Recorded lectures to be used at the students' own time.
- Enhanced lecturing via multimedia presentations.
- Smaller group seminars or tutorials taking place in a variety of computer and mediated forms.

In addition to the fact that these are well-developed systems, they also have various advantages for the educator (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2000; Scase & Scott 2001; Stiles 2001). The main benefit is definitely that after initial investment, preparation time is reduced. As a result there is increased opportunity to engage with learners in one-on-one or small group dialogical encounters (i.e. to really teach). Furthermore the chores of marking and administration are minimised by the judicious use of e-mail and electronic bulletin boards to address queries from students and issues from staff meetings. Another gain would be that creating and adapting RBL materials may produce materials for multiple use and, potentially, for national and international distribution. This could result in generating more money for the institution, whether from subsidies due to increased student numbers or from selling material. Equally important is the fact that teaching staff may acquire new teaching- and research-related skills (e.g. information and instructional design, Web publishing, general Internet and digital archive searching skills, etc.). The development and monitoring of RBL may also lead to more publishable research opportunities for reflective practitioners.

There are however, some potential pitfalls that may affect the successful introduction of these innovations in HE. Educators may be:

- reluctant to give up their autonomy vis-à-vis teaching content and forms of delivery;

- reluctant to accept, without strong evidence and/or personal experience, that new methods and materials are effective;
- anxious about adopting teaching methods and materials that are much more open to peer examination and appraisal;
- anxious about having to work in teams;
- anxious about engaging in less formal, dialogical encounters with students;
- reluctant to acquire new RBL as well as ICT-related skills (Mullan 1995; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001).

Owing to the above-mentioned reasons, a drop in morale and even active resistance to change could be present if it is not introduced in a sensitive, participative way. Similarly adequate resourcing and support are vital for successful implementation. Thus, necessary investments include the following:

- Staff development (i.e. general awareness raising specific training in RBL and ICT-related skills).
- Adequate support from technical staff for the communications and information technologies aspects of the delivery mode.
- Support from educational technologists, other media and design specialists.
- Conscious effort to facilitate team working.
- Opportunities for staff to reflect on and develop dialogical teaching skills.
- Periodic reviews of changes, with forums in which concerns can be raised (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001).

Staff have to have confidence in their leaders based on preceding responsibility and caring skills as well as introducing change sensitively and supportively. Thus a lack of participation leads to alienation and a lack of effective leadership, which could cause stress and anxiety (Holtzhausen 1999; Scase & Scott 2001).

In brief, the extent to which an academic can succeed in the above-mentioned circumstances depends largely on his or her knowledge, skills, attitudes and conduct as initiator, facilitator and manager of the educational and learning practice (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001). In addition, the knowledge transmission and -production function is a complex task, which not only implies educational changes, but also the changing roles of academics.

1.3.2 New roles for the academic

When the HE practice is adapted, the functioning of educators is simultaneously affected. At the core, it implies that the academic is no longer the centre of knowledge, but the **manager of knowledge** (Bitzer & Pretorius 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). This new emphasis means the re-positioning as knowledge transmitter in the following additional group areas, namely:

- The information provider during the contact session.
- The role model on-the-job and in the learning setting.
- The learning facilitator role and mentor.
- The student assessor and curriculum evaluator.
- The curriculum and course planner.
- The resource material creator and study guide producer (Harden & Crosby 2000).

It also means a much more active and a two-way communication process and relationship. The fact that the facilitator is now in partnership with learners, results in changing roles for both parties, namely the following (Berge & Collins 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001; Stiles 2001):

Table 1.1: Changing roles of lecturers and students

Changing lecturer roles	Changing student roles
From a lecturer who provides the answers, to an expert questioner who is a facilitator, guide and resource provider .	From passive receptacles for hand-me-down knowledge who memorise facts to complex problem solvers who construct their own knowledge.
Teachers become designers of student learning experiences , providing the initial structure to student work, encouraging increasing self-direction and presenting multiple perspectives on topics, emphasising the salient points rather than just being providers of content.	Students refine their own questions and search for their own answers and see topics from multiple perspectives as they work, in groups, on more collaborative/cooperative assignments. Group interaction is significantly increased.
The teacher-learner power structure changes. From a solitary teacher in total control of the teaching environment to a member of a learning team , sharing a learning environment with the students as fellow learners.	More emphasis placed on students as autonomous, independent, self-motivated managers of their own time and learning process. Access to resources is significantly expanded.
More sensitivity to the different learning styles and study methods being used.	Emphasis placed on acquiring learning strategies (both individually and collaboratively). Emphasis is on the use of knowledge rather than the observation of the teacher's expert performance or just learning to 'pass the test'. Discussion of students' own work in the classroom.

Source: Adapted from Berge & Collins (1996); Ryan *et al.* (2000); Scase & Scott (2001); Stiles (2001).

The above-mentioned roles have raised questions about the security of academic jobs versus the cost-savings that may be possible with the introduction of technology. However, this is not yet proven. In addition, the greater interaction, although a time-consuming task, is enhancing the learning experience, which makes this paradigm shift a "killer application" for education as well as modifying the human role of the academic. Furthermore, if new technologies and RBL is performed well, it will result in effective teaching, assessment and administration (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001; Stiles 2001). The question arises how this is possible.

Quality RBL and new technologies enhance and improve learning by the effective use of different media and by individualising instruction in a variety of ways. Effective assessment procedures have to address both the 'how' and the 'why' aspects of understanding, although in the context of a specific course, given its aims and desired learning outcomes, there may be more or less emphasis on one aspect or the other (i.e. sometimes performance skills, while other times theoretical, conceptual knowledge) (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001).

As a result our understanding of learning has changed and thus it is important for each academic to know when effective knowledge transmission and -production occur. Taking into account the shift in various HE institutional models, it is evident that the context in which knowledge transmission and -production take place may change, but not the underlying principles that inform good practice. The above-mentioned quality was not arrived at by accident, but needed the following (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2000; Scase & Scott 2001; Hay 2002; Holtzhausen 2002; West 2002):

- Competent application of relevant learning theories.
- Competent application of learning and teaching principles of course designs.
- Necessary competencies such as programming and media design.

These competencies and importance of quality assurance emphasised that input on pedagogy and course design is no longer primarily the responsibility of subject specialists, but needs inputs from programmers, media designers and educational technologists (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2001). This links with the changing role of academics, namely their involvement in the production of RBL materials as well as becoming effective instructional designers in their own right (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001).

In addition, creating and nurturing a learning environment requires a paradigm shift, not only in the institution's decision-making pattern, but also to re-orientate people on how to approach work more effectively. In the academe, this also links with new learning-based HE modes.

According to Meade (1997) the paradigm shift towards active learning can visually be demonstrated (*vide* Figure 1.2 & 1.3).

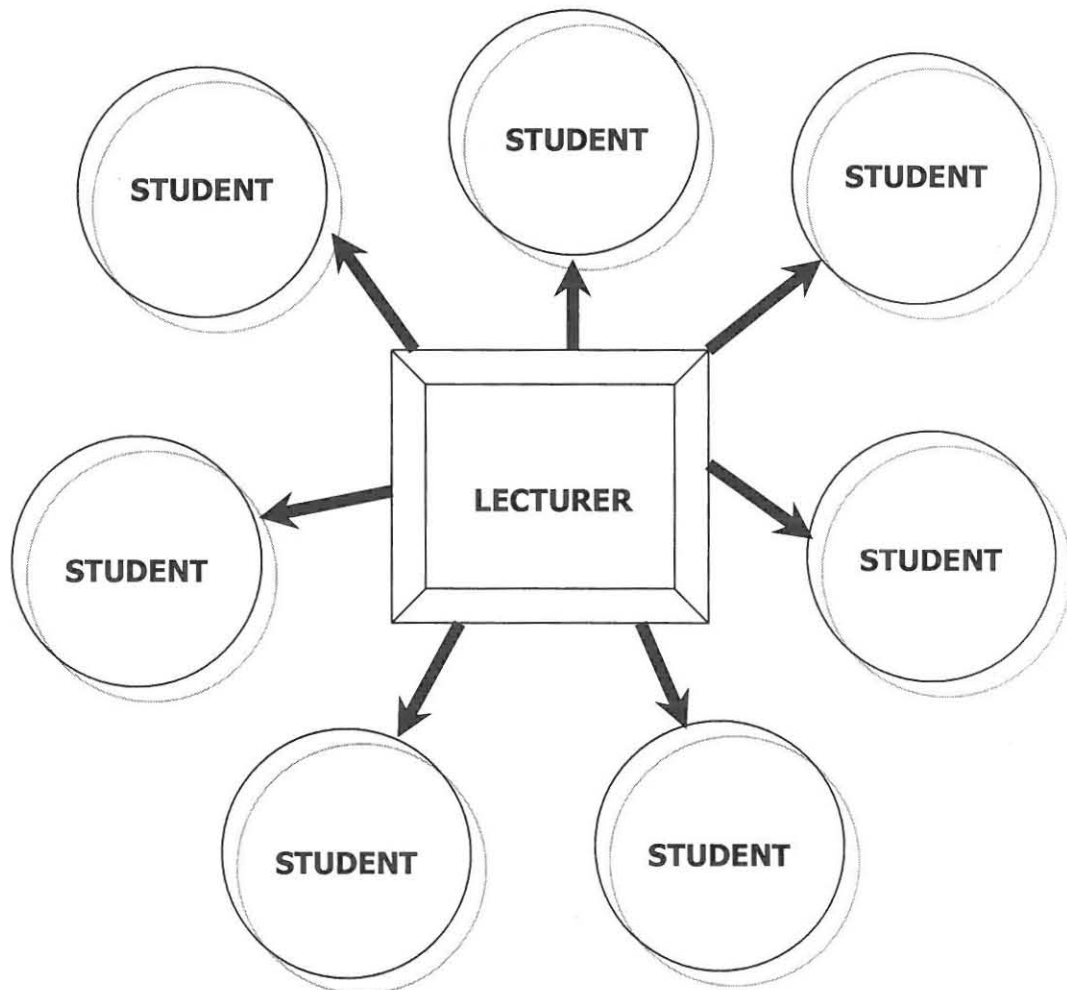


Figure 1.2: The traditional lecturer-centred model

In the lecturer-centred approach knowledge is amassed, students cluster around information and the lecturer (Meade 1997). This writer also stated

that according to this paradigm, learning is viewed in terms of teaching outputs (e.g. the curriculum is designed to ensure that academics cover a certain amount of contents and that students spend a certain amount of time studying the contents). The limitations of the above-mentioned paradigm is that this approach is more inflexible and is likely to inhibit the development of lifelong learning skills that are recognised as the most valuable outcome of HE (Meade 1997).

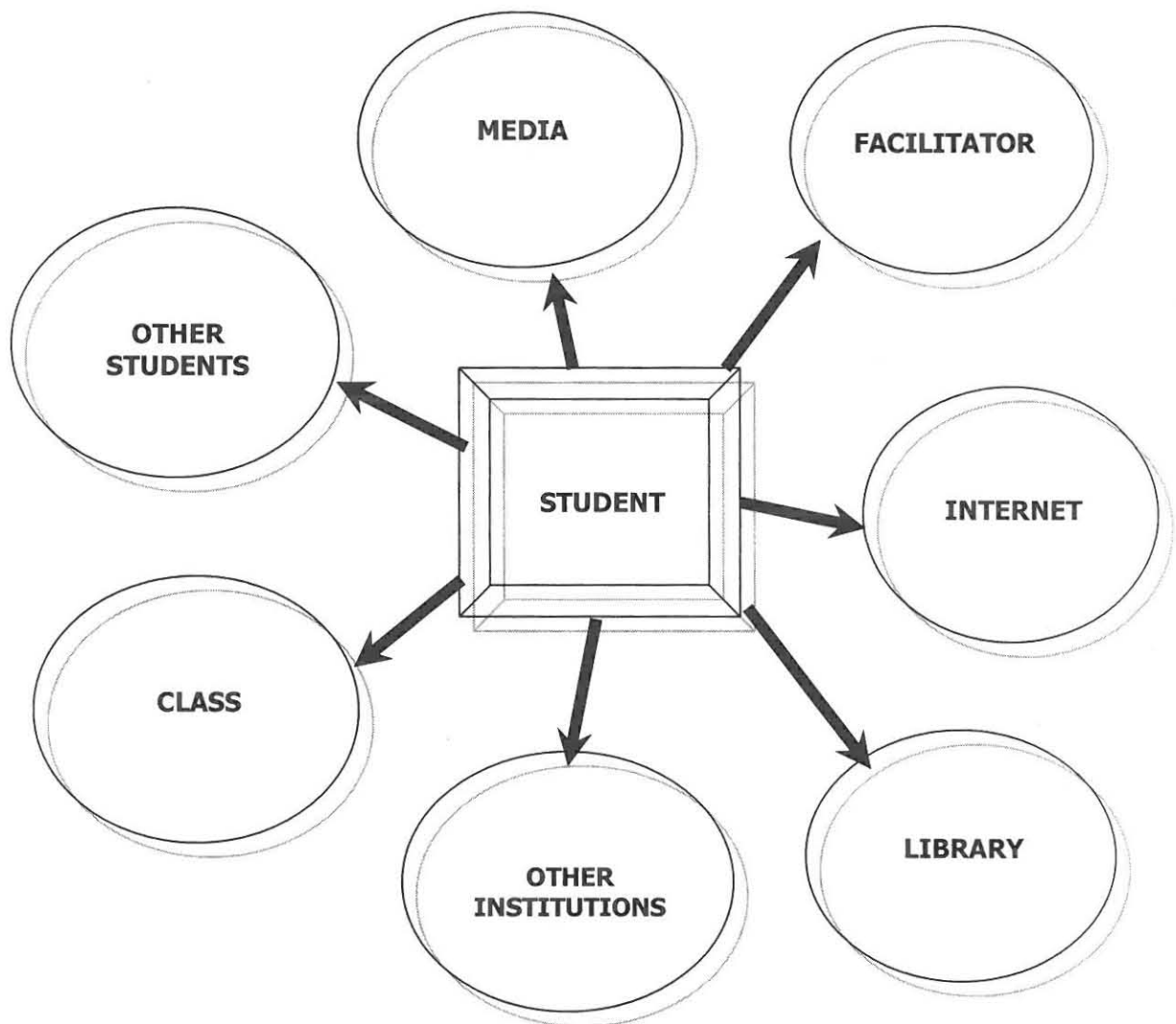


Figure 1.3: The learner-focused model

From Figure 1.3 it is evident that in RBL the student is in the centre of the learning process and all the other circles around the student represent

resources of learning. Learner empowerment should involve a more equal relationship between the academic and the learner with the acknowledgement that the educator is not the sole provider of knowledge, but rather the facilitator of the learning process (Brown & Smith 1996; Meade 1997; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2001). Meade (1997) further argues that this paradigm puts the emphasis on learning outcomes and that this approach will also assist learners to take responsibility for their own learning needs.

Learning-centred institutions is a complex concept and difficult to define (Griffey 1997; Stanton 1997; Olivier 1998; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2002). Such institutions require new learning modes as well as a creation of partnerships. There are two types of important partnerships, namely social partnerships and public-private partnerships where tension between co-operation and competition is manifested in both partnerships. These tensions can effectively be resolved by adopting a learning institution approach, conceptualise the learning partnership spiral and characterise the different degrees of emphasis on conceptual and operational learning (Griffey 1997). The same author argues that when an institution attaches its strategic development to the highest level of conceptual framework, the institution will be best suited to simultaneously manage the adaptation to change and the challenges coupled with it in the future. He also stated that the learning institution concept could be viewed as the lowest of the three stage conceptual hierarchy of learning-wisdom-enlightenment. This implies that learning is the foundation towards wisdom and enlightenment, which also stressed the hierarchical order of the learning process.

In addition, within the HE context the concept of institutional learning sits uneasily. Some HE staff are indisputable learners, while others have an ambivalent relationship to learning (e.g. their job is to teach rather than to learn) (Brew 1997). Most academics are engaged in all three functions of HE

institutions (teaching, research and community service), but this is not generally thought of as learning, even though learning activities of students are similar. A third group of HE staff is the support staff whose role traditionally has nothing to do with either knowledge transmission or production. However, currently the distinction between academic and support staff is breaking down and therefore the development of all staff is necessary for institutional effectiveness. This implies that in general HE institutions are moving away from the individualised institutional learning, which is based on the belief of the value of all human beings in the institution. It thus values HE staff's ability to learn, encourage and support that learning (Cunningham 1994). There is also recognition of the importance of everyone's contribution to institutional success.

In order to survive in the new landscape of South African higher education (SAHE), it is vital to be responsive to the diverse needs of learners and staff. Managing staff development responsibilities now, implies a dual challenge, namely:

- To find ways to satisfy individual needs, while simultaneously
- Pursuing the development needs of the institution.

One of the ways to improve the functioning of the institution is to create a learning environment, which is more effective. Both authors (Senge 1994; Dill 1999) called this environment a learning organisation where the ideal type of organisation is defined and created for learning to be maximised. The resource-based perspective to this learning organisation concept is its emphasis on the comparative advantage of organisational knowledge, accumulated as a by-product of the production process. There exist a strong relationship between the success of manufacturing organisations and the architecture of a production system (Dill 1999). With the term "architecture" he meant the design of the core conversion process of the organisation, the communication channels that help co-ordinate the conversation process and

provide the feedback necessary to make improvements in the core process, and the rules and procedures used to guide them all. In this study staff development has become an important communication channel for responding to the pressures that are constantly impinging on institutions such as accountability, appraisal and quality (*vide* Chapter 3).

1.4 RESEARCH AIMS



The aims of the research comprise a general aim and specific aims.

1.4.1 General aim

The general aim of the research is the design and structure of a RBL Academic Staff Development Model. This aim will lead to sub-aims:

- Why is there a need for RBL?
- How is RBL positioned within the HE context?

1.4.2 Specific aims

The specific aim of the literature study is to conceptualise:

- The proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

The specific aims with reference to the empirical research are:

- to determine the staff development needs of RBL practitioners with regard to the knowledge transmission and -production function (i.e.

competencies, roles and instructional improvement strategies), facilitation, assessment and management;

- to determine whether RBL practitioners have different staff development needs;
- to make accountable recommendations to improve the functioning of the RBL practitioners and the RBL programmes at the Technikon Free State .

In order to achieve these aims, the focus will now shift to the specific research design and methodology that has been used in this study.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The features of case study research design apply in this study. Yin (1994:13) is of the opinion that case studies is defined in terms of the research process as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context".

1.5.1 Case study research design

Debates prevail regarding the usability of the case study methodology. According to McKernan (1995) it is a valuable research technique. This was confirmed by the growing evidence of its use in educational research work such as educational action research (Elliot & Ebbutt 1986). In addition, it is also regarded as one of the most useful data collection methods, especially the Case Studies in Teaching for Understanding - where major problems were identified, diagnosed as well as attempts to solve them demonstrated. However, Brown and Dowling (1998) argue that there is not such a thing as 'the case study approach', but that it is simply a way of describing one's sampling procedures.

I² agree with the value of the case study methodology, because it not only entails decisions about population and sampling, but are also related to the research methods to be used. The application of this study link with the new case study research design where any non-interactive and interactive methods can be used, which differ from the traditional case study inquiry mode (e.g. 60%/40% or 70%/30% in favour of description versus analysis and interpretation).

Besides the case study methodology the researcher employs a number of research methods to generate the data. In this study questionnaires, focus group discussion and comments from RBL experts were used. In addition, triangulation (*vide* 1.5.1.2) was used. This implies the multimethod use of data collection strategies, which may yield different insights about the case of interest and increase the credibility of findings (McMillan & Schumacher 2001) (*vide* 1.5.1.2; 5.4.3 & Chapter 8). In order to understand this rich detail and evidence, the researcher uses a 'conceptual structure' to focus on the in-depth features and characteristics, rather than the breadth of coverage (McKernan 1995). In the context of this study it means an intensive inquiry into the system or unit (e.g. the RBL practitioners of the Technikon Free State).

1.5.1.1 Pros versus cons of case study research design

Various authors (McKernan 1995; McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead 1996; Krathwohl 1998) postulated the following advantages and disadvantages of case study research.

² In this study I have used the term "I" instead of "the researcher" due to the qualitative and narrative nature of the research design. In this way I could narrow the distance between text and the researcher.

Advantages:

- Reproduces a phenomenological world of participants through a detailed description of events.
- Presents a credible and accurate account of the setting and action.
- Uses multi-methods to corroborate and validate results.
- Tells a story in a language which both the practitioner and researcher can understand.
- Data are 'representative'.
- Researchers can call outside expertise as needed.
- The stages in the research serve the purpose of appreciation and understanding.

Disadvantages:

- Extremely time-consuming.
- Results are suspended until action is concluded.
- Researcher may have a prior assumption, which influences interpretations.
- Researcher can be 'taken in' by respondents and informants in the field.
- Idiosyncratic and interpretative nature.
- Expensive.
- Training.

Having listed both sides of the coin of the case study methodology, I was convinced that this new case study methodology (see 1.5.1) is the best attempted way to improve practice in this study. This is evident from the following reasons:

- Providing accurate, practical orientation toward improvement of practice.
- Entailing systematic and intensive reflection-practitioner feedback loops.
- These feedback loops create opportunities for improvement via explanations of each action.
- Using simple data collection methods, which are adequate for the task, would decrease interruptions of practice.

1.5.1.2 Value of case study methodology

Despite the prohibitive factors of case study research such as validity, time, cost and complexity of training (Stake 1985; McNiff *et al.* 1996; Krathwohl 1998), there exist certain values (McKernan 1995), namely that:

- Lecturers-in-training may be used to demonstrate aspects of real curriculum problems.
- One can get started with an inquiry and how a case study is actually reported.
- Lecturers who are already in service can study case studies to compare and contrast problems, solutions and persistent difficulties.
- Administrators can use case studies to form the basis of discussion on common problems originating from school.
- Practitioners in general may query whether they can 'generalise' from case studies to their own experience.

A triangulated (i.e. qualitative and quantitative) case study methodology will be used in this study (*vide* Chapter 9). In Table 2.1. is a brief summary of how the typical features of a case study methodology, as described by Meriam (1988:11-12), were applied to this study.

Table 1.2: Essential properties of case study methodology and their application to this study

Essential properties of case study methodology	Application of case study properties in this study
It is particularistic, concentrating on a particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon.	I was interested in the examination of a single incident in action. The incident in action represented the facilitation and RBL as practiced by academics in the Free State Technikon.
It is a descriptive gathering of rich information about the phenomenon being studied.	Looking at a particular case enabled me to study the research population in detail and unravel the complexities of the situation under investigation. It also offered the opportunity to explain why certain results were obtained and not just what the results were.
It is heuristic, extended understanding of what is known.	The research aim in designing and structuring an RBL Academic Staff Development Model used existing knowledge and theories/models.
It is inductive, gathering contextualised data in the form of descriptions from which generalisations can be drawn.	Methods and techniques used for data collection sought insight, discovery and interpretation in context, rather than hypothesis testing.

Source: Meriam (1988)

Consistent with the latest trends in social research, a multi-method was used for gathering data (Denscombe 1998). On the one hand methods typically considered qualitative were used (e.g. focus group discussions with key-informants, document and record review and audio transcriptions). On the other hand, given the widely acknowledged conception that qualitative and quantitative methods should be used complementary to enhance internal consistency (and therefore the reliability) of research results, structured questionnaires rendering quantitative data were also used (Altrichter, Posch & Someck 1993; Mills 2000; Mouton 2001). In this study, the research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches via triangulation.

Triangulation originated from Denzin's (1978) argument that multiple methods of data collection with a view to increase reliability of observation and not specifically the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches be used (Mouton & Marais 1991). These interpretations differ slightly from contemporary action researchers who favour a sense of triangulation, which combines the perspectives of various actors within a research setting (Elliot 1978; McKernan 1995). Thus a deliberate action to utilise different types of evidence (e.g. comparing and contrasting qualitative and quantitative data) into a more coherent frame of reference or relationship.

Furthermore, evidence in literature on the practical meaning of triangulation is found by various authors (Duffy 1993:143; De Vos 1998:359), who noted the following types of triangulation:

- Theoretical triangulation involves the use of several frames of reference or perspectives in the analysis of the same set of data.
- Data triangulation attempts to gather observations through the use of a variety of sampling strategies to ensure that a theory is tested in more than one way.
- Investigator triangulation is the use of multiple observers, coders, interviewers and/or analysts in a particular way.
- Methodological triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection procedures within a single study, i.e. the original meaning.

The two relevant forms of triangulation of this study are quantitative and qualitative data- and methodological triangulation (*vide* full details in Chapter 5).

However, instead of reporting findings in numerical form only, an analysis of issues and the researcher's assertions about the case will be used to describe and analyse situations.

Given the interpretive nature of case study methodology, I was sensitive to the fact that the research questions and findings could be influenced by my own knowledge. Hence, as detached observer, I was not interested in generalising and predicting on the basis of accurate measurement, but rather on a case in empirical research – using primary data (Meriam 1988).

Validity rested on the researcher's ability to organise the materials within the plausible framework by searching for a logical pattern in the multimethod results. Furthermore, the critical presence of the researcher in the context where the action took place, as well as triangulation enhanced validity, and thus scientific work. These strengths are confirmed by Mouton (2001) namely, high construct-validity, low refusal rates and ownership of findings. Method triangulation was achieved by combining dissimilar methods such as interviews and documentary evidence to cover the same unit of analysis. Triangulation of participants' perspectives was sought by the following:

- Sharing understanding of observed situations with the people concerned.
- Inviting role players' views and criticisms.
- Confirming interpretations with those concerned.

In addition, potential conflicts of interest, invasion of privacy and revelation of confidential information were attended to by keeping the progress and development of the research visible and open to suggestions from the various role players and stakeholders. Permission was obtained before making observations or examining documents and records. Participants' points of view were negotiated with them before I used such information in the research. All respondents were informed of my aims and their right to stay anonymous or refuse participation.

Finally, the main sources of error in this study could be the researcher (e.g. overly emotional or subjective involvement), or possible manipulation by research participants of the research process to serve their own interests

(Mouton 2001). The above-mentioned are serious considerations when preparing for implementation. In order to try and prevent it, it would be vital to remain focused and objective by acting on generalised criteria rather than own intuition.

1.6 LENDING PROMINENCE TO THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The statement of the research objective could be conceptualised as follows:



RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

To design and structure an RBL Academic Staff Development Model, focusing on the knowledge transmission and -production function of RBL practitioners.

In order to address this research objective the following research questions were formulated:



RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What competencies are necessary for success in the knowledge transmission and -production function of an RBL academic?
- What roles are necessary for success in the knowledge transmission and -production function of an RBL academic?
- What instructional improvement strategies are currently being used to enhance the knowledge transmission and -production function of an RBL academic?

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

The following terms need clarification because of their particular interpretation in the context of this study:

1.7.1 Facilitator/RBL practitioner

A facilitator could be defined as a neutral educator/academic helping with the learning and educational process of an individual or a group in a less directive way. The facilitator's role can be grouped in six areas, namely the information provider, the role model on-the-job, mentor and learning facilitator, the student assessor and curriculum evaluator, curriculum and course planner, the resource material creator and study guide producer (National Extension College 1990; Harden & Crosby 2000; Le Roux 2000; Smith 2000).

1.7.2 Resource-based Learning

RBL can be defined as an integrated set of strategies to promote student-centred learning in a mass education context, through a combination of especially designed learning resources and interactive media and technologies. Thus, learning that actively engages learners using various sources to acquire knowledge (Mullan 1995; Cannon 1997; Holtzhausen 1999; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Scase & Scott 2001).

1.7.3 Learning Theory

According to Cotton (1995) a learning theory is a systematic integrated view of the processes whereby people learn. Learning theories originate as the ideas of philosophers, psychologists, educationists, teachers and other people committed to finding out more about how learning takes place. Theories of learning serve as working models until new theories are needed. One learning theory may be more predominant than another in a particular period. The theory of one learning psychologist may be regarded as valid for several years, then another theory may be advanced by different theorist, challenging an existing theory. The views of various learning theorists should however, all be considered and evaluated by teachers and educationists. In addition, a learning theory has two additional advantages over other sources of

knowledge, namely principles of a theory can be tested (e.g. tests can be conducted to determine whether a theory can be verified by actual events) and a theory includes generalisations about learning that then can be applied to other learning situations.

1.7.4 Non-traditional students

The NCHE (1996) defined non-traditional students as those with characteristics such as out of school youth, out of work adults or neglected school pupils. Thus, the emphasis is on the exclusion of traditional high school pupils. In SA it is also unique in terms of absence of learning culture (for example where non-traditional students' parents did not follow a tradition to continue studying in HE) or where adults not only study part-time, but also for the first time.

1.7.5 Learning Paradigm

According to Hammond (2002) the mission and purposes of a learning paradigm is to produce learning by eliciting student discovery and construction of knowledge and creating powerful learning environments in order to improve the quality of learning and achieve success for diverse students.

1.7.6 Staff Development Model

A Staff Development Model is fundamentally a people improvement model (e.g. expression of dynamic relationships) where high quality training programmes with intensive follow-up and support as part of professional development (Saunders & Hamilton 1999).

1.8 OUTLINE OF STUDY

This study is limited by the research problem in Chapter 1, where it provides an introduction to the importance and relevance of this study, as well as the clarification of terminology.

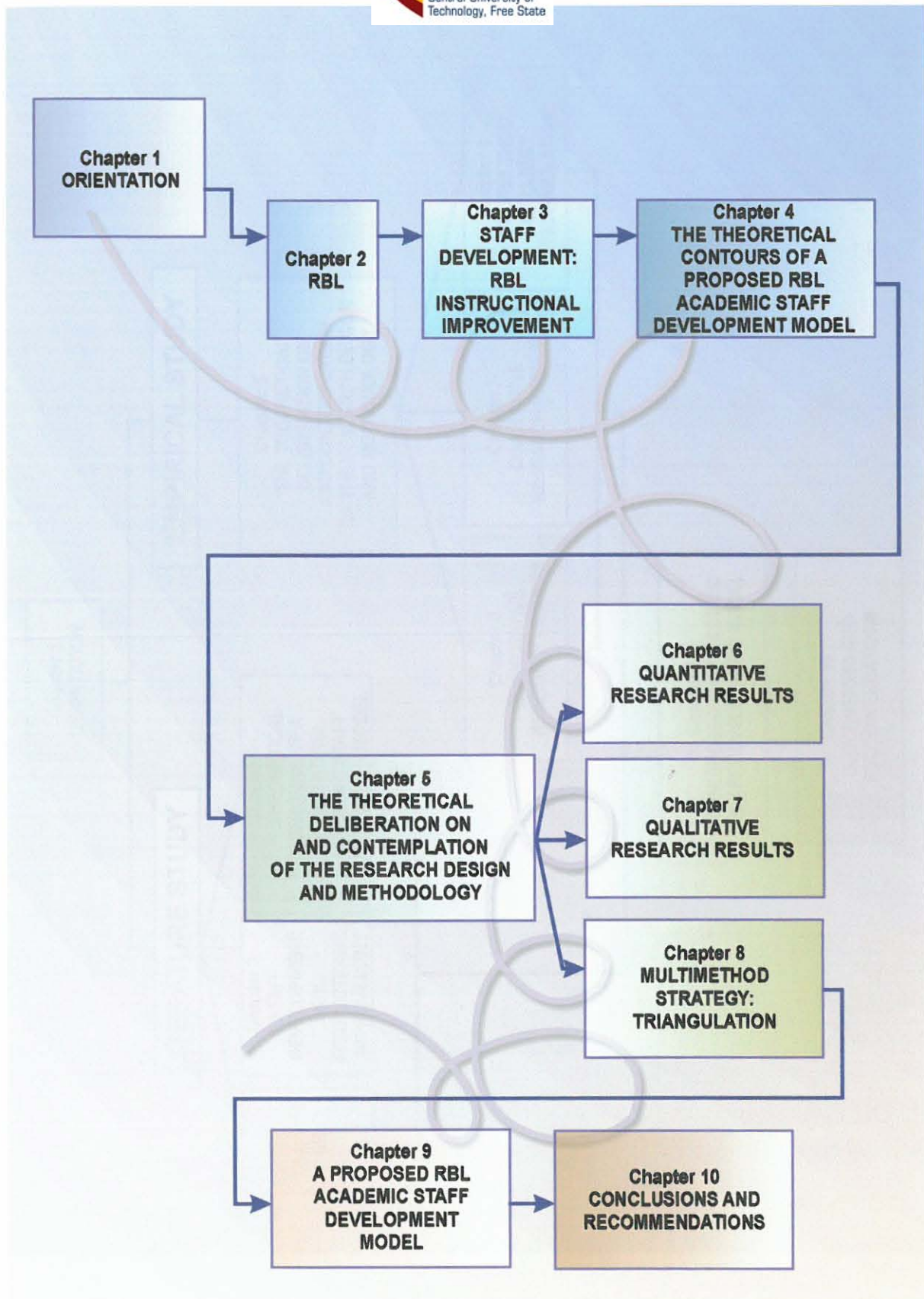
This study is also divided into two sections. The first represents the literature study and consists of the following:

- Following the general orientation outlined in this chapter, Chapter 2 reflects the conceptual orientation of RBL. Special references are made to the rationale of this innovation and where it fits within psychological learning theories.
- Chapter 3 presents information regarding the need for staff development for RBL as a new learning methodology.
- Chapter 4 indicates the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model, which provides the framework for the statistical analysis.

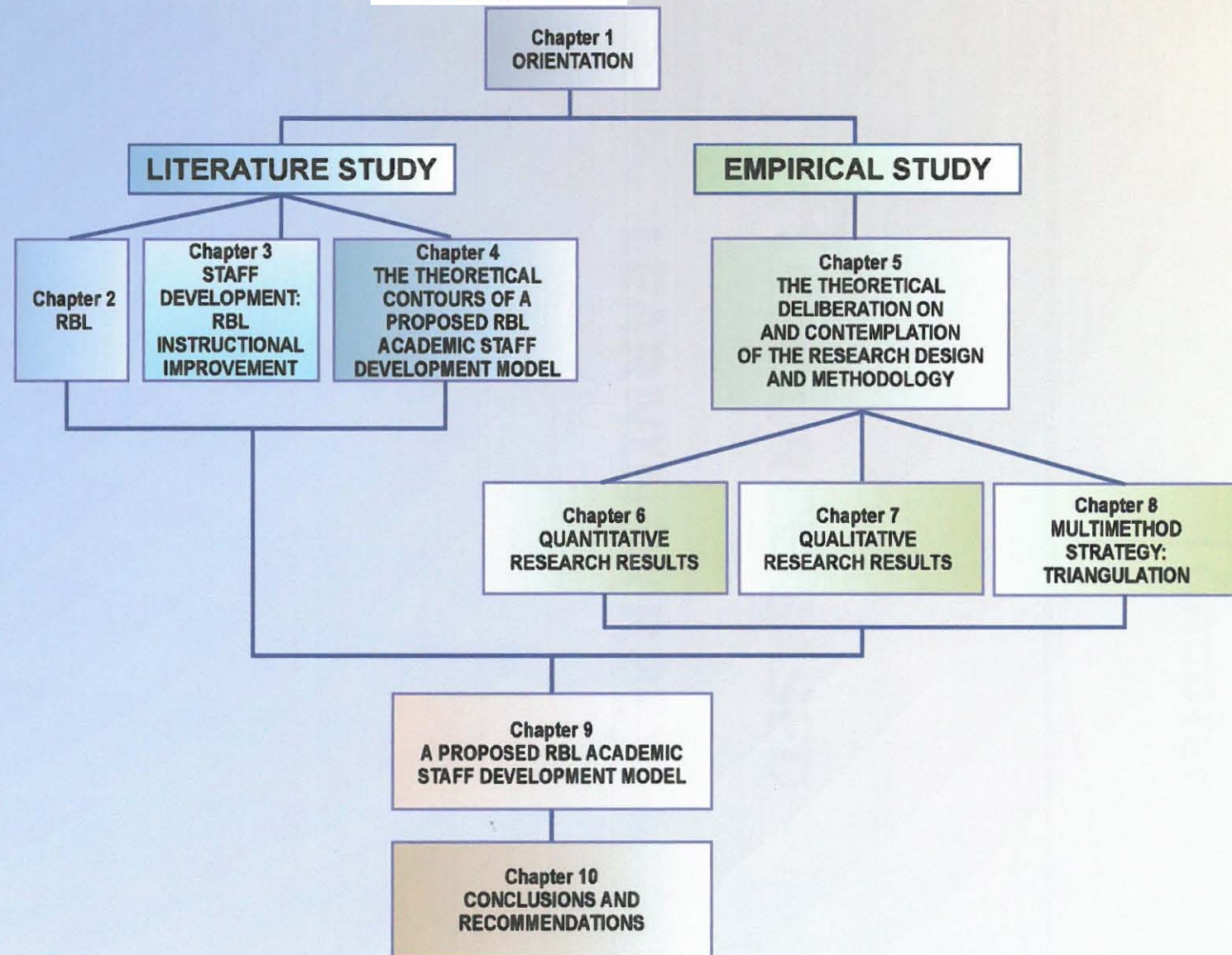
The second section represents the empirical study and consists of the following:

- Chapter 5 consists of the historical, philosophical and theoretical foundation of the research design and methodology which provide an explanation of the methodological aspects reliability, validity and how this research design strengthens the conclusions/results.
- Chapter 6 consists of the reflection on and discussion of the comparative quantitative research results.
- Chapter 7 consists of the reflection on and discussion of the qualitative research results.
- Chapter 8 highlights the triangulation results.
- Chapter 9 consists of the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.
- Chapter 10 consists of the recommendations for future research.

This study can visually be depicted as follows:



This study can visually be analysed as follows:



Having been orientated towards the research problem, the focus will now shift towards Chapter 2 for an in-depth investigation of the concept of RBL.

Chapter 2

RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING (RBL)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the central transformation issues in the HE context is effective learning experiences and environments (*vide* 1.1). It appears that no matter what type of institution, there are fundamental developments and changes occurring in the way institutions function as well as in the knowledge transmission and -production function itself. With regard to the latter, this study attempts to capture the ideas behind one of these new approaches which supports the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, namely RBL. Subsequently in order to meet the demands of HE within a changing South African context the rationale for RBL will be discussed. In the next two subsections I will provide relevant definitions and significant statements of RBL. In the following section the learning theory framework in which RBL is grounded will be scrutinised. This will be crucial in order to reconceptualise an inadequate understanding of RBL at HE institutions in SA [This was confirmed by the pilot study (*vide* 5.3.1) which investigated the presence and operation of RBL in the HE sector in SA]. Finally I would like to argue that despite evidence of the pitfalls of RBL, there is substantial research to demonstrate that the advantages and improvements of RBL exceed the disadvantages of RBL, especially when supported by an appropriate staff development model (*vide* Chapter 4 & 9).

2.2 RATIONALE FOR RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING

Within the new landscape of HE traditional course design, delivery modes and support services have demonstrated the need for transformation. Various authors highlight this, for example:

- Lectures and textbooks are no longer adequate tools for preparing learners for problem-solving in a complex world (Breivik 1992; Ryan *et al.* 2000).
- A knowledge base alone is not enough for learners to survive in a swiftly changing world (Farmer & Mech 1992; Ryan *et al.* 2000).
- The paradigm shift from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach is vital. The reason for this is that the former approach is inclined to lack of flexibility and has a likelihood of inhibiting the development of lifelong learning skills, which is now one of HE's most valuable outcomes (Meade 1997; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2000) (*vide* Figure 1.1 & 1.2).
- According to Le Grange (2002) the challenges for SAHE transformation include the increased emphasis on (besides learning and research) community service as well as the inclusion of indigenous ways of knowing.
- Paul, Teichler and Van Der Velden (2000); Teichler (2000) as well as Beyliefeld and Jama (2002) noted that the relationship between HE and the world of work has become a major curriculum transformation issue. Due to the acceleration in the use or development of technology there is an emphasis shift from factual knowledge towards methodological knowledge and skills.

It is evident from the above-mentioned transformation, that the challenge of creating, preserving and transmitting knowledge will now be shifted towards the learner. In practice this implies that the student experience is central to RBL – where the learning facilitator will now act as intellectual (Pence 1992; Holtzhausen 1999). This transformation of the South African educational system highlights the necessity for professional development of educators to enable them to meet the constantly evolving challenges of a society

characterised by change and development – an aspect which cannot be overemphasised (*vide* Chapters 3, 4 & 9).

In addition, there are many incentives for developing new forms of provision in the knowledge transmission and -production practice (i.e. towards learning-based delivery modes such as RBL) in which learners spend more time than hitherto in learning on their own than face-to-face with an academic (Gibbs, Pollard & Farrell 1994; Rowntree 2000). A few examples of these above-mentioned incentives are the following:

- Student numbers have increased greatly but resources have not increased comparably; therefore most staff:student ratios worsened significantly to 1:200 in the year 2000 (RSA MoE 2000).
- The student population has become more diverse, which pressurised staff to be competent, aware and sensitive to the increased cultural needs within the learning environment, e.g. the student population in 2000 consisted of 26% White, 6% Coloured, 7% Indian and 61% Black (RSA MoE 2000).
- Shorter, modular courses are becoming the norm and employers are demanding more flexible and cost-effective learning provision for their staff (RSA MoE 2000).
- The ICT explosion resulted in multimedia and computer conferencing technologies which enable interactive and individualised learning which would otherwise be impossible in class-based systems (RSA MoE 2000).
- It has also been demonstrated that HE institutions worldwide can now enrol additional students (as distance learners) without a comparable

increase in the need for resources. The shift towards learner-centred approaches, such as RBL, also appeals to management because it is seen as the only means by which HE can safeguard quality HE in the face of massification as well as aiming to improve access, e.g. enabling learning to take place anywhere, at any time and at the pace set by the learner (Gibbs *et al.* 1994; Harrigan & Wade 1995; Johnston 1997; Welch 1998; Rowntree 2000; Le Grange 2002).

Equally important aspects of RBL, which could improve its conceptualisation, will be addressed next.

2.3 RECONNAISSANCE OF THE RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING CONCEPT

Recently, there has been a growing interest in RBL, partly due to the fact that it reflects new trends and developments when using learning technologies and it serves as an umbrella term for various HE concepts like open learning, flexible learning, individualised learning, computer aided learning, problem-based learning, student-centred learning and self-organised learning (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2000). Although these explanations are useful to demonstrate the shift from traditional forms of knowledge transmission and -production, it could create difficulties (i.e. blurring the distinctions between teacher-centred and learner-centred or between self-organised learning and learning that follows an instructional system). However, it is useful to explain these shifts as moving away from traditional forms of teaching and learning. The latter encounters a focus on learning and a shift towards a facilitator role - as the manager of knowledge. Similar to the outcomes-based curriculum methodology it emphasises a holistic and integrated approach towards learning, which entails mastering of content, competencies and processes within a specific context. It will also have an influence on how and what learners will learn and achieve [Olivier 1998;

University of Pretoria (UP) 1999]. Other similarities with outcomes-based education (OBE) are that it is also learner-driven, knowledge and skills can be drawn from different source and learners are guided only towards achievement.

A term can present many opportunities for misinterpretation. Therefore I would now like to explore the concept RBL.

2.3.1 Establishing a well-defined image of Resource-based Learning

A useful summary of the RBL definition, as emphasised by the Australian National Council of Open and Distance Learning (NCODE) will serve as a starting point. This NCODE definition stresses that RBL encompasses:

...an integrated set of strategies to promote student-centred learning in a mass education context, through a combination of especially designed learning resources and interactive media and technologies (*vide* Ryan et al. 2001:30).

The above-mentioned definition represents a significant shift in pedagogical theory and practice from a focus on improving teaching to a focus on improving learning. The latter implies the active engagement (via facilitation) with learners by using various sources to acquire knowledge (*vide* 1.1 & 1.7.2). RBL strategies also have strong links with open/distance education (e.g. to teach learners on campus, at home or at work) as well as stressing the appropriate use of ICT. Although the above-mentioned definition indicated that internationally the initial driving force for RBL was identified as massification, in the SAHE context the motives for RBL were rather the profound impact of the ICT on the whole HE system. In this system fundamental developments occurring in access to education, the way

institutions function as well as the teaching and learning process itself. The innovative nature and user-friendliness of this delivery mode were of great value due to better and different transformed curricula and approaches which enhanced the learning process of diverse, multilingual, older and non-traditional SA learners. Hence SAHE institutions had to become more entrepreneurial to prioritise their resources, change instruction methods and increase the use of technology (Davies 2001). Although massification internationally has had a significant impact on knowledge transmission and -production, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (2002) noted that it was not clear whether their critical impact on knowledge transmission and -production policy and practice had been generally comprehended.

The aim of RBL, as opposed to various traditional delivery modes, is learning that actively engages learners by using various resources merging into a learning partnership (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). In order to validate this, the following input have to be added to my preferred definition of RBL (*vide* 1.7.2) that *learning is regarded as a social process where the provision of an effective learning environment and material are vital to facilitate the active, independent acquisition of knowledge and self-fulfilment at the learner's own pace. In fact this social learning process occurs in a shared, participatory working relationship between learners and facilitators (vide 1.1; 1.7; 2.3 & 2.4), which would also entail the following:*

- RBL is a learning-based mode (i.e. including open and flexible learning) with diverse learners in the centre of the process, assisted by various resources (e.g. learning facilitator, ICT, textbooks, study guides, etc.) working independently and at their own pace, with quality material and feedback loops, to achieve actualisation of own potential.

- In this changed context for learning in HE, the diverse population of learners is becoming more demanding as clients and where the government and society justly require HE institutions to be accountable for public investment, learning must be effective.
- Improved learning productivity will only be possible if there is a dynamic interaction between the conditions and experience of learning, like in RBL. The latter implies not a "fast-food" approach to learning, but strives towards the achievement of effective learning, without compromising the quality and sustainability of the other.

Furthermore it represents both a curriculum and delivery methodology by which the **learning content is more accessible** and the **emphasis is shifted from the lecturer as the main source of knowledge to the facilitator as the manager of knowledge**. RBL is therefore one of the most useful, successful and acceptable approaches to curriculum delivery, because it adapts easily to different learning methods as well as being the key to better and different approaches to learning and guidance (e.g. indirectly emphasised that leadership is intertwined with institutional culture formation). These new facilitators within learning institutions will be confronted with new roles (*vide* 3.3) which are one of the dominant functions of all HE staff. The quality of the instruction is also likely to reflect the status of learning within the academy. When instruction (e.g. like RBL in this study) is a valued activity, in which effective performance is rewarded and acknowledged, then academics will aspire to the challenge of performing at high levels. In practice, although institutions have seriously taken the challenge of raising the quality of learning and whilst there is evidence of strong institutional commitment, gaps remain between institutional rhetoric and practice when it comes to rewarding and acknowledging effective instruction (Commonwealth Department of Education, Science & Training 2002).

RBL also unites all the resource elements (i.e. tutor/facilitator, learners and learning resources) into a learning partnership. Within this partnership there are eleven new roles the RBL facilitator will be confronted with (*vide* 3.3). Within this rapidly changing higher educational situation, the main shift in roles in the learning-based approach is from an information transmitter to a facilitator. Due to the fact that academics are not the same (e.g. demonstrate different strengths and varied performance), there exists a dynamic and diverse group of people. The impact of the above-mentioned on practice and performance will also vary. Each academic in HE also has two functions, namely as subject specialist and as educator (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science & Training 2002).

In such a HE system the incredibly complex environment should be underpinned by scholarship³. These academics as scholars need to contribute to their disciplines as well as to integrate into their delivery mode the knowledge and understanding which they or others create. In order to achieve this and act accordingly, academics should not only nurture all other professionals in every field of human endeavour, but also adhere to professional development opportunities in instruction and learning issues.

All the above-mentioned accentuate the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, which can partly be achieved via providing learning resources with which the learners engage in an interactive manner. These resources also assist students in becoming independent learners where the lecturer's role as information transmitter/provider is transformed into being a mentor and learning facilitator. Ryan *et al.* (2000) also added the increased involvement in the production of RBL materials, thus becoming expert instructional designers in their own right. By using these resources, which facilitate autonomous, reflective learning, RBL is improving the quality of knowledge transmission and -production.

³ I agree with the expanded definition of Ernest Boyer's Four Scholarships (*vide* Glassick 2002:3), which include "research and three additional forms of scholarly work – integration, application and teaching".

Finally, the conceptualisation of RBL was necessary, not only for the purposes of this study to provide a frame of reference, but also in general to reflect fads, fashions, political tides and academic trends (Mouton 2001). These definitions, especially the one favoured in this study, stress essential arguments and elements of RBL which will be discussed next.

2.4 STATEMENTS CONCERNING RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING

Despite the importance and value of RBL, it appears to be a complex concept to comprehend. Not because the curriculum and delivery mode are so perplexing, but rather because of the unawareness of how and where it holistically fits within the HE context (this uncertainty was confirmed by the pilot study as described in Chapter 5) and its foundation (i.e. in which learning theory framework is it grounded). The following statements concerning RBL will attempt to put RBL into context:

- **RBL can be considered to be open or flexible in nature.** Open learning packages are learning resources in their own right, whether they are print-based, computer-based or multimedia in design (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; NCODE 2001). The learning process in RBL generally opens up freedom of space and time, if not always of place. Educators do not always welcome this freedom and openness – a number are reluctant or even anxious about it because of losing their power as main source of knowledge and their position of authority in the learning situation.
- **RBL suggests that the subject content is provided to learners through materials rather than teaching.** Resource-based as a concept is used as an opposite to taught as a concept (Taylor 1972;

- Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). With the latter in mind, good face-to-face teaching and learning often depends on the learners' working independently with learning resources during sessions, as well as outside the formal contact time. Quality RBL materials and the quality of the role of the facilitator as resource material producer (*vide* 3.3) are crucial to provide quality instruction.
- **The learning that happens in learning resource centres is usually considered to be resource-based.** The latter presupposes that RBL is frequently based on the sort of open learning resources which have a premium location in a particular centre, with technical or tutor support available if necessary, instead of materials for learners to use at home (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). In practice, RBL could be delivered through these centres (where the physical environment experienced by learners, also has to be considered). Currently due to the high cost involved with implementation of RBL, there are no RBL centres in SA, but it is implemented as a curriculum and delivery methodology in HE institutions.
- **Learning resources can be quite traditional in nature, too.** RBL programmes include proper study guides or briefing notes as well as resources such as textbooks, videos, journals and audiotapes located within various places (e.g. learning centres, libraries, etc.) when issued to or borrowed by learners (Mullan 1995; Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; NCODE 2001). It is clear from the above-mentioned that RBL is not a new invention, but rather the adaptation of existing curriculum and delivery methodologies to be relevant and effective within the new HE landscape.
- **Students may require appropriate induction into how RBL elements in their courses should best be approached.** Learners can benefit if aware of the design of learning materials, because it can

assist them while learning and guide them to monitor their own progress (Brown & Smith 1996; Cartwright 1999; Ryan *et al.* 2000). An orientation at the beginning of the course/programme as well as a study guide on RBL as curriculum and delivery methodology could not only assist learners to get a holistic picture, but also serve as a self-evaluation tool to determine their progress with regard to the effective use of RBL.

- **RBL usually accommodates a considerable amount of learning-by-doing.** It is crucial that resources provide learning opportunities to practice as well as opportunities to make mistakes within relative privacy (Cartwright 1999; Ryan *et al.* 2000). In a learner-centred approach where facilitators and learners are now in partnership with one another and sharing responsibility, learners could feel initially anxious, lost, frustrated, etc. (Manitoba Department of Education 1994; Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2001). To overcome this barrier in the implementation of RBL, it is essential to create a safe learning environment for trial-and-error of learners.
- **RBL depends on learners being provided with feedback on how their learning is going.** Feedback is provided to learners via human tutors or interactive elements within the learning resources where the feedback be provided in print or on-screen (Mullan 1995; Ryan *et al.* 2000). This demonstrates that feedback loops are crucial for learners to first become aware of their progress (i.e. success of failure), before action towards improvement can follow.
- **Clearly expressed learning outcomes are important in all kinds of RBL.** The wording of the intended learning outcomes is vital, because tutor support is not always available and then the tone-of-voice and facial expression could indicate to learners the acquired expectations (Cartwright 1999; Ryan *et al.* 2000). Thus, not only is the

quality of RBL learning material (where learning outcomes form part of it) important, but also the clarity of learning outcomes (e.g. where it becomes the indirect steering mechanism for learners who have to work independently).

- **Assessment criteria need to be clearly stated along with RBL.** Learners use cues from expected performance criteria and indicators of kind of evidence (or extent) of the evidence they should accumulate in order to demonstrate that they have learnt successfully from the RBL materials (Cartwright 1999; Ryan *et al.* 2000). Guidelines with regard to assessment criteria would provide clarity to learners about what is expected of them, how it will be marked and in the assessment feedback sheet what areas need improvement.
- **RBL often needs appropriate face-to-face debriefing.** It could be worthwhile to use a whole contact session to reflect on elements of RBL, including answering learners' questions (Mullan 1995; Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). These group sessions could provide valuable feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the materials as well as mutual support for learners, because RBL can be a lonely learning road to follow.

Considering the above-mentioned statements, it appears that RBL is an appropriate alternative for conventional learning and learning methods. The reason for this is the rapid expansion of HE and the continued decline in funding which put enormous pressure on HE to transform their curricula and delivery modes. Furthermore within this changing learning environment of HE institutions, academic staff are also required to acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes, while the finances and staffing for training becomes increasingly strained (Gibbs *et al.* 1994; Rowntree 2000).

Bearing in mind all the above-mentioned remarks on RBL, I will now formulate my own RBL definition.

2.5 AN INDIVIDUAL, HOLISTIC RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING DEFINITION

RBL appears to be a multi-dimensional and complex umbrella term. I conceptualise RBL as follows:

A lifelong learning driven methodology and delivery mode as a part of a comprehensive learning plan consisting of integrated inquiry and discovery strategies to enhance student-centred learning within a participatory and reflective working relationship. Within this learning environment, interlocking support systems such as sources and ICT (interactive media and technologies) that assist the active, independent acquisition of knowledge and self-fulfilment of learners to progress at their own pace steering towards quality improvement.

Considering this holistic RBL definition, it is evident that it represents a multimodal learning strategy. It is now first important to investigate within which learning theory framework RBL is grounded. This will not only assist in improving the comprehension of RBL, but it is also vital to conceptualise an RBL staff development model in the same learning theory.

2.6 RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING: AN EXCURSION INTO A LEARNING THEORY

The core issue in HE is knowledge (i.e. production and transmission), therefore learning theories have been developed to indicate when effective learning and instruction occur (Mullan 1995; Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Tennyson 2002). The roots of instructional design can be traced to early efforts between the science of psychology and the practical application of learning theory in educational settings (Tennyson 2002). Although the context within which instruction and learning occur may change, the underlying principles to good practice remain similar. Before analysing to which learning theory RBL belongs, it is essential to address the question: What is learning? According to diverse authors (Thorndike 1913; Gagné 1962; Ryan *et al.* 2000; Tennyson 2002) learning is:

- **A process of cognitive construction.** During the learning process new cognitive structures are acquired in order to adapt to the situation. Constructivist theories of learning emphasised that certain cognitive structures and processes actively guide the constructivist activities. Therefore, learners can learn to learn, but need cognition to enhance learning outcomes.

Kolb (1984) includes ideas of Lewin and Piaget, but mainly views learning as a cyclic activity in four phases (i.e. abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation, concrete experience and reflection on experience). The latter demonstrates similarities to RBL – where the learner is not a passive recipient, but active participant in the learning process.

Kolb's model was improved by Rescher (1973; 1977) when he formulated a two-cycle model of learning. The first cycle corresponds

with the acquisition and justification of the “why knowledge” in order to achieve coherence. The second cycle focuses on the “how knowledge”, thus implementing new methods/procedures/operations to solve problems. The underlying flexibility also corresponds with the RBL approach.

- **A conversation.** In these learning theories, the role of the lecturer/academic/facilitator is crucial for learning to take place via discussion. This encounters a verbal conversation as a result of behavioural interaction via a shared modelling facility. This process is also characterised by two complementary effective learning aspects, namely comprehension learning (why?) and operation learning (how?). When compared to RBL, the role of the facilitator is less dominant, but still crucial for two-way communication. He also has to guide the comprehension process of difficult cognitive concepts.

Quality learning is dependent on various experiences – where the silent profile of the facilitator in RBL is still determined to the extent that the learner performs (e.g. the quality of RBL materials produced and provided).

Having focused on the meaning of learning, the learning theory within which RBL is grounded, will now be investigated.

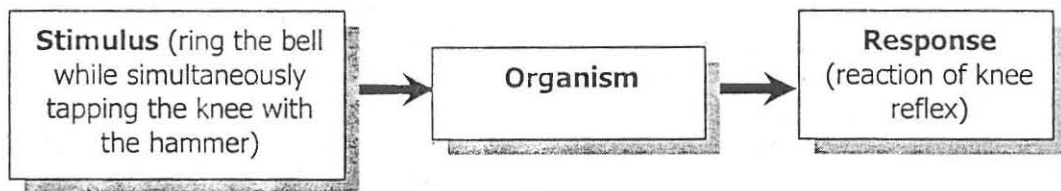
There is a plethora of literature on **learning theories** and higher educational instructional design (e.g. RBL) that purportedly enhances **learning** (Semple 2000; Tennyson 2002). Less is seemingly available, which integrates the two dimensions and includes reference to implications for training and professional development for HE educators (especially in this study with regard to RBL practitioners).

Five major theoretical approaches in psychology (i.e. psychoanalytic, behaviourism, humanistic, neurobiological and cognitive) - with regard to a

topic like learning exist. For the purposes of this study, the following learning theories will be analysed according to whether or not they complement RBL.

2.6.1 Behavioural learning theories

These learning theories ignore the visible characteristics and subjective experiences during the learning process, thus focusing only on the stimulus-response-reaction and knowledge is seen as objective, given and absolute (Semple 2000).



In the following decades, the behavioural paradigm gradually gave way to various cognitive approaches to learning, beginning with Bruner (1964) who started to move away from the stimulus-response reinforcement model towards instructional design practices which focuses partly on the mental processes of the learner. At this stage the consideration of cognitive learning theories and linking those theories to instructional design became important. (*vide* 2.5.2 & 2.5.3). Another shift was the existential-humanism movement (e.g. like Maslow and Rogers) who criticised behaviourism and psychoanalysts' determination of humans by external stimuli or intrapsychic impressions during the first six years, thus moving away to a point where humans can do enormous things by means of choices. This view definitely joins the RBL perspective where the learner can progress on his or her own without dramatic external assistance.

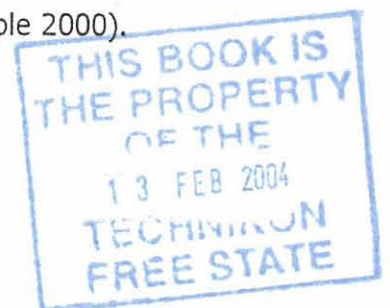
The outcome of all this was rapid proliferation of instructional design models covering a wide range of perspectives, where psychologists and educators pursued their ideas in a competitive environment.

The reason that RBL does not fit into this specific approach, is embedded in the following criticism of behaviourism:

- The role of the person responsible for the instruction is too minimalised. Although the focus in RBL is on the learner, the quality of learning is still indirectly dependent on learning materials.
- The education situation is cold, mechanistic and dehumanising. It regards the human being as a biological machine who reacts well to prepared stimuli. In RBL the human factor is considered and learning is recognised as a social process.
- Important learning aims (e.g. attitudes) are not measurable (Green 1984; Thompson, Simonson & Hargrave 1992; Hergenhahn 1993).

Despite the evidence of these significant differences with regard to RBL, there appeared to be one similarity, namely technology as a key step to support the education procedure. The only difference is locked up in the fact that in the strict behaviouristic approach the pace of the learning process is determined by facts or conceptional wisdom before the development of proposed steps. In RBL the pace is determined by the learner himself/herself (Case & Bereiter 1984; Semple 2000).

Hence it appears that RBL is not assorted into this learning theory. Justification for this, namely the use of drill and practice as well as tutorial programmes lies in its ability to teach new skills, employ rote learning, strengthen already rote learned associations and reinforce knowledge or skills acquisition, but not in incorporating several levels of difficulty and a great number of examples are able to be randomly generated (which are vital in RBL) (Wagner & Gagné 1988; Squires & McDougall 1994; Semple 2000).



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2.6.2 Gestalt learning theories

These learning theories focus on the holistic pattern of a concept (i.e. to study the whole learning experience), instead of the separate parts, to form a holistic picture (e.g. like the behaviourists that focus on units of stimulus and response) (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998; Westheimer 1999). It appears that it was not only behaviourism which was influenced by Gestalt⁴, but Gestalt theorists also used behaviourist principles in their own learning theories while maintaining the focus on holistic learning.

There exist basic similarities and differences between the Gestalt learning theories and RBL. The similarities are (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998; Westheimer 1999):

- Learning is viewed as a process of gaining insight.
- The learner is active, both physically and mentally, when engaged in the learning process.
- Awareness of the structure of learning content and the relationships between elements helps learners to conceptualise the learning material as an organised body of learning.
- Learning material is organised in such a way that learners perceive it as a whole.

With regard to differences, the following points are noted (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998; Westheimer 1999):

⁴ Gestalt is the German word meaning *form* or *whole*. In Gestalt learning theories the focus is on learning as the perception of a whole, rather than the perception of separate parts of the whole.

- In the classroom situation Gestalt theorists use highlighting, framing and contrasting content material in order to clarify the learning material to learners, while in the RBL context the same techniques are used in the material itself.
- All new learning should be based on recalling previous knowledge (Gestalt learning theories), while in RBL prior knowledge does not have to determine new knowledge.

It is clear that some of the principles of the Gestalt learning theories are similar to those of RBL. However, due to the two core differences, RBL is not completely grounded in the Gestalt learning theories. Prior knowledge is not essential in RBL to internalise new learning and the focus is not on the achievement of content only, but also on skills, attitudes and values.

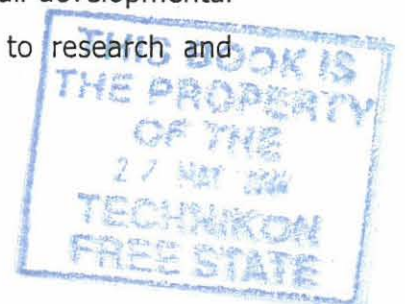
2.6.3 Cognitive and Metacognitive learning theories

The focus of these theories is on the development of the learner's thinking processes, which extend the concept of learning beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge (i.e. behavioural objectives) towards understanding the competent performance in various domains of knowledge and skills (Tennyson 2002).

The cognitive concept in these theories refers to systematic development of structures of meaningful knowledge in the learner's mind – a trend towards methods of information analysis where cognitive psychologists attempt to find the best ways of promoting meaningful learning. In addition, the emphasis is on learning by discovery through which learners explore new ideas, develop new skills and discover the truth for themselves. This principle is similar to the principle of learning at the learner's own pace, as in the case of RBL.

Another development was the metacognitive theories, which focus on the learners' awareness of how to learn, control and evaluate their own learning progress. The metacognition concept refers to the control that learners are able to exercise over their own learning processes. Metacognitive learning implies learners' cognitive abilities and their application of such knowledge during the learning process (Braten 1991). Knowledge of metacognition leads to a conscious monitoring and control of learning, which as an end result empowers learners to monitor their own learning. This also provides a reflection of the learner's planning, evaluation and regulation of the learning act. These strategies of metacognition are similar to RBL, with the only difference that the majority of these strategies have to be incorporated in the learning materials.

One of the proponents of the metacognition strategies is **Lev Vygotsky**. He is a Russian learning psychologist who published his ideas about the role of language in the development of the thought processes in 1934. According to him people use tools to understand their environment (e.g. psychological tools such as language and mathematics, in the modern world the computer, etc.) (Daniels 1996; Rautenbach 1996). In brief, Vygotsky's theory of mediated learning is based on the understanding of learning tools, the role of language in the learning process, human activity systems and internationalisation as a requirement for meaningful learning. These principles are also vital in RBL, because cognitive processes can be affected by the social interactions in which they are embedded and joint involvement episodes provide an effective context for learner growth. However, it is also dangerous making too strong claims for the part played by the social context (e.g. interaction with others can facilitate cognitive development under many circumstances and under certain circumstances may even be essential) (Daniels 1996). Thus it is unlikely that all skills acquired at all developmental stages originate in social interactions. There is a need to research and



establish what kinds of social interactions promote what kinds of cognitive achievements at what ages and in what manner. A key facet of the above-mentioned theory is the concept of "the zone of proximal development" (Daniels 1996; Hedegaard 1996). The latter refers to potential development of a learner - thus the learning in this area pulls development along by structuring instructional methods (i.e. tool for instruction). To develop higher cognitive processes in a learner has its origin in social interaction as well as a shift from the traditional delivery method to constantly and deliberately force learners to act towards a delivery method where learners are guided to critical evaluations of concepts (both these are crucial aspects in RBL where deeper learning could take place).

Another follower of metacognition strategies is **Feuerstein** whose theory is characterised by two core concepts, namely the role of culture and the mediated learning experience (MLE) (Mentis & Frielick 1992). The latter implies that cognitive development is the result of MLE (i.e. results from the interactional processes between developing human beings and experienced human beings). Furthermore, Feuerstein believes that MLE is a prerequisite for effective, independent, reflective thinking, as well as the means by which learners obtain a proactive attitude toward thinking and problem-solving. These two elements are also crucial for the independent RBL learner. Furthermore, both Vygotsky and Feuerstein require instruction to be ahead of the learner's development and aimed at the higher level of the learner's cognitive functioning (Mentis & Frielick 1992; Rautenbach 1996) – also a core issue which is important in RBL, namely that the learner is self-regulated and mediation done in a different way. RBL also has a post-modernistic outlook – belief in the learner's abilities where it has to function on a relatively high level of Bloom's taxonomy. Since the facilitator and material are the only guides (always one step ahead of the learners) student-centred learning strives towards self-actualisation via evaluation (the highest cognitive level of Bloom's Taxonomy). The latter referred to the major categories of the

cognitive domain as identified by Bloom in 1956 as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

2.6.4 Constructivist learning theories

The core of the Constructivist learning theories is based on the idea that learners must individually discover and transform complex information if they are to make it their own (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998; UP 1999). This implies a far more active role for learners as well as putting emphasis on the process goals. Success of this practice is dependent on a learning environment within which support and guidance are available – also important aspects for the RBL instruction mode. However, RBL (e.g. where the facilitator is to a great extent absent) is not directly in line with Social Constructivism where new constructs are only formed on condition that human interaction is present.

Constructivist approaches make extensive use of co-operative learning, which entails that learners will easier discover and understand difficult concepts easily if they have opportunities to discuss problems they experience while learning (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998; UP 1999). Thus a problem-based context emphasises interaction among group members which can be best facilitated by a virtual learning environment (e.g. also important for RBL).

It also appears that RBL is mainly grounded in the constructivist perspective. There have been attempts to put constructivism into a learning theory. This theory is usually described as a contrast to the behaviouristic model. According to Jordaan and Jordaan (1998) the constructivistic perspective is also in contrast with the cognitivist perspective. It appears that RBL not only fits in this learning theory, but is also grounded in this learning theory, which is demonstrated in the following characteristics of the Constructivistic approach:

- It follows a flexible approach to the learning process (RBL facilitator only manages the knowledge/resources, not the structured information transmitter any more).
- The course is controlled by networking (RBL is dependent on various resource and technology channels to be successful).
- It has a real world context orientation (RBL learning materials strive to be market-orientated).
- Learner should have intrinsic motivation (the RBL learner has to work on his/her own at his/her own pace).
- Individual learners are recognised and supported (the RBL learning facilitator still assists and supports learners with problems).
- Sensitive to culture issues (RBL resource material producers strive to multiply the examples in order to be culturally relevant).
- Collaboration is central to learning (the RBL facilitator and learner are now in partnership, thus dependent on each other and various resources).
- Relationship between mentor and student (similar to the RBL facilitator and learner's relationship).
- Both the facilitator and the learner are responsible for the success of the instruction – as in RBL, partners in the learning process (Cronje 1997; UP 1999; Ryan *et al.* 2000).

According to the above-mentioned it is clear that RBL corresponds with the constructivist principles about **learning** which have an affect on the practice, namely:

- Knowledge is constructed from experience of the learner.
- Knowledge resides in the mind rather than externally.
- Personal interpretation of the world according to the learner's beliefs and values is used in interpreting objects and events.
- An active process of giving meaning to experience exists.
- It takes place in a context relevant to the learner.
- Reflection is an essential part.
- A collaborative process in which multiple perspectives are considered (UP 1999; Semple 2000).

It is also evident that not only knowledge and understanding, but also the characteristics of the learners themselves influence learning (e.g. cultural and socio-economic background, their values and beliefs as well as motivation and expectations in the learning environment). Thus the two essential aspects of RBL are nurtured within this learning theory, namely flexibility (i.e. the ability to cope with a variety of learning styles) and the promotion of student autonomy.

Having explored constructivism as a theory of learning and how it links with RBL, it is necessary within the SAHE context to highlight the symbiotic relationship between constructivism and an OBE approach. Lifelong learning, flexible education and training structures, the integration and transfer of learning as well as the need to teach towards crossfield and specific outcomes are the main underlying OBE principles (UP 1999). Competence is also seen as combining skill, values and knowledge (Gultig 1997). All these principles and aspects are also echoed in RBL, viz. learner-centred approach, different learning styles and rates of learning which need to be acknowledged and

incorporated in the development and implementation of learning programmes (Lubisi, Wedekind, Parker & Gultig 1997).

In the above-mentioned there is sufficient evidence that **virtual learning environments facilitate constructivist learning and RBL**. It is, however, important to analyse possible practical challenges for these instruction methods. Thus, I identify the following inherent challenges and principles:

Principle A: Problem-based collaboration and co-operation to promote critical thinking and team working skills are important in the learning environment.

Challenge: It is time intensive to co-ordinate effective co-operative groups and it becomes difficult with large groups of learners.

Principle B: A learner-centred approach in which the learner constructs meaning through active engagement with the learning environment. Instruction is designed to accommodate the learner's prior knowledge, skills and learning style.

Challenge: This is very difficult in distance education and with very large groups of learners.

Principle C: Formative and summative assessment are both essential assessment methods.

Challenge: The workload of staff will increase.

Principle D: The necessity of rich, flexible learning environments which should simulate real life if it cannot be real life.

Challenge: Creating rich learning environments such as simulations are often very expensive and time-consuming.

The solutions to these above-mentioned principles and challenges would be discussed during the empirical study (*vide* 10.5).

2.6.5 Critical thinking

Currently, knowledge is increasing at an exceptionally rapid rate. It is not possible for the modern learner to assimilate more than a fraction of the knowledge available in the world (knowledge revolution) (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998). Knowledge changes as research, invention and discovery occur. Contemporary learners need to be able to gain access to information. They also need to be able to view knowledge critically and to evaluate its usefulness. This links with the view where learners act as active meaning-giving beings which has the implication that learners take control of their own acquisition of learning (McNamee 1996; Steyn & Hay 1999). This is in contrast to the traditional teacher for whom it was paramount to steer the learning in an orderly and logically way. This movement led to learner-centred approaches like RBL. Thus learners need to be taught critical thinking skills which are the ability to accurately and efficiently conceptualise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information as a guide to belief and action (Jordaan & Jordaan 1998; Scriven & Paul 2000). It appears that these skills and abilities are also vital in RBL. In order to apply critical thinking in the learning situation, questioning could be used to promote thinking. By using for example, Bloom's Taxonomy (i.e. evaluation, synthesis, analysis, application, understanding and knowledge) (*vide* 2.5.3) learners can exercise their judgement to produce a better quality of thinking rather than to prove their knowledge. Thus organisation, prioritisation and structure of knowledge elements are on the agenda of the learner (Scriven & Paul 2000). These are

also crucial elements in RBL where the facilitator is under tremendous pressure to fulfil all these tasks. This includes maintaining neutrality, having role clarity, preparing well-planned agendas, managing the process, using effective questions and summaries, handling difficult people and situations skilfully and making it easy for learners to succeed (Ryan *et al.* 2000).

2.7 INTEGRATING AND ENERGISING THE CURRENT RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING PRACTICE BY USING HIGHER EDUCATION CRITICISM AND CONNOISSEURSHIP

This chapter explored how four ideas of RBL, namely learning-driven HE, systems thinking, constructivism and a collaborative learning partnership were shaping a new direction in HE. **Learning-driven education** judges the success of learning by what learners actually know and what they can do as a result of their time in a higher educational institution (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training 2002). This complements the RBL mode where active learning is critical and where the focus has shifted from generic skills towards a combination that includes content-specific skills (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). The fact that RBL is a learner-centred approach confirms the learning-driven action where learners are encouraged to become active participants in their own learning while investigating various topics and a collection of resources. A more holistic approach to learning (i.e. focusing on learning rather than covering the content) where the learning facilitator's role is also more active.

Systems thinking is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things. This links with the collaborative learning partnership of RBL where each component (i.e. learners and facilitator) and learning resource is essential for the success of the learning process. It also increased the responsibility of the different parties involved (Ryan *et al.* 2000). Thus where learning was fragmented in the past, it is now a comprehensive plan. This

indirectly also motivates lifelong learning for all parties with the aim of development and improvement (Sparks & Hirsh 1997).

Constructivism views learners as the creators of their own knowledge structures rather than receiving them from others (Semple 2000). This is substantiated in RBL, where the learners are partners in the learning process (i.e. active learning participants and utilised two-way communication is part of an active learning process) (Brown & Smith 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). The task of the learning facilitator in RBL, as in Constructivism, is to organise and support learning environments according to the learners' cognitive state, focusing on personal exploration and expression with internal development (Squires & McDougall 1994; Semple 2000). This revealed that flexibility within the learning situation is imperative and reflection and collaboration have to be part of the educator's profile (Greening 1998; Semple 2000).

Learning partnership represents the amalgamating of all the resource elements (i.e. tutor/facilitator, learners and learning resources). In this learning partnership in RBL the design and execution of these RBL programmes enables joint planning and team learning efforts to build the research process directly into the classroom endeavours (Manitoba Department of Education 1994; Ryan *et al.* 2000).

I have identified and discussed the different notions of RBL (e.g. as epitomised by the RBL definition and Constructivist learning theory), which verified my conceptualisation of RBL, namely:

A learning-driven curriculum and methodology which accommodates diverse, independent learners, progressing at their own pace only if quality learning material and feedback loops are present, as well as striving towards satisfaction within the learning partnership.

It is thus evident that RBL is a multifaceted and thorny delivery mode, which requires both a mind shift and transformation of practice to be successfully implemented. In short, RBL facilitators may need to obtain new knowledge, competencies and attitudes. It can be disastrous to assume that effective lecturers will automatically be effective RBL facilitators, because RBL is very much about reducing or otherwise modifying the central role of the human teacher. Dynamic involvement in this can make a real contribution to professional development, which emphasises the need for staff development (role of training and process of empowerment), as a prerequisite for successful and effective RBL implementation (*vide* Chapters 3, 4 & 9), as well as the need to be supported and valued by the institution (i.e. institutional and departmental levels).

2.8 REFLECTING ON INDIVIDUAL, HOLISTIC RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING DEFINITION

When scrutinising the proposed definition it is evident that it addresses the four notions (*vide* 2.6) as stipulated for RBL practice. Representing a learning driven mode (e.g. the learner in the centre of the learning process) within a systems approach (i.e. focusing on interrelationships) where Constructivist views (i.e. learners create own knowledge) and collaborative learning partnership (e.g. shared responsibility and two-way communication counts) is crucial for quality learning development and improvement.

Within this radical shift in learning, new processes and procedures need to be put in place. In order to be successful, the people that lead this change should display visionary leadership – emphasising again the importance and need for RBL Academic Staff Development (*vide* Chapter 3; 4 & 9).

2.9 CONCLUSION

In order to comprehend RBL and prevent inadequate understanding of its principles, it was essential to provide a definition of RBL as well as the rationale for this delivery mode. This study then continued then to advocate that the advantages of RBL exceed the disadvantages, which make it an effective delivery mode and methodology.

In addition, although it is always useful to break down a curriculum and delivery mode into parts to first understand the parts before attempting to understand holistically, the disadvantage is that an integrated understanding of the "whole" may be lost. For the purposes of this study it was vital to first break down all the learning theories and then integrate this information and the facts of RBL into a holistic summary in order to establish not only where RBL fits into the HE context, but also to determine in which learning theory framework it is grounded. This would provide essential data for the developing of a staff development model for those involved in RBL (which will now be explored in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4) as well as solutions to the identified inherent challenges during the empirical investigation (Chapters 6-8).

Chapter 3

STAFF DEVELOPMENT: RBL IMPROVEMENT

*... it is becoming more and more evident that the
quality of staff is a crucial element ...
Sadly staff development has received little attention,
being measured by the mere advancement up the
academic ladder. Currently only a handful of
lecturers have been professionally trained in the art of
teaching and learning.*
(Cairns 1990:87)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter served a very important purpose by building on RBL, as a curriculum and delivery mode, and grounding it in the Constructivist learning theory (*vide* 2.5.4) as well as moving towards the improvement of the RBL delivery mode by means of quality staff development. Chapter 3 attempts to conceptualise staff development, with the focus on the knowledge transmission and -production function of the RBL academic. In view of the important role that staff development plays in supporting and enhancing the academic, RBL academic staff development is a powerful instrument for promoting the outcomes of HE as stipulated in the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001a):

Table 3.1: Outcomes (1-6) stipulated in the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001a)

PRODUCING THE GRADUATES NEEDED FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA	
SECTION 2:	
Outcome 1:	Increased participation rate
Outcome 2:	Increased graduate outputs
Outcome 3:	Broadened social base of students
Outcome 4:	Increased recruitment of students from SADC countries
Outcome 5:	Fluctuating changed enrolments in fields of study
Outcome 6:	Enhanced cognitive skills of graduates

Given the importance of high-level skills and human resources for social and economic development in a knowledge-driven world, RBL Academic Staff Development could play an essential role in empowering the human capacity and supplying the human resource requirements of the country by organising relevant development and training opportunities (such as RBL competencies, roles and improvement strategies) and networks.

Table 3.2: Outcomes (7-8) stipulated in the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001a)

ACHIEVING EQUITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	
SECTION 3:	
Outcome 7:	Inequities in SAHE
Outcome 8:	Increased equity in access and success rates

RBL Academic Staff Development will not necessarily address the achievement of equity in relation to the composition of the student and staff bodies, as part of the transformation of the SAHE system. However, it will strive towards staff empowerment by identification of these needs and related

solutions (associated with cognitive, affective or behavioural dimensions) during workshops taking account of the demographic realities of the South African society.

Table 3.3: Outcomes (9-12) stipulated in the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001a)

ACHIEVING DIVERSITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	
SECTION 4:	
Outcome 9:	Diversity through mission and programme differentiation
Outcome 10:	Regulation of distance education programmes
Outcome 11:	Establishment of a single dedicated distance education institution
Outcome 12:	Regulation of private HE

RBL Academic Staff Development has an obligation to ensure diversity, both in its organisational form and institutional landscape. This can be accomplished by incorporating diversity visually through mission and programme differentiation. In this way institutions can build on their strengths and respond to social, economic and market needs in a rapidly changing regional, national and global context. In addition, the above-mentioned not only provides development and training opportunities, but also networking among academics to prevent duplication of programmes. Increased market relevance can also be achieved when specific cultural, racial and gender needs and differences are being addressed (acknowledging each individual's human right).

Table 3.4: Outcomes (13-14) stipulated in the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001a)

SUSTAINING AND PROMOTING RESEARCH	
SECTION 5:	
Outcome 13:	Research concentration and funding linked to outputs
Outcome 14:	Increased graduates and outputs at the masters' and doctoral levels

Research plays a key role in the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge (also one of the core functions of HE institutions) and the development of high-level human resources (one of the aims of RBL Academic Staff Development). Furthermore RBL Academic Staff Development attempts to increase participation among RBL practitioners and indirectly facilitates possible participation in future research.

Table 3.5: Outcomes (15-16) stipulated in the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA MoE 2001a)

RESTRUCTURING THE INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	
SECTION 6:	
Outcome 15:	Programme and infrastructural collaboration
Outcome 16:	New institutional and organisational forms

RBL Academic Staff Development endeavours to reduce duplication and overlapping in programme and service provision via provision of networking opportunities for RBL practitioners. In order to build RBL academic staff capacity, promote joint RBL development and effective RBL delivery, it would be essential to enhance RBL competencies and strategies to perform better as practitioners in their RBL roles.

Subsequently the design and structure for an RBL Academic Staff Development Model, which meets the demands of HE within a changing South African context, will be discussed.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING IMPROVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The practice of RBL is recommended in the *White Paper* as one of the means of meeting the challenge to expand access, accommodate diverse learners and enhance quality in a context of resource constraints (RSA MoE 1997). In order to achieve this is a challenging task for HE institutions who have to adapt to a new approach, process and procedures (e.g. bridging programmes based on the RBL mode; allowing learners to progress at their own pace; etc.), but also for RBL practitioners who have to make a paradigm shift towards a new profile. This now also requires a shift from an instruction paradigm towards a learning paradigm. Within this context, the changing culture of HE is accompanying the changing practice in HE (e.g. requires now new forms of learning and new roles for the academic). Subsequently, the lack of creating a coherent national framework for facilitating RBL throughout the HE system and the paradigm shift towards a learning-based approach not only increased the pressure on RBL practitioners to change to facilitators, but also to provide quality learning. The above-mentioned highlighted and emphasised the need for a Staff Development Model to enhance RBL delivery mode.

By developing such a staff development model, the quality of RBL could serve as a useful barometer for measuring the "academic health" of institutions. In this context it would be essential firstly to consider the dynamics of knowledge transmission and -production, in order to contribute to the academic and professional excellence of HE (Van Dyk, Nel, Loedolff & Haasbroek 2001).

Within the rapidly changing SA higher educational context, it is important to reflect on the changes which have been noticed (e.g. the changing roles of RBL practitioners within the learning-based approach), before meaningful preparation can be done to face these challenges. One of the major new roles of RBL practitioner is to be a facilitator, which entails an educator assisting the learning process (e.g. arranging access to equipment and facilities, enquiring about progress and resolving difficulties) of an individual or a group in a less directive way. Equally important to remember is that the success of the RBL facilitator is embedded in the success of the system in which he/she works.

For the purposes of this study, attention will now shift towards the latest roles RBL practitioners will be confronted with in this new learning paradigm.

3.3 TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL ROLES

Exposure to the paradigm shift towards a learning-based approach and the shift towards a new delivery mode confronted RBL practitioners with the evaluation of their own skills in terms of quality, productivity and responsiveness. They were also faced with a major task, namely to identify and implement quality interventions/practices which is the only way to fulfil their roles effectively (Harden & Crosby 2000). Thus the delivery mode is not only complex, but also a demanding task. This was confirmed by Bitzer (1984) as well as Brew and Boud (1998) that more complex demands are now being placed on HE academics with the changing nature of their work tasks, new academic roles and the diversification of existing ones (e.g. in this context a role implies a group of functional activities, while functions refer to specific activities). It is evident that the RBL facilitator role is not simple or easy, but rather as Brookfield (1990) described it "the educational equivalent of white water rafting".

In order to distinguish between the various roles of the RBL facilitator, it is crucial to take into account the context of the inter- and intra-relationships that exist among the learner, the facilitator and the curriculum (Harden & Crosby 2000). In RBL the focus is on the material rather than on the deliverer, thus no longer mainly the information transmitter, but the manager of knowledge (Brown & Smith 1996). Within this new role the RBL academic has now to take responsibility for certain management functions/tasks/activities such as planning, organising and management at the operational level. Despite the above-mentioned shift, the RBL facilitator will remain indirectly the steering mechanism as curriculum planner and resource developer to retain quality RBL material (i.e. the focus area). In this curriculum delivery process it is no longer the task of "a lone hero", but rather a collaborative process where educational staff developers, technicians, administrators, librarians as well as information and communication technologists work along with RBL facilitators (Brown & Smith 1996). Within this network of interactions in RBL, the following areas of activity of the RBL facilitator are identified (Brown & Smith 1996; Marquardt 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000):

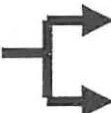
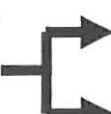
- Information provider.
- Role model in the learning setting.
- An educator assisting the learning process.
- Assessor.
- Planner.
- Resource developer.

Each of these activity areas can be subdivided into more roles. Certain internal and external factors contribute to a more complete view of the roles and functions of RBL practitioners. For effective functioning, RBL practitioners have to know exactly what is expected of them (external and internal factors). A definition of roles is therefore a pre-requisite. The

alternative is role ambiguity and role conflict, which will have a counter productive impact. Similarly an analysis by various authors (Brown & Smith 1996; Marquardt 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000) resulted in the identification of six functions of RBL practitioners, namely:

- The linking/liaising function of the flow of information.
- The learner-function with regard to learning and counselling.
- The postgraduate/research function.
- The data function related to administration.
- The staff function.
- Leader function with regard to short- and long-term planning.

These functions and the eleven roles as illustrated in Figure 3.1 are connected with leadership and management – already an indication of meeting the demands of increased effectiveness.

Information provider		Lecturer during contact session Teacher in practical class setting
Role model		Role model during contact session
Facilitator		Mentor, personal advisor or tutor Facilitates the learning process
Examiner		Planning/participation in formal examination Curriculum evaluator
Planner		Curriculum planner Course organiser
Resource developer		Production of study guides Developing learning resource materials (e.g. videos/ print/ computer programmes as adjuncts to lectures)

Source: Adapted from Ryan *et al.* (2000).

Figure 3.1: Eleven roles of the Resource-based Learning academic

These eleven roles that RBL facilitators are facing will now be explored in more detail.

The information provider

- (a) *The lecturer.* Traditionally students expected to be taught. Thus the prime responsibility was on the lecturer to transmit information, knowledge and understanding, which resulted in the traditional role of a teacher as information provider in the lecture context (Harden & Crosby 2000). Furthermore the teacher was seen as the expert in a specific field, who conveyed the knowledge via various educational strategies – usually by word of mouth (Brown & Atkins 1986; Harden & Crosby 2000). Although there is a general call for the reduction of lectures, it remains an essential part of the learning toolbox – “... the infectious enthusiasm of an expert who is also a good communicator excites and motivates learners ...” (Harden & Crosby 2000:6). The lecturer’s role will remain important for RBL practitioners, especially when difficult, complex and abstract concepts or formulas have to be explained.
- (b) *The practical teacher.* Harden and Crosby (2000) postulated that practical settings are a powerful context to transfer direct, relevant knowledge. As reflective practitioner you illuminate the process of decision-making as well as use simulators to teach certain skills (Gordon, Issenberg, Mayer & Felner 1999; Harden & Crosby 2000). The practical dimension of learning will continue to be important for the RBL academic where knowledge application also triggers high order thinking skills such as critical thinking and complex decision-making within learners.

The role model

- (a) *The teacher as role model.* It is crucial to distinguish modelling as a distinct function where it is impossible for learners not to be influenced by the living example set before them (Squires 1999). RBL practitioners stay role models for learners, where the active

partnership between them nurtures this role and encourages practical application.

The facilitator

- (a) *The learning facilitator.* The paradigm shift towards a learning-based approach, has subsequently required a fundamental shift in the lecturer's role. Thus lecturers no longer transmit knowledge to learners as if they were empty vessels, but they are the facilitators/managers of the learning process (Brown & Smith 1986; Harden & Crosby 2000). The majority of traditional lecturers find this shift towards a learning facilitator extremely difficult because they experience disappointment about their reserve position regarding authority and expertise (Harden & Crosby 2000; Stiles 2001). This new approach for RBL practitioners might trigger feelings of uncertainty, frustration or enthusiasm/excitement, depending on the experience of the individual RBL academic. Thus a fluctuation in emotions is possible due to the new practice.

The introduction of RBL with the consequent fundamental change in the learner-facilitator-relationship has also highlighted the change in the role of the lecturer as information transmitter to a learning facilitator (Brown & Smith 1986; Ryan *et al.* 2000). The question now is, what characteristics an effective learning facilitator in an RBL curriculum should have. It appears that the ability to communicate in an informal way in small-group sessions as well as create an academic atmosphere in which open exchange of ideas can be facilitated is the ideal (Ryan *et al.* 2000). RBL practitioners will now be responsible for creating this environment and develop or improve their own group learning skills.

The increasing availability and use of learning resource materials also trigger a need for the lecturer to be a learning facilitator (Harden &

Crosby 2000; Ryan *et al.* 2000). Thus no set course materials, whether in print or electronic format, is suitable for all learners (especially for the diverse South African learners where multiculturalism, different backgrounds and frame of references are a reality). Due to the financial constraints in the SAHE system, RBL practitioners have to be creative and innovative in the development of RBL learning packages.

- (b) *The mentor.* This is often a misunderstood or ambiguous role due to "the semantic and conceptual variability about what mentoring is and does, and what a mentor is and does" [Standing Committee on Postgraduate Medical Education (SCOPME) 1998:5]. It appears that everyone has one or is beginning to want one. This is because of the value of this off-line assistance of one person to another in making significant transition in knowledge, work or thinking (Megginson & Clutterbuck 1995). The above-mentioned reference to off-line usually implies a staff member who is not responsible for teaching and assessment, but off-line in terms of the relationship with the students, which is essential for the RBL academic because of the active and participatory relationship with learners. According to Morton-Cooper & Palmer (2000) three lecturer-as-mentor models have emerged which could be described as follows:

- 1.) The *apprenticeship model* where the teacher acts as skilled crafts person. In this model learning is mainly via observing and can be figuratively depict as sitting in the lab or at the feet of the mentor/role model.
- 2.) The *competence model* where the lecturer acts as trainer. This trainer role encompasses the skills of an instructor and coach who demonstrates and assists the learner to achieve certain competencies.

- 3.) The *reflective-practitioner model* who acts as critical friend and co-enquirer of the learner, which includes the promotion of collaboration and partnership in the learning process.

It is clear that various concepts of mentors exist, which are vital to RBL practitioners as well. Some of the roles overlap with the other identified roles. This specific role also requires specific expertise from the RBL academic, both as a subject expert and as an educator.

The examiner

- (a) *The student assessor.* Assessment has emerged not only as a distinct area of activity for each educator (or RBL academic), but also as one of the most important task to complete regarding the learner's competence (Mapstone 1996). This complex task requires expert knowledge and understanding. Individuals act as test developers as well as guidance providers on the choice of instrument, marking, procedures and standard setting. Examining is an integral part of the lecturer's role and teaching where the development of rapport and genuine interest in the learner are crucial (Whitman & Schwenk 1984; Piper 1994). The RBL academic thus requires not only subject expertise, but also inter-relationship skills as an educator.

Furthermore the role of the assessor is frequently seen as distinct from the other roles. While most roles primarily assist the learner in various ways to achieve performance goals (e.g. such as the information provider, role model, facilitator and curriculum planner), an assessor has the role of passing judgement on the learner, especially during summative assessment [e.g. during formative assessment the boundaries between assessment and teaching become increasingly blurred (Harden & Crosby 2000)]. RBL practitioners have to be confident and self-assertive.

In addition, the assessor's role is important, because learners can walk away from poor teaching, but are unable to do so with regard to assessment (Boud 1990). Thus depending on the learners' lives and careers, instructors have to be responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure that the end result of assessment is valid, open, fair and congruent with the course objectives (Harden & Crosby 2000). The above-mentioned has a positive impact on quality of practice, but increases the responsibility and pressure on the RBL academic.

- (b) *The curriculum assessor.* The responsibility of the lecturer/facilitator is far more than only planning and implementing educational programmes or assessing learners' performance, it also encompasses the assessment of the course and curriculum delivered (Harden & Crosby 2000). Thus, "a deliberate act of inquiry" which sets out with the intention of allowing people concerned with an educational event to make rigorous, informed judgements and decisions about it as well as facilitate appropriate development (Coles & Grant 1985:405). The quality and accountability of the above-mentioned knowledge transmission and -production process needs to be assessed by means of student and colleague feedback, peer evaluation and self-evaluation of the reflective practitioner. Tools such as questionnaires, focus groups, interviews and diaries of learners could be used – especially by the RBL academic (Tiberius, Sackin & Cappe 1987; Harden & Crosby 2000). Similarly the power and creativity of teaching lie in the curriculum design, the choice of text, the focus of the study, the planning of experiences for learners and the means by which achievement is assessed. RBL practitioners have to be flexible and informed decision-makers in order to use the knowledge of the RBL delivery mode in the above-mentioned complexity of tasks.

The planner

- (a) *The curriculum planner.* This role links with the resource material creator, where the focus is on a curriculum level to incorporate the RBL delivery mode and all its techniques and strategies in the planning of future implementation. RBL practitioners need more specific training in this regard.
- (b) *Course organiser.* The active relationship with learners, requires RBL practitioners to be flexible and sensitive to learner needs in order to enhance the course as well as be a good organiser-facilitator within the learning process.

The resource developer

- (a) *The resource material creator.* With RBL and other student-centred approaches, learners are dependent on having the appropriate resource material for the independent use of individual learners or in groups. Equally important are the new technologies that have greatly expanded the formats of learning materials to which the learners may have access. These technologies will help learners to take responsibility for their own learning/education. RBL practitioners need to be up-dated with the latest RBL material/resources as well as obtain maximum results with the support of the correct technology and equipment.

The increased awareness and training of staff/RBL practitioners in the role of activity builders and developers/creators of new learning environments are crucial for the appropriate development within these technology supported learning institutions (Longstaffe, Williams, Whittlestone, Hammond & Edwards 1996; Ryan *et al.* 2000). Given the above-mentioned challenges for RBL practitioners, support and training are crucial.

- (b) *The study guide producer.* The trend in HE where the teacher as information provider becomes the manager of learning in RBL has been discussed (*vide* 1.3; 2.2 & 2.3). While learning is still facilitated in RBL by means of face-to-face contact, the amount of time for this is limited (Harden & Crosby 2000). As replacement, suitably prepared study guides, in electronic or print form, serve as tutors available 24 hours a day to assist the learning process (e.g. expected learning outcomes, the necessary competencies to acquire, availability of learning opportunities, etc.). These study guides facilitate learning in three ways, namely to assist the management of learning, to provide focus on activities related to learning and to give information on the subject/topic of study, i.e. guiding and supporting independent learning and learning at own pace. To be successful, RBL practitioners have to be creative and innovative curriculum and resource designers

The above-mentioned eleven roles provided not only an understanding of the different views of the functions fulfilled by the RBL facilitator, but also a structure for further consideration of the culture of quality practice. The explicit identification of the eleven roles and sub-divisions offers a useful model to think about and make decisions related to the knowledge transmission and -production function which is the focus area in this study. Furthermore, while the eleven roles have been described separately, in practice they are interconnected and closely related to one another. Thus multiple roles are necessary to enable the RBL facilitator to be engaged in a combination of knowledge transmission and -production tasks (e.g. the RBL facilitator acts as lecturer and as practical teacher). However, although a quality RBL facilitator need not be competent in all eleven roles, which would be unusual to find and unreasonable to expect from novice RBL facilitators, staff development and training could help to acquire new skills and fulfil new roles which were not previously within their reach. Leadership and

management are becoming important components of the total workload of the RBL academic. RBL practitioners now have to be leaders and managers within this new learning institution where the above-mentioned roles could be grouped as follows:

- Instructor, coach and mentor: The leader must enable people around him/her to learn by making use of different approaches.
- Knowledge leader: Each facilitator will be judged accordingly to his/her contribution to the success of the learning institution (i.e. learning and the learning process) and will also determine what knowledge is important.
- Co-learner and model for learning: Leaders will encourage, motivate and assist workers to improve their skills and learning.
- Architect and designer: It is the responsibility of the leader to develop a fit-for-purpose learning institution.
- Co-ordinator: The leader has the responsibility to be a "Servant Leader" where he/she is a servant first. The learning leader walks in the shoes of his followers and empowers many people to perform their best.
- Advocate and champion for learning processes and projects.

Taking the above-mentioned groups of roles into account, RBL leaders and managers in learning institutions are responsible for building institutions where learners are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their own future of lifelong learning.

3.4 THE NEED FOR NEW COMPETENCIES

Taking the above-mentioned eleven roles and accompanying functions into consideration, certain competencies will be vital in order to become an effective RBL academic. The concept, competencies could be defined as a collection of characteristics (i.e. skills, knowledge, self-concept, traits and motives) that enable individuals to be successful in interaction with others at work, at home, in HE institutions as well as in our community at large – the core inter-relationship aspects (Goleman 1998). The above collection of characteristics could refer to the following specific nuance differences (Goleman 1998):

- *Skills* are a learned ability.
- *Knowledge* refers to the acquiring of information in a particular field.
- *Self-image* encompasses attitudes and values.
- *Traits* pertain to the reasons why and how we behave in a certain way.
- *Motives* involve the factors that drive us (e.g. the need to seek achievement, power, influence or affiliation).

The above-mentioned source continues to argue that competencies are important, not only because they provide both an entrée into, and progression/advancement in the career/occupation field, but also enable the individual to become a contributing member to the community and find job satisfaction. This links with SA's National Skills Development Strategy (RSA MoL 2001) aiming to improve skills in order to compete more successfully in the global economy, attract investment, enable individuals and communities to grow and eradicate poverty as well as build a more inclusive and equal society. These are also crucial for the RBL academic within the new learning-based approach, because he or she can measure his or her progression/advancement/satisfaction levels against the required

competencies and build a culture of quality lifelong learning. The seven key competencies, which are the basic foundation of any current educator, can be described as follows

[<http://www.education.monash.edu.au/projects/kc/whatkc.html>]:

- Collecting, analysing and organising information.
- Communicating ideas and information.
- Planning and organising activities.
- Working with others and in teams.
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques.
- Solving problems.
- Using technology.

These competencies are general descriptions of the abilities necessary to perform successfully in educational areas. However, in order to succeed in today's learning-based HE context, these competencies have to be narrowed down and integrated in the eleven RBL facilitator's roles. Thus, a proposed model of competencies for an RBL facilitator can be demonstrated as following progressive levels, each level is more complicated than the previous one.

Level 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes of the RBL facilitator

Knowledge is seen as the "food" for the learning organisation, while skills are referred to as a learnt ability. Equally important is the learning of attitudes, which depend on certain behavioural verbs such as choose, offer and select (Van Dyk *et al.* 2001). In addition, these three aspects of competencies need to be behaviourally measurable and classifiable otherwise it would be extremely difficult to have clear-cut recommendations for a proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. The RBL facilitator should:

- Develop and accept the role of RBL facilitator.
- Know change theory and strategies for initiating change.
- Understand learning theories and the components of delivery mode – especially relating to adults and non-traditional learners.
- Know about alternative delivery mode strategies (e.g. Information Technology and Communications) as well as appropriateness of strategies to learning objectives.
- Recognise and identifies communication skills appropriate to the role of the RBL facilitator.
- Know about different types of evaluation instruments and designs in RBL (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Van Dyk *et al.* 2001).

The goal of these competencies is to equip the RBL facilitator with the basic abilities to perform successfully as RBL facilitator in practice.

Level 2: Application (planning, implementing and facilitating)

Whereas the first level served as the building blocks to equip an RBL facilitator, the second level would like to support the RBL facilitator in practice. According to Ryan *et al.* (2000) and Van Dyk *et al.* (2001) the following competencies are essential to survive in the RBL practice:

- Planning ahead.
- Managing discussion and interaction with leadership and direction.
- Fostering group learning.
- Utilising RBL resources.
- Selecting and implementing appropriate RBL strategies.
- Producing RBL materials and assisting others in developing RBL learning materials to meet diverse learner needs.

- Implementing the use of alternative strategies in own knowledge transmission and –production function.

The primary goals of these competencies are to enhance cognitive outcomes related to course objectives and foster community collaboration among learner participants in order to improve learner satisfaction with the course and the programme.

Level 3: Problem-solving, synthesising and evaluating

On level three there is a shift towards the higher cognitive levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. This attempt to develop the RBL facilitator as a reflective practitioner where the following competencies are crucial, namely being able to:

- evaluate role and effectiveness of role within the institution,
- evaluate effectiveness of change strategies,
- evaluate effectiveness of RBL learning materials,
- evaluate effectiveness of alternative delivery mode strategies,
- adopt evaluation instruments to own situation based upon goals and objectives,
- provide learner with clear grading criteria,
- return assignments promptly with detailed notes and grades (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Van Dyk *et al.* 2001).

The primary goal of these competencies is to establish high standards, assure that learners understand how they will be evaluated and provide assistance in meeting course objectives.

Competencies are therefore essential for all RBL practitioners to perform their RBL facilitator roles efficiently with underlying management and leadership

functions. In addition, there are strategies that will also improve RBL delivery mode, which will now be discussed.

3.5 PROPOSED RBL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

In the context of delivery improvement there exist certain strategies that naturally improve the intrinsic motivation of lecturers, for example:

- Feedback providing information about teaching/learning effectiveness, which enhances the facilitator's perceptions of control, efficacy and self-determination in improving their delivery mode practice (e.g. via observation and action research).
- Delivery mode problem-solving provides intellectual challenges and opportunities for creativity.
- Reading about delivery mode practices.
- Selecting workshops and seminars on delivery mode practices.
- Having constructive conversations with colleagues regarding delivery mode practices.
- Consulting experts.
- Giving guidance with portfolios (Burgar & Frankenberger 1997; Newton 2000).

Based on the insights of these strategies educators can experiment more wisely with the changes in their delivery mode practice. Therefore these **delivery mode improvement strategies** will form **an essential part of the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model** as outlined in the next chapter, because they involve instructors more directly in the delivery mode improvement processes, combining knowledge of subject matter with greater understanding of the knowledge transmission and – production function. Research can be used to inform practice as well as

provide intrinsic rewards for instructors in pursuit of delivery mode improvement via self-directed, collaborative, reflective and empowering/growth activities. Furthermore these participative and reflective skills that the RBL facilitators would acquire could additionally help to keep such an RBL Academic Staff Development programme not only sustainable, but also cost-effective.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has identified the rationale for RBL improvement within a rapidly changing SAHE context. It is clear that every RBL academic has to realise that learning is a constantly process (e.g. learning is a journey, not a destination and knowledge is a constant changing companion). It is essential for RBL practitioners to develop a mindset of learning as a lifelong discipline.

There appears to be four delivery mode essentials for an RBL academic, namely **clear information, thoughtful practice, informative feedback** as well as strong **intrinsic/extrinsic motivation**. These essentials need to be incorporated in the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. Staff development takes place by means of quality circles where RBL practitioners identify problems, think of solutions and participate in the implementation.

In this chapter, the eleven roles of an RBL academic, the necessary competencies and functions to fulfil these roles as well as the RBL improvement strategies to enhance the educational practice, were discussed at length. The detail of the above-mentioned implies not rigid implementation, but rather provokes flexibility and creativity. However, these competencies, roles and improvement strategies will be the cornerstone of the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model as outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

**THE THEORETICAL
CONTOURS OF A
PROPOSED RBL ACADEMIC
STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

4.1 INTRODUCTION

RBL is becoming an increasingly accepted method of learning in HE (*vide* Chapter 2). By putting learning, rather than teaching, at the centre stage requires the educator to adapt and transform in order to enhance the implementation of RBL.

A central issue in the successful implementation of RBL is staff development (*vide* Chapter 3). In fact, in HE this staff development concept lends itself to different interpretations with regard to the application. Traditionally staff development was synonymous with “sit” and “get” sessions in which relatively passive participants were “made aware” of the latest ideas regarding knowledge transmission and -production from so-called experts. **Currently staff development not only includes high quality training programmes with intensive follow-up and support, but also additional growth-promoting processes such as study groups, action research and peer coaching** – to only name a few (NSDC 2001). This divergence has also given rise to different propositions and models.

Nevertheless, both the literature and experience, have shown no research regarding studies on the process and management of RBL staff development or models. The Information Service⁵ on Higher Education verified this after an extensive investigation on a thesaurus (based on the ERIC thesaurus) comprising 2500 HE terms, the KOVSIEKAT, EBSCO database and the Internet. Although various HE institutions have ad hoc staff development opportunities, no applicable working model for RBL within the South African context could be found. Consequently I decided to design and structure a proposed theoretical RBL Staff Development Model for RBL practitioners. In order to drive this process of empowerment, the RBL practitioners’ reflection

⁵ The above-mentioned service, which was established in 1980 at the University of the Free State (UFS) offers an opportunity to all researchers, professional officers, lecturers, managers, students and other persons interested in the field of HE to have access to unpublished work documents, memoranda and research documents, theses and dissertations, books, journal articles and newsletters on higher education.

skills will be utilised to establish their technical, human and conceptual skills. These three skills were focused on because they are regarded as the core issues of RBL. This again emphasised the broad spectrum of skills required from the RBL academic in order to apply the RBL delivery mode. In the end this will enable them to sanction RBL practice with autonomy.

Within a learner-centred approach, learners are actively and meaningfully engaged in the identification, collection and use of print and human resources (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2001). For instance technical skills would be vital because of the use and provision of ICT resources, human skills would be crucial to handle interactive and participatory actions of the various human resources and stakeholders involved and conceptual skills are required to enable the RBL facilitators to transform the learning process into an active and meaningful experience for learners.

Having studied RBL practitioners and the areas in need of staff development (*vide* Chapter 2 & 3), it was evident that there are three pillars on which the proposed structure of such an RBL Academic Staff Development Model could be based, namely **competencies, roles and RBL Improvement Strategies** (*vide* 3.3-3.5). These three pillars also shape the foundation of this study, viz. when the research objective is narrowed down to research questions, they will direct the investigation (*vide* 1.6).

In this study these three pillars can be visually depicted as they are operationalised in the RBL Staff Questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A). Staff development in this case will be aimed at improving performance whether it involves lack of knowledge of RBL, RBL skills that yet need to be mastered or motivating staff to change their attitudes towards RBL. The above-mentioned theoretical proposed structure for such a model could thus serve as a 'road map' to help understand this complicated process of developing a new model (Van Dyk *et al.* 2001).

The purpose of this theoretical proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model would mainly be the improvement of the learning and delivery process of RBL. In order to accomplish this, the focus should be not on how to improve the RBL delivery mode, but which aspects in the RBL delivery mode process ensures good practice (i.e. what competencies, skills and improvement strategies are required for successful implementation). It became clear that this study would address the “what” aspects of RBL improvement. In other words this study will investigate what input with regard to the three pillars is present or needs to be present for RBL improvement – with special reference to knowledge transmission and -production, assessment, facilitation and management of RBL practice. In addition, these aspects were chosen because they are the core operational actions involved in HE practice. Furthermore if the learning and the delivery process of RBL were improved, all stakeholders involved would undeniably benefit. When the management of the delivery mode design and evaluation processes is improved, not only will it be reflected in the institutional results, but also in the quality of the operationalisation of RBL practice.

In this study I decided to follow a systems approach (which implies an organised unitary whole composed of two or more interdependent parts, components or subsystems delineated by identifiable boundaries from its environmental supra-system) to design the proposed model for RBL training and -staff development (Van Dyk *et al.* 2001). This definition contains two concepts that require elaboration. Firstly, there is the **interdependence concept**. The components of the system are interdependent. Should a change occur in any component of the system, it will affect the other components either directly or indirectly (e.g. in this study the interdependence between the RBL academic, the learners and the resources during the knowledge transmission and learning process as well as among RBL practitioners). This suggests a certain holism, which means that a system must be seen as a functioning unit. Secondly, the **concept of**

synergy is present. This refers to the outcome of the interaction and co-operation between different components. This action produces an output that exceeds the total outputs generated by the individual components (e.g. in this study it refers to the effective networking and support system which the RBL Academic Staff Development Model could offer). It is evident from the above-mentioned that a systems approach in this study is utilised because the RBL delivery mode process is a system where the prime goal is to bring about learning. This study attempts to improve learning and RBL delivery by means of the problem-solving and the feedback characteristics of the systematic approach. Furthermore the components of this RBL academic staff development model-system comprise the **curriculum** (where RBL is both a curriculum and a delivery methodology), **the learners, the learning materials, the facilitator** and **the delivery mode** and can visually be depicted as follows (*vide* Figure 4.1):

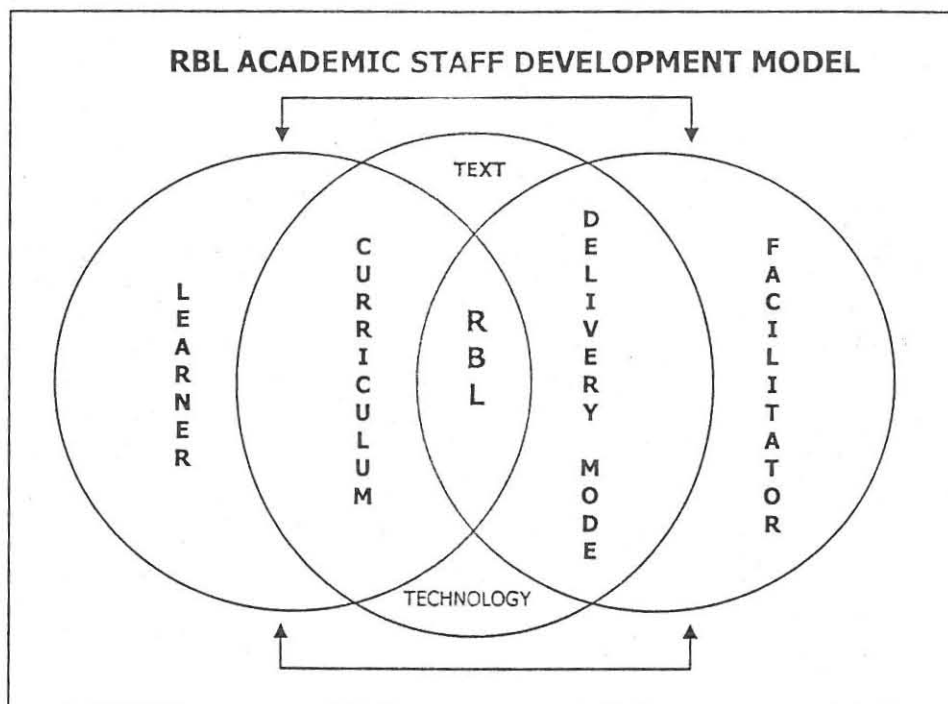


Figure 4.1: RBL Academic Staff Development Components

These components are essential for operation, thus by designing and structuring an RBL Academic Staff Development Model via a systems approach each of these components will be impacted on. This model, within an institutional context, should accommodate learning and change RBL practitioners should not be driven, but should drive themselves to set high standards for performance and learning, while the institution provides the environment for creativity, flexibility and entrepreneurial learning.

The main elements of this proposed structure for an RBL Academic Staff Development Model is highlighted in Figure 4.2. The three distinct features of the above-mentioned approach versus other social forms of inquiry are its participatory character, its democratic impulse and its aims to produce knowledge that is both useful and action-orientated (Schwandt 1997; Le Grange 2002). For instance in this study the participatory character refers to relations of co-operation, mutuality and reciprocity between the researcher and other stakeholder participants such as RBL practitioners and support staff. These participants are holistically involved in the research process (e.g. from problem identification to feedback via comments to finalise the dissemination of the facts of the thesis). The knowledge production characteristic is concerned about the creation of own knowledge, which will empower participants. This feature in particular has a strong link with the objective of this study (*vide* 1.6).

It is necessary to clarify this choice of research approach (*vide* 1.5) because of the significance of case study design and methodology and the systems approach principles. Additional evidence to support this approach will be provided in the next chapter (*vide* 5.2.1-5.2.2). In brief, this case study research approach becomes a process of change where the end result of the process in this study is for example RBL improvement. It is also openly ideological (i.e. not value neutral), socially critical, overtly political and

emancipatory in orientation (strives to liberate and empower the RBL practitioners involved in this research).

The proposed three pillars (i.e. competencies, roles and improvement strategies) operate at a more abstract level. As a result the level descriptors for HE, as stated in the Draft New Academic Policy (RSA MoE 2001b), was utilised as guidance as well as a conceptualising and organising tool to stipulate the description and specification of the above-mentioned three pillars. These three pillars will also provide a conceptual structure on which the RBL Staff Questionnaire will be based (*vide* Appendix A). Attention will now shift to a more in-depth study of this proposed theoretical structure for a staff development model for RBL practitioners.

4.2 THE THEORETICAL CONTOURS OF THE PROPOSED RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

RBL practitioners have a very complex task. They are not only confronted with adapting to a new delivery mode (e.g. RBL in this study) within a changing HE culture, but are also pressurised for a quality delivery mode (Ryan *et al.* 2000; Stiles 2001). Within such an educational context, any reflective RBL academic will constantly seek to improve his or her own practice and to make the learning experience more valuable for learners [University of Western Cape (USWE) 1997]. In order to achieve this within the higher educational context, this study followed a particular process in the theoretical designing and structuring of the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model, which can be illustrated as follows:

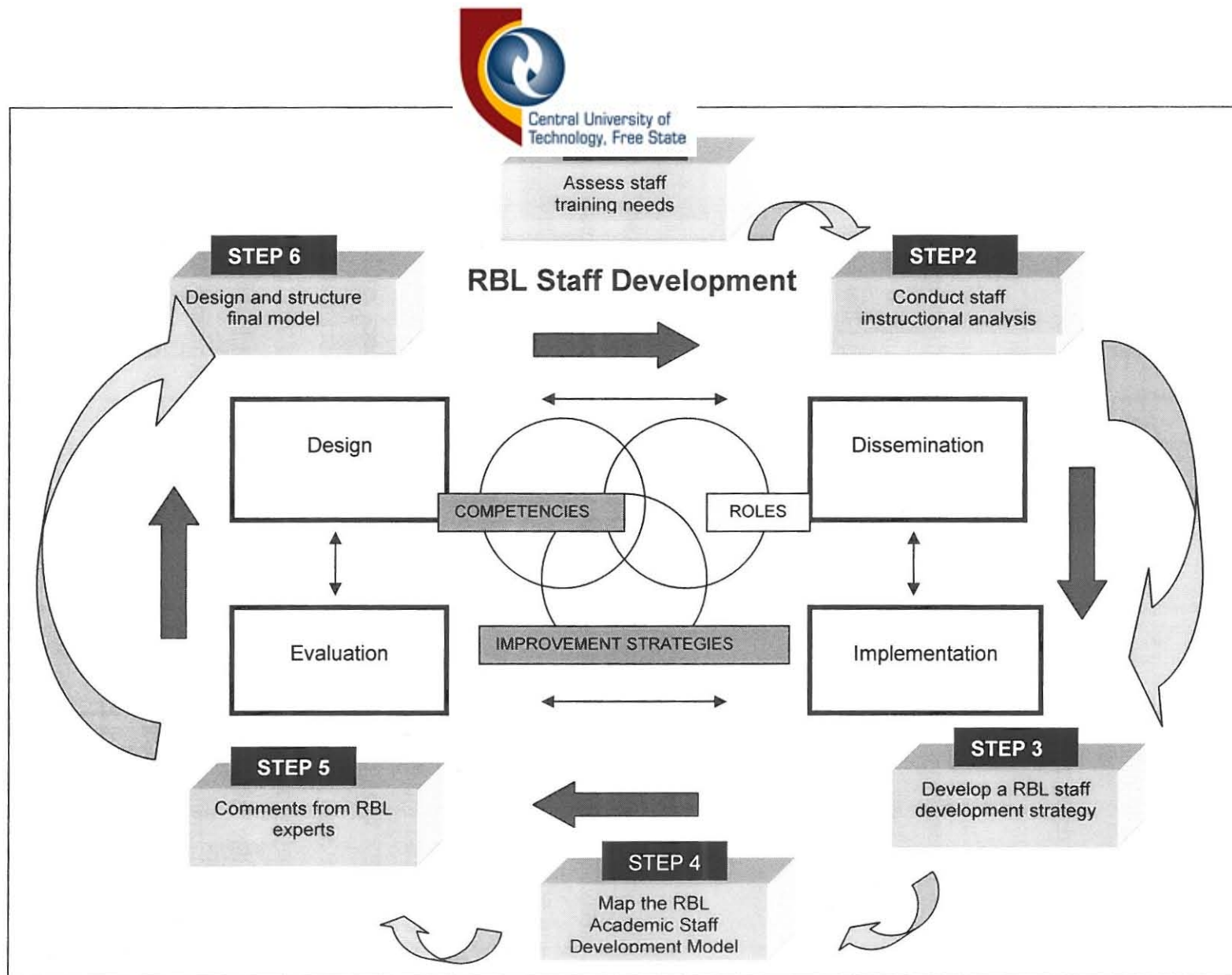


Figure 4.2: A proposed Resource-based Learning Academic Staff Development Model

In Figure 4.2 it is evident that this theoretical proposed design and structure for an RBL Academic Staff Development Model will serve as a measuring tool to assess the RBL competencies, roles and improvement strategies to develop critical, reflective and constructive RBL practitioners. Embedded in this proposed Model are empowering and growth elements which are essential for the professional and academic development of these RBL practitioners.

Furthermore this proposed Model will be developed by means of an intensive process of studying an educational innovation (e.g. RBL). This learning process will start by formulating a vision, namely the improvement of RBL practitioners. This vision could stimulate creative action, thus closing the gap between present reality and future improved practice and empowered RBL practitioners (Zuber-Skerrit 2000).

The assessment of the current RBL practice, as stipulated in the RBL Staff Questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A), would entail the three identified pillars. The first pillar, being addressed in the RBL Staff Questionnaire, will be analysing the importance of each RBL academic's competency as well as the current level within each competency (*vide* 3.4 & Appendix A). This will include assessing the gaps to identify the developmental needs of RBL practitioners in the future. Secondly, the importance of the eleven roles of RBL practitioners will be assessed as well as the satisfaction levels within each role (*vide* 3.3). This is a vital aspect of the RBL Staff Questionnaire where the adaptation of the individual RBL academic is measured. The third pillar will be to identify the RBL improvement strategies, which RBL practitioners (*vide* 3.5) are currently using. This will include assessing the gaps to identify future staff developmental needs of RBL practitioners. Subsequently the RBL Staff Questionnaire assesses the satisfaction of current RBL improvement strategies and identifies the need for additional RBL improvement strategies.

Exploring all three these pillars, will not only provide a holistic picture of the RBL academic practice, but will also systematically assess gaps to identify the RBL staff development needs which have to be addressed in the future. This investigation of RBL improvement is a complex and lengthy task, which could normally take years to complete because of the various facets and different levels of academics, which have to be considered. Therefore I derived that the above-mentioned three pillars would form the basis of the theoretical proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

The design and structure process of this model is characterised by four phases. I narrowed them down to the design, dissemination, implementation and evaluation phases supported and integrated by six steps. They complement the participatory nature and systems approach principles being utilised in this study.

The following comprehensive descriptions of each of the above-mentioned phases, including the six integrated steps, will give an indication as to what is to be understood by each of them (Van Dyk *et al.* 2001):

- ***Staff development design*** is the phase during which a new RBL Academic Staff Development Model is planned (e.g. this study starts with the first step, namely assess staff training needs), or during which the replanning and review of an existing staff development model is done after a full re-evaluation has been carried out. Aspects such as flexible planning and decision-making figure strongly. This phase usually has a number of characteristic components, which include, inter alia, purposefulness, contents, methods, learning experiences and evaluation with regard to RBL.

- ***Staff development information dissemination*** is that phase during which the RBL staff development customers are prepared for the intended implementation and information is disseminated (e.g. via publications, in-service training, etc.) to inform them of the new proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. In the case of a new RBL Academic Staff Development Model, as in this study, it would involve the dissemination of an RBL Staff Questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A) and conducting focus group discussions (*vide* Appendix B) which would serve as a self-awareness and evaluation tool of own RBL practice. In this phase, both step two (conduct a staff delivery mode analysis) and step three (developing an RBL staff development strategy for a model) are accommodated, illustrating the systematic and systems approach followed in this study.
- ***Staff development implementation*** is that phase during which the relevant design is applied in practice. The new RBL Academic Staff Development Model would imply mapping the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model in step four (based on the literature study and quantitative and qualitative data received and feedback from practice). In this study comments from RBL experts (step five) on the proposed model were gained, these data were then triangulated to increase the validity. Step six will be represented by the final proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.
- ***Staff development evaluation*** is that phase during which not only success and effectiveness of the RBL Academic Staff Development Model is evaluated, but also the effect on the academics. Due to the time-span of this study and the focused nature of it, this aspect will become an institutional responsibility.

It is clear that this process of RBL Staff Development has a specific nature and character as a result of specific orientations and approaches to staff

development, which may serve as theoretical foundations. Furthermore it is evident in Figure 4.2 that the improvement of RBL practice entails a multifaceted learning process which involves all stakeholders to obtain ownership, otherwise the empowerment and growth elements cannot be realised.

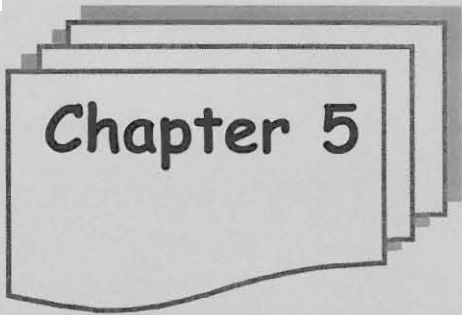
In addition, the purpose of this RBL Academic Staff Development Model is to improve and refine RBL practitioners' knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to become effective in their roles by giving instruction in a dynamic, interactive manner.

As indicated in Figure 4.2 the RBL Academic Staff Development Model will be conducted in four phases (supported by six steps) where the whole process will be constantly reviewed and further adapted to suit the changed and changing needs.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Current developments in HE have led to the hope that the theoretical proposed design and structure for an RBL Academic Staff Development Model will be conceptualised. In addition the latter also served as the basis for the design of the RBL Staff Questionnaire to be used. In order to achieve RBL Improvement, four phases (design, dissemination, implementation and evaluation) are conducted, where the last phase serve as the vital phase to review the process holistically. In the last phase gaps are assessed to identify the developmental needs for the future. This will serve as the core function of the proposed design and structure of the RBL Academic Staff Development Model to provide RBL practitioners with appropriate and accessible pedagogical tools and support, thus building a repertoire of RBL competencies, roles and instructional improvement strategies.

This chapter summarised the main focus of this study, which will serve as the foundation for the statistical analysis. In the next chapter the research design and methodology will be clarified.



Chapter 5

THE THEORETICAL DELIBERATION ON AND CONTEMPLATION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

*He that judges without informing himself
to the utmost that he is capable cannot acquit
himself
of judging amiss* (Locke 1788).

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching and (resource-based) learning, within the new landscape of SAHE, now belong to the practitioner as part of the extended professional role. In this context, the **case study methodology design** and **multimethod strategies (i.e. triangulation)** are viewed as the best suited tactics to push forward the methodological boundaries of this study.

This chapter is therefore reserved for the historical and philosophical paradigm underpinning of the new case study design used in this study (*vide* 1.5.1) and triangulation, as well as for making methodological assumptions explicit. This is important because it not only provides a blueprint of how the research was conducted (i.e. the end-product) in order to increase the chances of valid and reliable results, but is also the heart of the research/study, namely the instrumentation (i.e. what tools and procedures were used) (Babbie & Mouton 2001).

5.2 RESEARCH AIMS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH



For the purposes of this study, the main aims of the empirical research are the following (*vide* 1.4.2):

- to determine the staff development needs of RBL practitioners regarding the knowledge transmission and -production function (i.e. competencies, roles and instructional improvement strategies, facilitation, assessment and management;
- to determine whether RBL practitioners have different staff development needs;
- to make recommendations to improve the functioning of the RBL practitioners and RBL programmes at the Technikon Free State .

In order to address these empirical research aims, this educational research study is a scientific and disciplined inquiry using quantitative (*vide* Chapter 6) and qualitative approaches (*vide* Chapter 7) as part of the triangulation process – by describing the development of knowledge to improve RBL practices.

5.3 CASE STUDY DESIGN

This design implies that the data analysis focused on one phenomenon (i.e. staff development needs of RBL practitioners) (*vide* 1.5.1 & 5.3), which I selected to understand in-depth regardless of the number of sites or participants of the study. Thus it required in practice a circular process where purposive sampling, data collection and partial data analysis are simultaneous and interactive rather than separate sequential steps (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001).

I also investigated small, distinct groups such as RBL practitioners. This was a single site study where the natural sociocultural boundary and the face-to-face interaction encompassed the participant and the group. Although the focus of this study was on contrasting sub-units, namely various disciplines, the purpose was to understand one phenomenon, namely RBL. These sub-units were contrasting sub-units, but were informative about the research foci. The different disciplines were not done simultaneously, because of the complexity and the difficulty of managing the data collection (Brown & Dowling 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). However, the analysis of the data will be integrated and discussed holistically.

5.3.1 Significance and Justification

To plan a case study design comprises not only selecting the general research aim/question, but it also includes design components which add to the potential contributions and significance of the study. This study is designed to contribute to HE theory, practice, policy, social issues and action.

Contributions to Theory: This study is appropriate for exploratory and discovery-orientated research (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). In this study the staff development needs of RBL practitioners were examined. This is a topic on which there has been little prior research. It has also been designed to lead to further inquiry. The purpose of this study is to elaborate on the RBL concept, as well as to design and structure a model with its related sub-components or suggested propositions.

Contributions to Practice: This study entails a detailed description and analysis of the RBL practice, process and events. Not only will events be documented, but it will also increase the participants' own understanding of practice and how to improve performance (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001).

Contributions to Policy: This study could supply valuable information for HE policy formulation, implementation and modification regarding RBL. By identifying issues (*vide* 7.4.3-7.4.5), the need to modify statutes or regulations is recognised which assist policymakers to anticipate future issues.

Contributions to Social issues and Action: This is a critical study aimed at transformation and empowerment within the HE context. In this study the empowerment of RBL practitioners is a vital social issue, while the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model entails future action.

Other justifications: Although confidentiality and reliability always remain an issue, this study may be justified for confidential handling and obtaining of data as well as for feasibility issues related to obtaining valid data.

5.4 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Case study methodology is an appropriate qualitative research design for the empirical part in this study. In order to clarify this statement and address what little consensus exists on what constitutes a case study, as well as look into the confusion on how this type of research is conducted, I defined the case study methodology in this study in terms of *its end products*. Additionally, a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single phenomenon or social unit circumscribed by boundaries during a specific period of time (Meriam 1988; De Vos 1998; Conrad, Haworth & Lattuca 2001). The selection of the target population in this study was based on the issue around the lack of competence/roles/improvement strategies for RBL practitioners. Accordingly the sampling process in this type of design is purposive and the design called a one-shot case study non-experimental approach (De Vos 1998).

The choice of focusing in this study on a qualitative case study design stems from the fact that I am interested in inquiry, discovery and interpretation, rather than on hypothesis testing only. This holistic description and explanation can only be possible if interpretation takes place within a specific context.

The qualitative case study design can further be characterised as being particularistic, descriptive and heuristic (De Vos 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001). The application of these three characteristics in this study is the following:

- *Particularistic* implies that the case study focuses on a particular phenomenon (RBL practitioners).
- *Descriptive* refers to a rich description of the phenomenon, namely staff development needs of RBL practitioners.
- *Heuristic* means that case studies illuminate the reader's interpretation of the phenomenon being studied – where the reader's interpretation of the phenomenon can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience or confirm what is known.

In defining a phenomenon such as a case study design, it is often beneficial to determine when it is appropriate to use a case study in comparison with other research designs (De Vos 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001). In this study it would have a distinct advantage, because the "why" and the "how" questions of the phenomenon can be addressed. In addition as a participatory reflective researcher, I would have less control over the contemporary set of events and for that reason would be unable to identify or predict ahead of time, which gives added validity and reliability of results. The new case study design also tend to spread the net for evidence widely, which will be crucial for the holistic perspective in this study. Thus, as in all research, the choice of this case study design depended on what I wanted to know.

Qualitative case studies in HE can be further defined by categorising them into certain types such as descriptive, interpretative, evaluative, building theory or comparative case study designs (Conrad *et al.* 2001). This study reflected an evaluative nature, which involves description, explanation and judgement. Consequently it weighs information to produce judgement, where judging is the ultimate act of evaluation (Guba & Lincoln 1981; De Vos 1998).

All research designs can be discussed in terms of relative strengths and limitations (*vide* 1.5.2.1), but the strengths have to outweigh the limitations. Furthermore the merits of a particular design are inherently related to the rationale for selecting them as the most appropriate plan for addressing the research problem. This study offers a means of investigating a complex social unit consisting of multiple variables of potential importance by increasing the comprehension of the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, this case study will result in a holistic account of the phenomenon by offering insight (De Vos 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001). In addition, this case study methodology has proven to be very useful in studying higher educational innovations such as RBL. As a result, it reveals not static attributes, but increased comprehension of humans as they engage in action and interaction within a specific context of situations and settings (e.g. in this study to understand how a delivery mode such as RBL may affect behaviour of academics. Additionally "why" and "how" staff development could support the satisfaction and quality of performance). Identifying the limitations of this research design, which have already been highlighted (*vide* 1.5.2.1), is crucial when impacting on the validity, reliability and generalisability of end results.

5.4.1 Research group

The respondents included all RBL practitioners (N=27) in the School for Tourism, Hospitality and Sport; School of Environmental Development and Agriculture and the School of Health Technology at the Technikon Free State.

The respondents of this universum were included in the empirical research because they have first hand experience of all the phenomena being investigated – in this study the only three schools at the Technikon Free State involved with RBL (Maxwell 1996; Brown & Dowling 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001). Further criteria to motivate the choice of research group were that it is a scientific study of a single unit under investigation (i.e. already implementing RBL) and not a comparative study.

The fact that there were no exclusion criteria present when this group of RBL practitioners were selected, contributed to the homogeneity of the group and therefore the results should not be affected. Table 5.1 reflects the group of RBL practitioners of this study.

Table 5.1: Composition of the population of Resource-based Learning practitioners (N=27)

GENDER	RBL PRACTITIONERS	PERCENTAGE
Male	13	48.1%
Female	14	51.9%

As indicated in the above-mentioned table, 48.1% of the RBL practitioners are male, while 51.9% are female. There is not a significant difference between the two groups, consequently the results will not be affected.

A pilot study was undertaken by me to establish the presence of RBL in the technikon sector. At the stage of the research only the Technikon Free State indicated that the RBL delivery mode was implemented. As a result this institution was the universum of this study.

As already mentioned, the respondents were recruited from the Technikon Free State. After obtaining approval from the three heads of school, questionnaires (*vide* Appendix A) were sent to respondents (i.e. all RBL practitioners) informing them of the purpose of this study and they were then

contacted to determine a convenient time for the three focus group interviews conducted during September 2002. The respondents were again contacted a day before the focus group interviews to ensure maximum participation.

5.4.2 Statistical procedure

This study made use of descriptive statistics in order to get an indication of the first empirical research aim (*vide* 5.2). The responses to the questionnaire were computerised, before the qualitative data was analysed and systematised. The qualitative data from the focus group interviews and comments from five RBL experts were analysed by using the Qualitative Solutions and Research's Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising [(QSR NU*DIST) Application Software Package 1995] (*vide* Appendix C) software to assist in a partially ordered meta-matrix, cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994; Conrad *et al.* 2001). In this study a comparative analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data was done via triangulation. This multimethod strategy of data collection will be discussed in detail (*vide* 5.4).

5.4.3 Measuring instruments

The quantitative survey component consists of the completion by the Technikon Free State RBL practitioners of the uniquely developed **RBL Staff Questionnaire** (*vide* Appendix A) by me, which consists of three RBL staff development dimensions (RBL competencies, roles and instructional improvement strategies). The qualitative part of the study was designed to assess the staff development needs of RBL practitioners by means of **focus group interviews** and **comments from four national and one international RBL experts** on the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. The above-mentioned also helped to advance the researcher's understanding of variations in RBL competencies, roles and

improvement strategies, because it is a more in-depth investigation and also provides reasons for clarification. The results of the above-mentioned will serve as a supplement and extension regarding the quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A).

The collected quantitative and qualitative data were combined, triangulated and analysed to assess what RBL competencies, roles and improvement strategies had to be in place for an effective RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

5.4.3.1 Resource-based Learning Staff Questionnaire

The RBL Staff Questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A) was designed specifically for the South African context, including both quantitative and qualitative questions. The unreturned questionnaires were followed-up via the heads of the three schools. The responses to these questions were expanded by focus group interviews and comments from five RBL experts to increase comprehension. The questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A) which was used, consisted of 20 questions that included questions on gender, population groups, age, post level, nature of job, RBL competencies, RBL roles and RBL improvement strategies necessary for the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

5.4.3.2 Focus group interviews

The qualitative data was collected through open-ended questions during focus group interviews for the purposes of data triangulation. The latter was specifically designed for RBL practitioners.

Focus group interviews as research instrument generally involves 4-12 individuals discussing a particular topic (e.g. in this study staff development needs of RBL practitioners) under the direction of a facilitator (in this study, by me). I as the facilitator promotes interaction and assures that the

discussion remains the topic of interest. The duration of the discussion was one and a half hours, including audio taping. The main objectives of focus group interviews in this study were the following (Greenbaum 1996; Sim 1998):

- Discover accurate information.
- Record this information so that it could easily be used as input in the next step in this study.
- Leave the participants confident that their understanding of the topic has been explored, listened to and valued.

This research instrument is further supported by the following advantages (Greenbaum 1996; Sim 1998):

- It may be adapted to provide the most desirable level of focus and structure.
- It is easy to use.
- The open response format produces a rich body of data expressed in the respondents' own words and context.
- There is the opportunity to collect several opinions or points of view.
- It provides opportunities for the clarification of responses, follow-up questions and probing.

Despite the above-mentioned advantages, various authors (Greenbaum 1996; Sim 1998) highlighted the following disadvantages of focus group research:

- When only small numbers of respondents are present, it limits generalisation to a larger population.
- Interaction of respondents could result in responses being biased by a dominant or opinionated member, while more reserved group members may be hesitant to participate.
- The open-ended nature of responses makes them more difficult to summarise and interpret due to the variety and diversity.

enhanced the validity and reliability of results (Babbie & Mouton 2001). The answer sheets of the questionnaire were analysed by a statistical analyst.

5.5.2 Qualitative procedures

After completion of the quantitative questionnaires, the twenty-seven respondents were submitted to qualitative focus group interviews. All the participants' consent was required because the focus group interviews were audio taped. I emphasized that all the data would be handled strictly confidentially. In order to meet equity demands all the focus group interviews were conducted in English or Afrikaans, depending on the respondents' home language.

5.5.3 Triangulation procedures

Strategies of Multiple Triangulation were used in order to add breadth and depth to this study's analysis (Fielding & Fielding 1986; Babbie & Mouton 2001; Conrad *et al.* 2001). The implications of triangulation are the following:

- Perhaps this research design best reflects the research process of fluctuation between inductive (e.g. a form of reasoning where genuine supporting evidence such as empirical data can at best lead to highly probable conclusions) and deductive (e.g. forms of reasoning where true premises such as general theory or law necessarily lead to true conclusions) thinking in a research study.
- For some researchers the use of triangulation is very complex and difficult, because it requires sophisticated knowledge of both the above-mentioned paradigms conveys the linking of paradigms and requires that the researcher conveys a combination of paradigms unfamiliar to many researchers (De Vos 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001). In this study I have addressed these issues by using the QSR NUD*IST4 Application Software Package (1995). The structure of the Index Tree being used is demonstrated in Appendix C.

This study's comparative analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data was done by means of triangulation.

5.5.3.1 Outlining the types of triangulation

According to certain authors (e.g. Brown & Dowling 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001), triangulation consists of four types, namely data, investigator, theory and methodological triangulation. In this study data and methodological triangulation were used. **Investigator triangulation**, which refers to the use of multiple observers, coders, interviewers and analysts in a particular study (Conrad *et al.* 2001), was left out in this study because a single researcher was involved and not teams or partnerships of researchers. **Theoretical triangulation**, which implies the usage of several frames of reference or perspectives in the analysis of the same data (De Vos 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001), was also omitted because the purpose of this study was not to include an in-depth investigation of different theoretical perspectives.

5.5.3.2 Data triangulation

Data triangulation implies the collection of accounts from different respondents in a prescribed setting, from stages in the activities of the setting and, if appropriate, from different sites of the setting (Brown & Dowling 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001). It also means the cross-checking of the consistency of specific and factual data items from various sources via multiple methods at different times (Conrad *et al.* 2001). With reference to this study, it entailed the comparison of data received from the qualitative focus group interviews with RBL practitioners and comments from RBL experts. This dual approach does not provide a single, clear-cut, consistent picture, but rather provides challenges to improve comprehension of the various reasons for the existence of inconsistencies between the two sets of data (Patton 1990; Conrad *et al.* 2001).

5.5.3.3 Methodological triangulation

Methodological triangulation entails the dual approach of combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). Additionally these authors argue that all methods have limitations, validity threats, etc., but **by using a single method the danger is that the results could be an artifact of the method**. This study combined quantitative methods such as a questionnaire with the qualitative methods such as focus group interviews and comments from RBL experts.

In this study **data triangulation** between quantitative and qualitative measures, and **method triangulation** between quantitative and qualitative methods were utilised.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, educational practitioners need to move outside their professional practice and into a distinct activity of educational research. The Case Study Research Design is a term, which applied to this research study, means that practitioners (i.e. RBL practitioners) seek to effect transformations in their own practices.

In this study a multimethod strategy (triangulation) was utilised because of the complexity of human nature (RBL practitioners) and social reality. As a result the quantitative methods (RBL Staff Questionnaire – *vide* Appendix A) was combined with the qualitative methods (focus group interviews and comments from RBL experts). Triangulation was also used to strengthen the research design.

Chapter 6

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Although case study research designs mainly use qualitative methods to gain understanding and insight into the worlds of research participants, this study used a **multiple research strategy by combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods to enhance the reliability and validity of the data analysis.**

There is increasing acknowledgement of the value of this strategy, namely to combine theories and methods purposefully with the intention of adding breadth or depth to the analysis (McMillan & Schumacher 2001). Without being ambiguous about the exploratory and descriptive nature of the specific research design being used (which will be addressed in Chapter 8 where the triangulated results will be integrated), this study will start to describe the quantitative and qualitative data in separate chapters, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, in order to provide a systematic and clear picture on the results of the data respectively.

The analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data, which corresponds with the research objective and research questions (*vide* 1.6) will be focused on in this chapter. In addition, the analysis of the questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A) and summaries of the research results will be found throughout the chapter.

6.2 RESULTS OF THE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Details on the completed and returned questionnaires were already discussed (*vide* 5.3.1). Also the distribution of gender in the purposive selection of RBL

practitioners were highlighted (*vide* 5.4.1). The median age of the RBL academic population was 44.5 years. Tables 6.1-6.4 represent the summaries of all the relevant data of this study.

6.2.1 Discussion of the relevant data of the biographical information of the questionnaire

All relevant aspects, which have an impact on staff development of RBL practitioners will be discussed, as obtained from biographical information of the questionnaire.

6.2.1.1 Population group

Although the population group category is not directly related to staff development, I deemed it as important to include it in this analysis because cultural needs could differ with regard to staff development among RBL practitioners.

Observation of results: The research group was not represented - only two of the four population group categories were represented in this research participant population, namely 11.1% Black RBL practitioners and 88.9% White RBL practitioners. For example, African academics think holistically which emphasises collective identity (e.g. governments and international funding agencies must invest in HE not necessarily for the sake of the individual, but to promote peace and democracy in the community), while their Western counterparts think more specifically and in detail which emphasises individual identity (e.g. evokes debates about autonomy, critical thought, independent judgement and the promotion of culture) (Cloete; Muller; Makgoba & Ekong 1997).

Comment and implication: Despite the large difference in representation, it is still crucial to take into consideration the big difference in the thinking processes of the two populations. These differences do not represent a hierarchy of thoughts (one better than the other), but is rather embedded in the different conceptualisations. This specific dissimilarity has to be addressed and accommodated in the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model (e.g. in the presentation of activities or how the material is visually demonstrated, etc.) in order to manage diversity effectively.

6.2.1.2 Age

Although the age category is not directly related to staff development, I regarded it as important enough to include it in the analysis because it could have an influence on the experience of academics of the new RBL mode (e.g. more experienced people tend to be more resistant to RBL, while their younger colleagues are more open for the RBL innovation which was confirmed in this study), which also has to be accommodated in the new proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

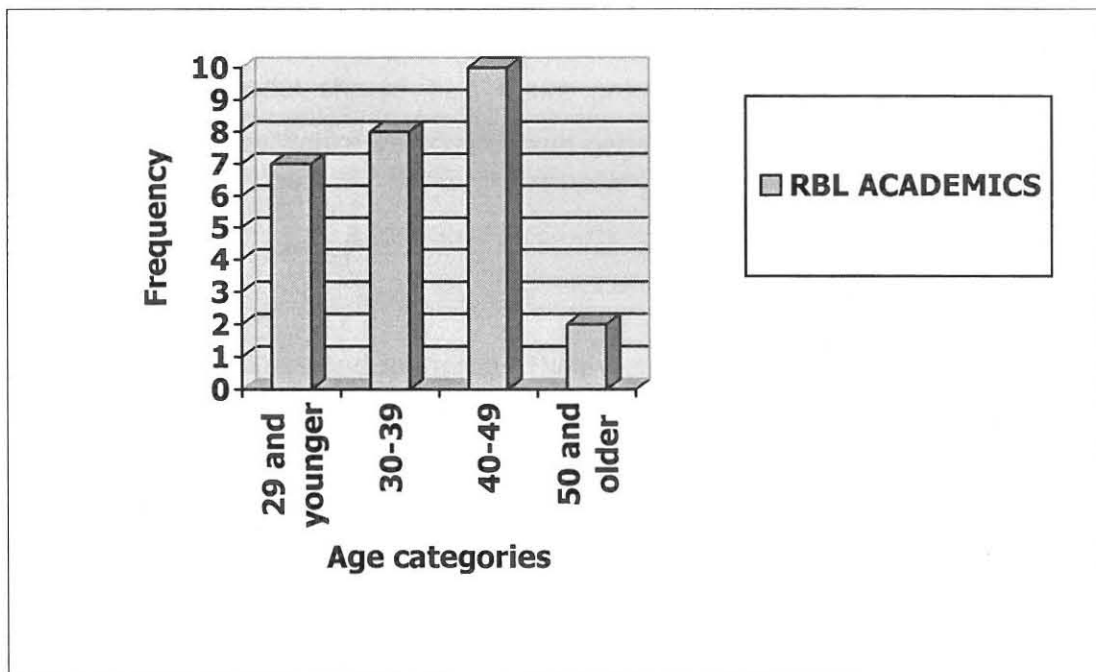


Figure 6.1: A bar diagram to indicate the age distribution of RBL practitioners

Observation of results: According to Figure 6.1 it appears that 37% of RBL practitioners are between 40 and 49 years. The median age of the RBL academic population, already mentioned (*vide* 6.2), implies that the average RBL academic is in the middle adult phase (Louw 1990; Louw 1998). This implies not only a certain developmental phase with specific tasks, but also that the participants have universal cognitive, affective and behavioural characteristics – excluding those due to personality traits.

Comment and implication: During the middle adult phase, the important tasks regarding the self are to redefine the self-concept and identity, to describe one's own values and life philosophy more distinctly and to provide more assistance to others (Louw 1990; Louw 1998). All three these tasks, with regard to the above-mentioned, are relevant for RBL practitioners because it indirectly correlates with this paradigm shift towards RBL - which has to be accommodated at a cognitive, behavioural and affective level. Despite the fact that the majority of the research participants' developmental phase created a positive climate to adapt to the change towards a new delivery mode (i.e. like implementing RBL), the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model should also make provision for other developmental phases, where resistance, reluctance and negative emotions could be present.

6.2.1.3 Post level

The RBL practitioners had to indicate their post level which were vital in order to determine their experience and responsibilities. The reason for this is embedded in the fact that the above-mentioned has an impact on individual RBL staff development needs and has to identify the different levels of competence, roles and improvement strategies which have to be accommodated.

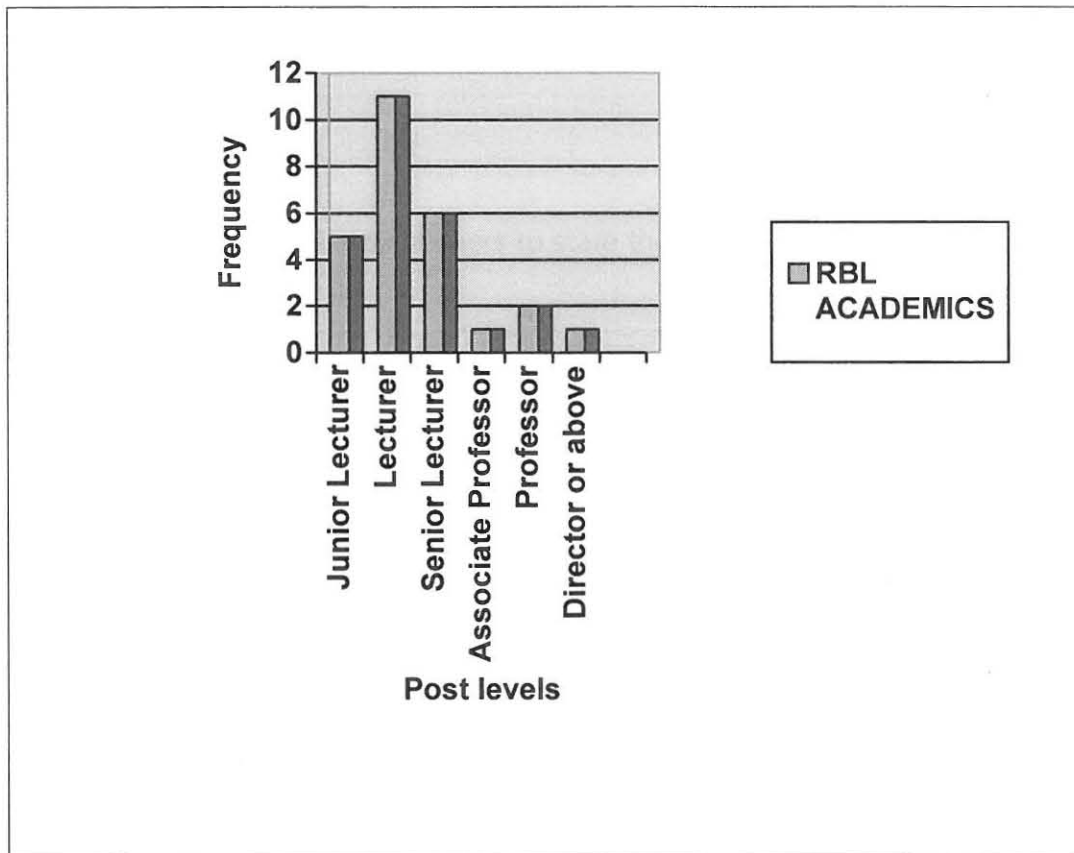


Figure 6.2: A bar diagramme to indicate the distribution of post levels of RBL practitioners

Observation of results: According to Figure 6.2 it appears that the majority (42.4%) of the RBL practitioners are lecturers, 23.1% are senior lecturers and 19.2% are junior lecturers. This clarifies the need for assistance/training and their natural interest in the theme of this study, because most of them are currently involved in their own studies.

Comment and implication: Newly appointed staff's attitudes presume to be more positive to change (e.g. in this case towards a new RBL delivery mode), because their thinking and actions are not so embedded in the traditional teaching instruction mode as those with more experience. The majority of the junior lecturers in the South African technikon sector are also

involved with their own studies, which makes them naturally more attracted and open to change and innovations.

6.2.1.4 Job

It was expected of RBL practitioners to state the nature of their jobs.

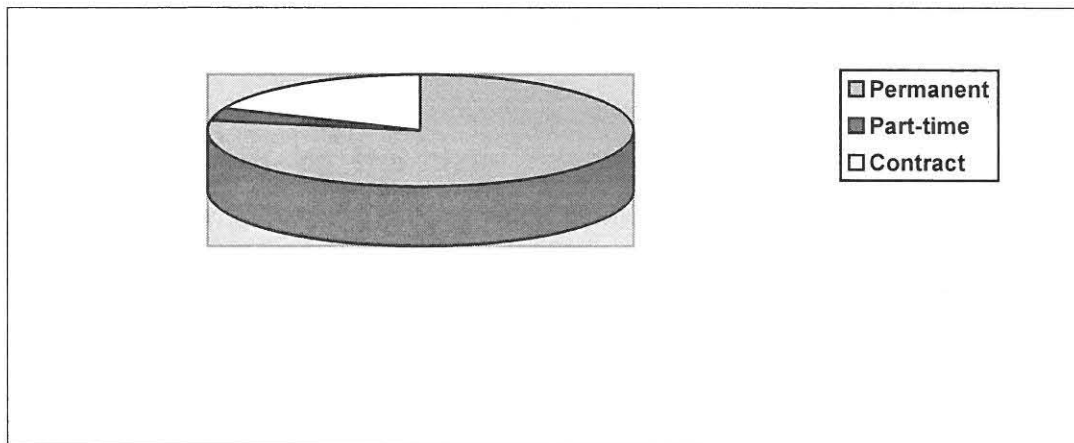


Figure 6.3: A sector diagram to indicate the nature of the jobs

Observation of results: According to Figure 6.3 it appears that the majority (77.8%) of the RBL practitioners are permanently employed, 18.5% on a contract basis and only 3.7% are part-time.

Comment and implication: The fact that the majority of RBL practitioners are permanent employees (there is not a constant fluctuating of staff) emphasises that the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model should be creative to promote constant professional development due to changes and innovations in the HE sector, while it also has to follow a cyclical process to keep new comers updated. Other factors that could have an influence on staff development are commitment and motivation. Where the contract employees, in this case the minority, would hypothetically be more committed in order to secure their jobs for the future (i.e. demonstrate more internal

motivation and determination as confirmed by this study), the permanent employees would like to perform for promotion purposes. In order to accommodate this in the proposed complex and time-consuming RBL Academic Staff Development Model, it would also be essential to link and associate certain aspects and activities of change with detailed and described motivation. This would not only assist the anxious, confused and frustrated new RBL practitioners, but also maintain a learning curve for personal- and/or professional development for those expert RBL practitioners.

6.3.1 Discussion of the data related to the competencies as Resource-based Learning facilitator (Section B of the Questionnaire)

The RBL practitioners/facilitators were important role players in this case study research process (*vide* Chapter 5) and their input was (and still is) regarded as one of the crucial driving forces in the process of empowering and professionally developing them as RBL practitioners by means of the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. This Model also indirectly improved the learning process.

The RBL practitioners' responses to Section B (Competencies), regarding the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the RBL facilitator, revealed the following:

- RBL practitioners agreed that the most important knowledge and skills for RBL facilitators should be the understanding of learning needs of non-traditional/adult learners that they should demonstrate understanding of delivery mode components, communicate effectively and listen with sensitivity by taking the culture of the learner into account. Regarding their self-evaluation of their current level within each of these competencies, the ratings were on a medium level. This resulted in one of the points (i.e. how to improve their competencies

with regard to the above-mentioned), which was addressed during a focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

- RBL practitioners requested more short courses and training in RBL, in order to gain knowledge of non-traditional learners' learning needs as well as to develop the effectiveness of their RBL facilitator's role. This resulted in an important point on the agenda during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).
- RBL practitioners strongly felt that the most important attitudes of an RBL facilitator should be to approve the use of various sources, welcome the shared responsibility and to agree to the use of new technologies. The majority of the respondents also rated their attitudes towards the above-mentioned three aspects of the facilitation skill at a medium level. In addition, one of the attitudes that was highlighted that needs definite improvement is to improve their communication skills to the non-English speaking learner in order to prevent misunderstandings and overcome the language barrier. This issue had to be explored in more detail and therefore became an important question in the Focus Group Interview Schedule (*vide* Appendix B).
- RBL practitioners indicated that their developmental needs, regarding a change in their attitudes, included issues such as non-English speaking learners, a shift towards learner-centredness and modifying the RBL facilitator's role. This concern was explored in more detail during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).
- Regarding the successful application of RBL, RBL practitioners signified that planning ahead for contact sessions as well as managing the direction of discussion were vital. These aspects also needed to be

emphasised in the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. Application aspects which required more training and exploration were fostering group learning, utilising RBL resources, implementing appropriate RBL strategies, producing RBL materials as well as implementing the use of alternative strategies in own knowledge transmission and -production. It also became evident that training would be needed in terms of promoting RBL material, implementing appropriate RBL strategies and effective group learning/dynamics as well as using alternative strategies for problem areas. All the above-mentioned were important aspects during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

- RBL practitioners stressed that the two most important aspects of the RBL facilitator's role in assessment is to provide the learner with clear grading criteria and to return assignments promptly with detailed notes. In their view their current level is rated high and satisfactory. One area that needed further investigation and improvement was how to evaluate the satisfaction of RBL delivery mode strategies. That was addressed in the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

Thus, the case study research design would have to address the RBL practitioners' lack of competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes as identified in the above-mentioned data) regarding the RBL delivery mode through further exploration during focus group interviews and discussions with the Centre for Staff Development (*vide* Chapter 7).

6.3.2 Discussion of the data related to the roles as a Resource-based Learning facilitator (Section C of the Questionnaire)

The RBL practitioners' responses to Section C (RBL roles) disclosed the following:

- RBL practitioners/facilitators felt that the experience of their RBL roles in the beginning, highlighted four concerns, namely allocating tasks, acting as traditional lecturer (authoritative), accommodating a new concept and high uncertainty levels. When the same participants later mirrored their present RBL roles it became evident that the majority had indicated that they mainly facilitated participatory discussion during contact sessions and guided learners. However, there was still evidence of uncertainty and lack of confidence (i.e. acknowledging own limited RBL application due to lack of knowledge and skills). This specific pair of questions of the questionnaire was poorly answered, perhaps because phenomena are portrayed statically in questionnaires, which discourages a greater degree of spontaneity in the expression of views. This was explored during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).
- Although the majority of RBL practitioners pointed out that their **job as a RBL facilitator was not stressful** at all, many declared that they **did not have sufficient time to fulfil their jobs effectively**. The latter would necessarily result in stress, so this discrepancy was delved into during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).
- There was a minimum indication of dissatisfaction regarding the listed aspects of their RBL role, namely curriculum planner, curriculum evaluator, course organiser and resource developer. This dissatisfaction correlated with the above-mentioned issues regarding limited time for quality performance as well as their own uncertainty and lack of competencies in the RBL delivery mode. Both these issues could be the core factor inhibiting these RBL practitioners to act with confidence and competency in the above-mentioned roles. The two roles with which the RBL practitioners felt the most satisfied were information provider and role model within the learning context. This might be because these roles are closer to the traditional teaching role

and thus easier to adapt to, but further investigation and debate by means of the focus group interviews were needed (*vide* Appendix B; Chapter 7 & Chapter 8).

- Apparently not one of the listed aspects of the RBL facilitator's role was a priority nor time consuming. However, in practice this seemed unrealistic (*vide* 1.3.2) and need follow-up during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).
- The majority of RBL practitioners indicated that prior training was essential to acquire distinctive knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to not only be multi-skilled, but also properly equipped to fulfil their responsibilities towards their learners. Although this statement verified their insight in the complexity and difficulty to have a mind shift towards RBL, it also contradicted their previous self-reflection on their role as RBL facilitators, where they indicated a lack of competency and limited practice. This contradiction needed further clarification during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).
- 52% of the RBL practitioners felt that the shift towards RBL did not complicate their role as facilitators because they had received prior training and there had been gradual shift over the years. The other 48% felt that this shift towards RBL complicated their roles as facilitators, because they did not feel in control, that evaluation was complicated, they had limited knowledge and there were time constraints. The responses indicated that no complication was also in contradiction to previous acknowledgement of limited competencies and practical experience. This inconsistency had to be elucidated during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

Thus, there appeared to be contradictions regarding the RBL roles of facilitators, which needed further exploration and clarification via focus group

interviews (*vide* Appendix B & Chapter 7). Although it appeared that the RBL practitioners had received appropriate information of and guidance regarding their respective roles, there were still negative attitudes and uncertainty, which seemed to be a concern that needed further attention.

6.3.3 Discussion of the data related to RBL Improvement Strategies for an RBL facilitator (Section D of the Questionnaire)

It can be deduced from the responses of the majority of RBL practitioners that RBL has influenced their personal and professional development – not only by changing their delivery methods, but also by enhancing their relationships with learners. The detail of the above-mentioned needed further investigation during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

The feelings of RBL practitioners fluctuated between dissatisfaction and neutrality regarding the availability (e.g. related to content and time), opportunity and relevance of RBL training courses. The extent to which provision was made for the above-mentioned as well as its value needed to be dealt with during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

RBL practitioners did not indicate a definite satisfaction or dissatisfaction with either the RBL improvement strategies such as feedback on satisfaction with the RBL delivery mode or problem-solving. However, those improvement strategies towards which extreme dissatisfaction was experienced are the following:

- Reading of RBL practices.
- Workshops/seminars on the RBL delivery mode.
- Conversations with colleagues on RBL practices.
- Consultation with RBL experts.
- The compilation of an own RBL portfolio.

These strategies would thus be crucial for inclusion in the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model, but the practicality regarding the implementation needed to be looked at during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

RBL practitioners indicated their satisfaction with the extent to which they worked together as a team. This is the first step towards supporting one another, sharing experiences, etc. as well as an indirect way of maintaining RBL staff development. Regarding the rest of question 17, there were no clear signs of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Hence it would be essential to probe the intellectual stimulation as a result of RBL, the overall effectiveness, the available expertise and the commitment to RBL of the institution during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

6.3.4 Discussion of the data related to recommendations for the Resource-based Learning facilitator (Section E of the Questionnaire)

Regarding future RBL courses, the majority of RBL practitioners felt that time constraints were the most important concern, while the loss of control was the least concern. The challenge would be to design and structure the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model in such a way that could be time effective. Two other concerns from RBL practitioners were how to prevent those learners who do not deserve it from passing, without lowering standards when you do not have sole control any longer and how to encourage effective group learning among big groups of learners. These were also important themes which had to be included in the above-mentioned proposed model, but first clarified during the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B).

The majority of RBL practitioners felt positive about their RBL experience and indicated that they had initiatives which they would like to implement in order to improve both their and the learners' overall experience. They requested additional training on aspects such as new RBL practices, Internet and RBL as well as how to be more effective RBL facilitators. These areas had to be included in the above-mentioned proposed model. It was suggested that a centre, which would support the production of the RBL study guides be created.

6.4 SYNOPSIS OF THE RELEVANT DATA RELATED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The quantitative data results indicated that although RBL practitioners are positive and demonstrate initiative regarding the implementation of the RBL practice, uncertainty and negativity are still present. This emphasised both the need and the value of the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

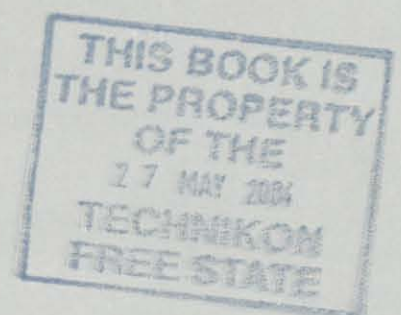
In addition, not only areas that needed to be included in the above-mentioned model were identified, but also what issues and concerns needed to be accommodated in order to provide effective and continuous RBL staff development opportunities. The challenge would be to design and structure this model in such a way that it would be time- and cost effective, but also relevant and practical.

6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the quantitative results of the empirical research were discussed. The quantitative results were by no means conclusive and were followed by a focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B). These results would assist in the next step of the case study research design. Due to the fact that this research is ongoing, the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model would be refined as the process continued.

Chapter 7

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

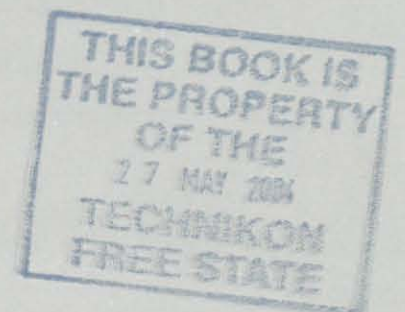


6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the quantitative results of the empirical research were discussed. The quantitative results were by no means conclusive and were followed by a focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B). These results would assist in the next step of the case study research design. Due to the fact that this research is ongoing, the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model would be refined as the process continued.

Chapter 7

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS



7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 the research approach and orientation of this study were outlined. This study represents higher educational research which is a scientific and disciplined inquiry using quantitative and qualitative approaches. The latter will be fully discussed in this chapter, where the focus is on the case study methodology as the interactive research approach (i.e. mode of inquiry).

Before starting with the research purpose and research questions, as stipulated for this case study methodology, a short review of the research orientation will provide a rationale for the research design decisions (i.e. conclusions or resolutions reached after consideration of various problem areas in research problem and mode of inquiry) in this study.

Assumptions: Qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophy that assumes reality as multiplayer, interactive and a shared social experience interpreted by individuals (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). Hence, reality is a social construction where individuals or groups derive or ascribe meanings to specific units (e.g. events, persons, processes or objects). In this study the specific unit is RBL. Sense is made of these units by means of reorganisation of viewpoints, perceptions and belief systems. Thus what is "real" is directed by actions, thoughts and feelings, with special reference to RBL practitioners.

Goal: The essential concern of qualitative research, as also in this study, is to understand social phenomena from the participants' perspective (i.e. RBL practitioners). This understanding is obtained by analysing the various contexts of the participants and by narrating participants' perceptions for

these situations and events (via the focus group interviews with RBL practitioners – *vide* Appendix B) (De Vos 1998; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). Within this context RBL practitioners' perceptions include feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and actions.

Multimethod Strategies: Interactive strategies (such as in-depth focus group interviews, reflection and comments of experts in the RBL field, etc.), are not more flexible, but also provide more valid of data by overcoming the complexity of multiple realities (De Vos 1998; McMillan & Schumacher 2001).

Research Role: In order to prevent becoming immersed both in the situation and the phenomena being studied, the position of the interactive social roles of the researcher had to be settled (De Vos 1998; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). My role in this study fluctuated on the continuum, namely on the one hand being a neutral party (thus not part of the participants' context) and on the other hand acting as active participatory party (where I was involved as facilitator in conducting focus group interviews and discussions with experts) (De Vos 1998; McMillan & Schumacher 2001).

Context Sensitivity: Human actions are strongly shaped by the settings in which they occur (McMillan & Schumacher 2001). This leads to context-bound generalisations to be used by participants, which have to be considered during the analysis and also by interested readers and researchers.

The above-mentioned assumptions substantiates most of the research design decisions in this study. The attention will now shift to the purpose and research questions of this study.

7.2 PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS



This study represents a *descriptive exploratory* research purpose, namely to design and structure in detail an RBL Academic Staff Development Model for future research (*vide* 1.4). This study will therefore add to the literature by building descriptions of complex situations and by giving direction for future research (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). The specific aims of the empirical research (*vide* 1.4.2) represents an illustrative research question, namely how are these RBL patterns maybe linked for propositions/assertions. This will be discussed in detail (*vide* 7.4.3-7.4.5).

First, the focus will now shift to the qualitative data analysis.

7.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is a relatively systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising and interpreting to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest, namely as in this study an RBL Academic Staff Development Model (Brown & Dowling 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). In Figure 7.1 the analytic network of this study's coded transcripts of RBL practitioners' experience of the questionnaire which was used, is presented. The numeric reference to coded transcripts data was important to refine my organising, analysing and interpreting system (QRS NU*DIST Application Software Package 1995) (*vide* Index Tree in Appendix C).

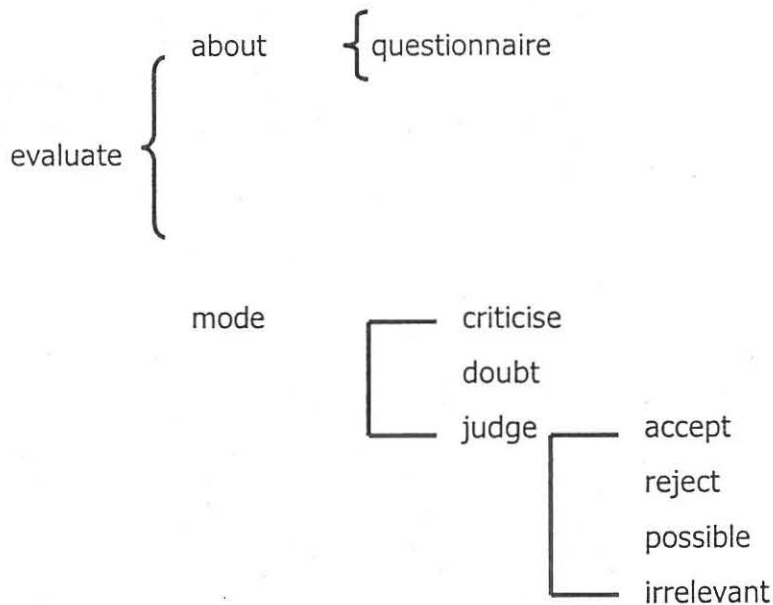


Figure 7.1: Analytic network of coded transcripts, data 1

Figure 7.1 entails that evaluative reasoning carried out by participants will be “about” a specific element related to the questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A) and will be in a particular “mode”. The evaluation is about a model where the “mode” of the evaluative reasoning will be either to criticise, doubt or judge. In the “judge” mode, the options are either to accept or reject or to judge something as possible or as being irrelevant. Both braces may be used at any level of the network, although in this study, the majority of the braces occur at the first level.

7.31 Experience of the Resource-based Learning questionnaire

The majority of the responses to the RBL practitioners' experience of the RBL questionnaire transcended simple interpretations of criticism, doubt and

judgement. The fact that the RBL Instruction mode was viewed as difficult, unclear and unknown, reflected the feelings of novice RBL practitioners, while the judgement of certain rejected and irrelevant items/responses (e.g. facilitation and other unspecified items) indicated problem areas when RBL would be incorporated within the South African HE context. As already noted (*vide* 2.4) the implementation of the RBL practice would reveal context specific characteristics. This was also voiced by those who took part in this study by challenging the complicated RBL instruction mode within the SAHE context (e.g. lack of infrastructure and limited human and financial resources). However, all RBL practitioners agreed that the RBL delivery mode, both from policy and practice viewpoints, should be accepted due to the possible value it added to performance of learners (e.g. independence, working at own pace and good time-management) and the end results of the learning process (e.g. effective learning and problem-solving as well as increased critical thinking skills).

7.3.2 Subjection to a Focus Group Interviews

When reflecting on the comments of the RBL practitioners of attending the focus group interviews of this study, the following figure represents the analytic network of this study's coded transcripts:

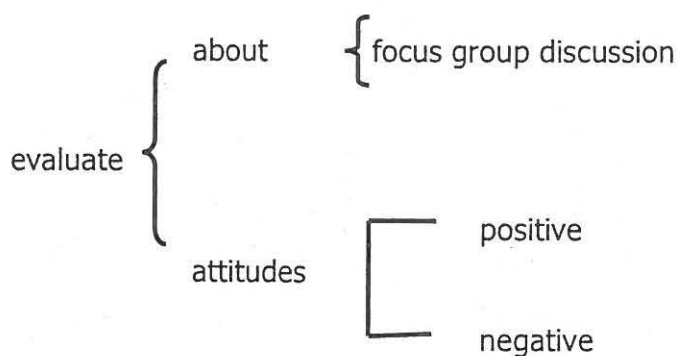


Figure 7.2: Analytic network of coded transcripts, data 2

Figure 7.2 requires that evaluative reasoning carried out by participants will be “about” a specific element related to the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B) and will be according to particular “attitudes”. The evaluation is about a focus group interviews where the “attitudes” of the evaluative reasoning will be either positive or negative. Both braces maybe used at any level of the network, although in this study, the majority of the braces occur at the first level.

The responses of the RBL practitioners fluctuated between the positive and the negative sides of the continuum. Although the participants did not mind sharing their ideas and problems regarding their RBL practice, it seemed there were signs of resistance and frustration among them due to the extensive number of documents and policies (e.g. participants claimed that they were negative just from hearing more new terminology such SAQA, OBE, RBL, etc.) that academics were confronted with nowadays. For proposed implementation to be successful the impact on the academic and institution have to be considered due to the amount, demands and pace of change within the transformation of SAHE. The underlying experience of participants can thus be linked to the change concept which is a process and not necessarily negative, threatening or destructive. It can also lead to a positive condition of renewal and progress depending on the context and objectives (Bennis 1966; Toffler 1979; Hickman & Silva 1986).

7.3.3 Required competencies of Resource-based Learning facilitators

This study was a qualitative investigation of the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for to be a competent RBL facilitator. The following is a visual presentation of the analytic network of this study's coded transcript is needed:

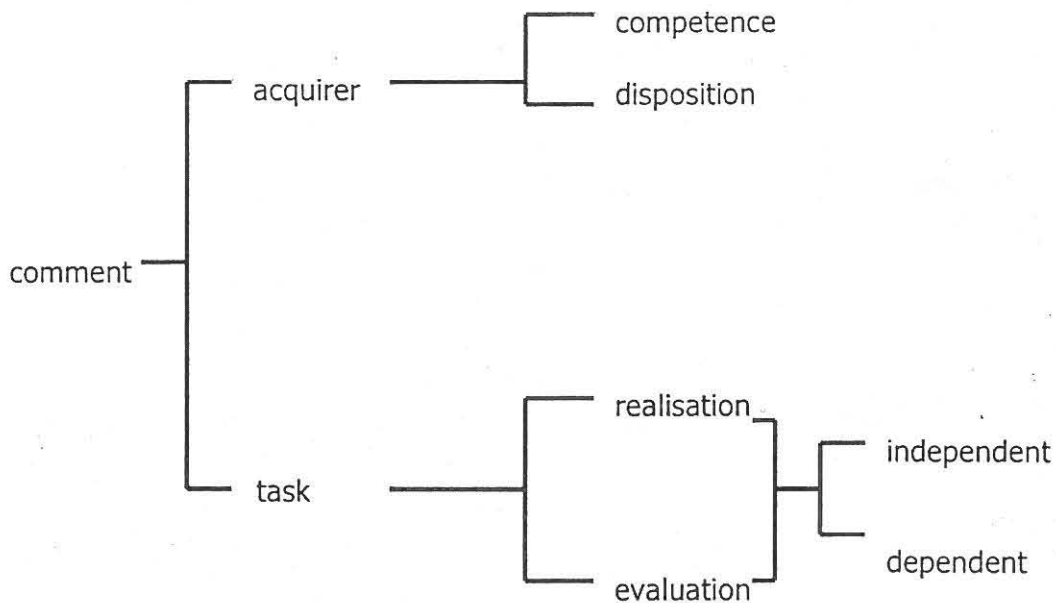


Figure 7.3: Analytic network of coded transcripts, data 3

Figure 7.3 demonstrates the diagram, following the acquirer/competence route. In the first analysis an initial distinction was made between the comments focused on the acquirer (RBL academic) and those that focused on the task (related to competence). These comments were then subdivided again to distinguish between the acquirer focused comments that refer to the competence of the RBL academic and those that refer to their dispositions (e.g. RBL practitioners have no stress, although they indicated that they did not have sufficient time to perform their role effectively). The task-focused comments were divided into those, which focused on the realisation of the task (e.g. resource developing is complex) and those focused on the evaluation of the task (e.g. facilitation is a vital activity). This gives two subsystems, differentiated in terms of the statement being described.

The findings of this sub-section are summarised in the following assertions:

Assertion 1: The important knowledge, skills and attitudes of each RBL facilitator fluctuated due to the level of experience.

Assertion 2: Each RBL academic had multiple competency levels dependent on the level of experience.

Assertion 3: The application and implementation of RBL is problematic and needs adaptation within the SA higher educational context.

The shift of participants towards RBL was mainly due to indirect forces (e.g. projects within specific subject disciplines), and not because of a holistic movement of the institution. Therefore, there is neither a systematic process nor a central support system for RBL practitioners. Despite these circumstances, academics acted positively and innovatively (e.g. by the corroboration of the perspective that the reputation of institutions and the quality of your programme are intertwined. This included the responsiveness to the market, networking as well as intangibles on the operational level). In addition, the above-mentioned also resulted in differences regarding the progress made with RBL in the institution. In order to prevent this dilemma from continuing in the future, participants suggested that the Centre for Staff Development should act as a support system. The staff of this centre should also receive additional training to act as RBL experts for the whole campus, so that the current frustration and time-consuming implementation aspects could be avoided (e.g. separate training and no coherence or co-ordination among RBL practitioners, which results in duplication). There should also be effective communication channels between the centre and the library (both acting on professional basis), especially because all the participants agreed that the latter is crucial for the successful implementation of RBL. Furthermore a cluster of RBL delivery principles should be developed by the centre in order to address the current lack of knowledge and skills. The latter resulted in dependence as RBL facilitators and in order to progress towards independence, the following identified areas have to be addressed by the participants, namely:

- **Understanding of non-traditional/adult learners and instructional design components.**
- **Communicating effectively and listening with sensitivity regarding cultural issues.**

Incompetence in these areas also link with the identified developmental needs (*vide* 6.3.1), where a shift in attitude is required (e.g. towards learner-centredness, non-English speaking learners and a modified role of the RBL facilitator) which is a slow process considering the diversity among academics. Yet, only an attitude change of staff via prior training and orientation will not ensure successful implementation. A mind-shift by learners where the learners as a group are orientated to increase the acceptance and understanding of the RBL concept, is also necessary. However, there seems to be a discrepancy about the level (i.e. first, second or third year learners) at which RBL should be introduced: on the one hand, first or second year learners who are immediately confronted with new ways when entering the HE system, or third year learners, too stuck in rigid thinking and behaviour regarding the learning process. Participants also indicated that older students would adapt easier, because they are more mature and understand holistic processes better. Within the SAHE context, where a large and diverse student population are formed, it appeared to be more practical to introduce RBL in a hierarchical order where knowledge, skills and attitudes could emerge in a predictable positive sequence, which can be monitored. Although the latter focuses rather on the learner than on the facilitator (who is the focus in this study), it is also essential to take note of the fact that RBL entails a shared responsibility and working-relationship between the RBL facilitator and the learner in order to be implemented successfully. Part of the success is due to the learner, where a systematic and logical introduction could enhance the implementation by addressing the feelings of uncertainty and resistance.

The lack of knowledge and skills of the RBL academic also relate to the limitations and inappropriateness of infrastructure and resources. The implementation of RBL in a SAHE context implies adaptation and innovation, for example by providing a resource list or RBL package to overcome not only the cost implications, but also the limited availability of resources and limited access and ownership of new technology. Two other issues, which hinder the performance of RBL practitioners limited expertise to apply their own subjects and the language issue (e.g. the medium of instruction is both the facilitators and learners second language). Regarding to the first issue, RBL practitioners stressed that when they were competent in their own discipline, the facilitation process is easier to apply and they also felt more comfortable. Otherwise more planning and skills related to managing discussion are required. One of the misconceptions of facilitation mentioned by a participant was that you do not apply facilitation, if you do not have other facilitators (e.g. lack of human resources). Within the SA higher educational context, where there is a lack of finances, facilitation could also imply the usage of learners to act as facilitators in the groups when providing feedback. The second issue, namely medium of instruction is a very sensitive factor at the moment as it is a second language to most participants. Because the Technikon Free State does not have a parallel-medium policy and academics are struggling with high workloads, each academic acts on the demands of the learners. However, there could be problems if the market strategy does not meet the promise of including both English and Afrikaans as medium of instruction in their practice. Other obstructions in the application of RBL are highlighted as the group dynamics and assessment of big groups. This has been identified as one of the areas which needs more training in order to improve RBL delivery mode. One of the myths believed by participants is that RBL is an easier way to obtain a degree, because standards are lowered and learners can slip through the system. This resulted in an end-product that is unable to perform in the practice/field/industry. It also implies non-

transparent assessment and an informal/chaotic learning process. This highlighted the need for more accurate information and also demonstrated the enormous shift academics are confronted with.

Cultural diversity can also impact on the performance of RBL practitioners (*vide* 6.2.1.1). Hence cultural sensitivity is not only crucial to comprehend the learners within the learning process, but also has to be accommodated within an RBL Staff Development Model in order to address the difference in the thinking processes (i.e. Afrocentric versus Eurocentric). According to various authors (Van der Walt 1997; Cloete *et al.* 1997) the biggest difference between these two ways of thinking is the collective identity of the people from Africa versus the individual identity of the people from the West. The consequences of these intercultural differences are misunderstandings and clashes in the management of diversity.

The post level influence on the performance of RBL practitioners appeared to be a very individual aspect, depending on the attitude towards and adaptation to diversity issues (*vide* 6.2.1.3). Furthermore, there exists a diverse RBL academic population, therefore the proposed RBL Staff Development Model has to cater for different learning needs on various levels. According to junior lecturers, the shift towards RBL was not experienced negatively, but rather as challenging in order to meet new demands. This may be due to the inquisitive mind of lifelong learners, still involved in learning themselves.

The nature of the job of RBL practitioners impacted on their performance (*vide* 6.2.1.4). This proposed model should be creative and innovative to promote constant professional development (some participants' even suggested the electronic availability), following a cyclical process to provide novice academics with the same information and perspectives because there appeared to be no function of staff. One of the current practices which seemed very effective and appropriate is to annually have a strategic

workshop where the focus can progress from only operational issues (i.e. developmental) towards improvement, creating benchmarks and templates for good practice.

All the above-mentioned aspects revealed that when a certain amount of knowledge, skill or attitude was lacking, and the evaluate-state was regarded as a disposition (e.g. big groups and group dynamics), it has to be addressed as a delivery mode improvement strategy.

7.3.4 Required roles of Resource-based Learning facilitators

The transformation of traditional roles, resulting from of the shift towards a learning-based approach, was discussed (*vide* 3.3). In the following visual presentation of the analytic network of this study's coded transcripts, the extent to which RBL practitioners adhere to transformed roles will be debated.

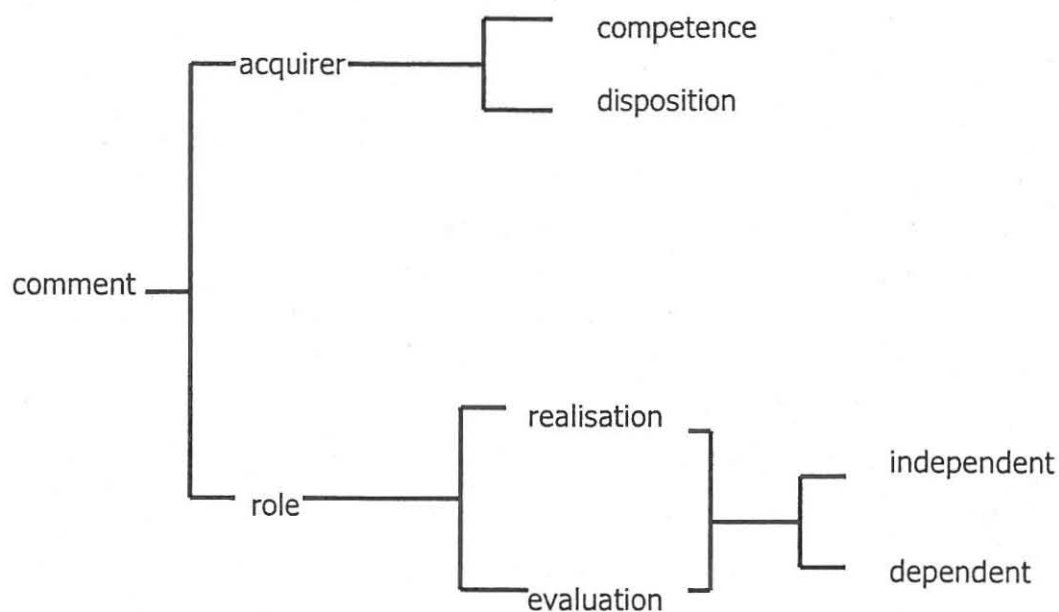


Figure 7.4: Analytic network of coded transcripts, data 4

Figure 7.4 displays the diagram, following the acquirer/competence route. In the original analysis a distinction was made between the comments focused on the acquirer (RBL academic) and those that focused on the task (related to roles). These comments were then subdivided again to distinguish between the acquirer focused comments that refer to the competence of the RBL academic and those that refer to their dispositions (e.g. RBL practitioners fulfil all the roles, although they indicated a need for more training). The task-focused comments are divided into those which focus on the realisation of the task (e.g. resource developer's role is complex) and those focused on the evaluation of the task (e.g. facilitator's role is a vital activity). This gives two subsystems, differentiated in terms of the statement being described.

Eleven roles of RBL practitioners were identified (*vide* 3.3). It appeared to be a very complicated task to fulfil all these roles simultaneously and with the same competency. All the participants echoed that they struggled with insufficient time because the preparation of **RBL is very time-consuming**. These RBL practitioners also acknowledged the presence of stress, especially if new subjects had to be presented in this mode, which again complicated their role and performance.

The reaction of participants, when reflecting on the change of roles, was complex and difficult to pinpoint. This was because the introduction had not been systematic and the majority of RBL practitioners were still experimenting as reflective practitioners. One of the roles, namely that of the resource developer has been highlighted as a priority area that needs improvement, because it is very time-consuming. Writing study guides and RBL material are areas, which is not only vital but also needs more support and training. In this regard more knowledge, skills and positive attitudes have to be achieved. This again emphasised **the need and value of the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model**. The learning facilitator also has to acquire effective skills in group dynamics to enhance the learning process.

Reasons for the complication of roles have been debated, providing both positive and negative reasons. When the competence of roles has been realised, it is hypothesised that these roles could be fulfilled independently.

7.3.5 Required improvement strategies for Resource-based Learning

The focus of the study mainly comprised of a qualitative investigation in order to identify personal and professional developmental areas of the RBL facilitator. Before discussing the findings, the following is a visual presentation of the analytic network of the coded transcripts:

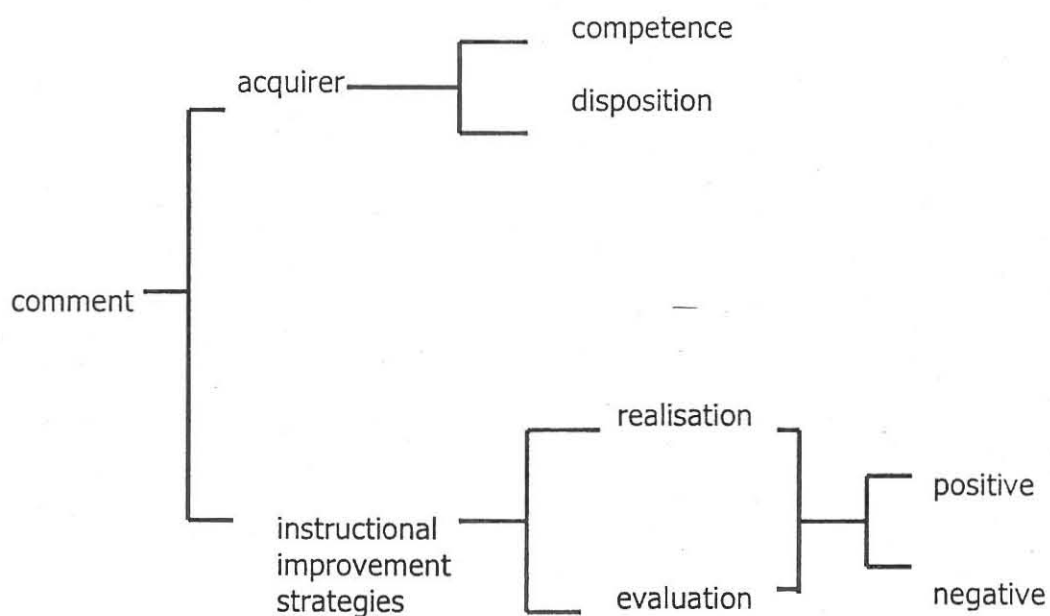


Figure 7.5: Analytic network of coded transcripts, data 5

Figure 7.5 is the diagram following the acquirer/competence route. In the original analysis an initial distinction was made between the comments focused on the acquirer (RBL academic) and those that focused on the task (related to instructional improvement strategies). These comments were then subdivided again to distinguish between the acquirer focused comments that refer to the competence of the RBL academic and those that refer to their dispositions (e.g. RBL practitioners have no stress, although they indicated insufficient time to perform their role effectively). The task-focused comments are divided into those, which focus on the realisation of the task (e.g. resource development is complex and essential) and those that focus on the evaluation of the task (e.g. group dynamics and assessment need improvement). This results in two subsystems, differentiated in terms of the statement being described as well as positive versus negative continuum.

The one issue being stressed as an area that needs improvement, is group dynamics and group assessment. Due to the complexity of this skill, it has to be prioritised as a key area for RBL Academic Staff Development. Furthermore to be effective in developing RBL materials appeared to be another essential area.

Responses of RBL practitioners revealed that RBL had influenced their personal and professional development. More effective learning and more equipped and skilful learners indirectly resulted in more intellectual stimulation.

RBL practitioners also indicated that reading material, workshops, conversations and consultations should be directed via the Centre for Staff Development, thus a central system, to avoid duplication, in a systematic and strategic way. This could be a way to visually demonstrate the institutional

unpreparedness towards this shift as well as create RBL experts and expertise – currently lacking.

7.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter a qualitative analysis was done, where information had to be processed (e.g. consisting of a variety of text forms). I tried to accomplish this by incorporating analytical networks to identify patterns and code transcript, thus by means of own engagement in the empirical setting. This procedure required a janusian attitude. Janus was the two-faced Roman god who looked both ways at a portal. I have tried to focus on both the theoretical and empirical fields in my research.

According to this chapter, the most significant results are that by addressing the lack of RBL competence, the basic building blocks of RBL Excellence Performance increased. Excellence Performance of RBL roles is dependent on the state of RBL competence and the use of RBL improvement strategies as tools for improvement.

In the next chapter the triangulation of data (combining Chapter 6 and Chapter 7) will be addressed.

Chapter 8

MULTIMETHOD STRATEGY: **TRIANGULATION**

*We should combine theories and methods
carefully and purposefully with the
intention of adding breadth or depth to our
analysis, but not for the purpose of pursuing
"objective" truth.*

(Fielding & Fielding 1986).

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The focal point of this chapter is on the multimethod strategy of this study, which allows triangulation of data collection (*vide* Chapter 5) and data analysis of the quantitative (*vide* Chapter 6) and qualitative (*vide* Chapter 7 & Chapter 9) research results. Various authors (De Vos 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Shumacher 2001) comment that **multimethod strategies authorise *triangulation* of data across inquiry techniques**. The advantage of this is embedded in the fact that different strategies may yield different insights about the investigated phenomenon and, in turn, increase the credibility of findings. Other strategies present in this study to enhance design validity will now be stressed (*vide* Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: Strategies to enhance Design Validity: Data collection strategies to increase agreement on the description or composition of phenomena between the Researcher and the Participants

Strategy	Description
<i>Mechanically recorded data</i>	Use of tape recorder during focus group discussions.
<i>Verbatim accounts</i>	Obtain literal statements of RBL practitioners.
<i>Participant review</i>	Ask each RBL academic to review the synthesis for accuracy of representation; frequently done during focus group discussion.
<i>Discrepant data</i>	Actively search for, record, analyse and report discrepant data that are the exception to patterns.

Source: Adapted from McMillan & Schumacher (2001).

The purpose of this chapter is three-fold:

- Present an overview of the quantitative and qualitative results;
- Provide the data- and method-triangulation results;
- Indicate whether results were either confirmed or denied by the quantitative or the qualitative triangulation processes.

8.2 TRIANGULATION PROCESS

Data- and methodological triangulation are the two relevant types of triangulation in this study.

8.2.1 Quantitative and qualitative data triangulation

Data triangulation has already been defined as researchers explicitly search for as many as possible different data sources that have a bearing on the phenomenon being analysed (*vide* 5.4.3.2). In this study data triangulation entails the comparison of quantitative data from the questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A) and qualitative data received from the focus group interviews (*vide* Appendix B) with RBL practitioners. Another data source which has been included, is the comments by five RBL experts on the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. Using this multimethod approach does not result in a single clear-cut, consistent picture, but presents a challenge to improve comprehension of the diverse reasons for the existence of inconsistencies between the two sets of data (Patton 1990; Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001).

8.2.2 Quantitative and qualitative methodological triangulation

Methodological triangulation entails the dual approach of combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). This is based on the rationale that a single data collection method is insufficient to provide adequate and accurate research results. It is vital to remember that the above-mentioned method is also a form of comparative analysis where the interpretation of results is complicated when the convergence of data leads to inconsistencies and contradictions. This study aims to combine the quantitative data triangulation results with the qualitative data triangulation results.

8.3 A REVIEW OF THE TRIANGULATION RESULTS

According to various authors (Miles & Huberman 1994; De Vos 1998; Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001), data management is an integral part of data analysis. Managing such a database is viewed as a challenge, because of the need to comprehend the data and to locate a description to illustrate a concept/phenomenon (Conrad *et al.* 2001; McMillan & Schumacher 2001). In this study I decided to handle the data management as a display of the triangulation process in a matrix. This provides a summary of what the results were and identifies common themes in various sets of data in order to generate the triangulated results. A review of the triangulated results of this study is illustrated in Tables 8.2-8.8. Horizontal rows represent the broad RBL academic staff development dimensions. Column 1 consists of the three dimensions of RBL academic staff development being investigated. The summary of the quantitative data triangulation results is found in Column 2. Column 3 reflects the data of the comments of RBL experts, while the fourth column consists of the themes confirmed by either the quantitative or the qualitative data triangulation results. In Column 5 the methodological triangulation results are provided which consists of the quantitative (Column 1), qualitative (Column 2) and feedback from RBL experts (Column 3) results.

Tables 8.2-8.8 only provide a cryptic display of results in the matrixes, and thus require elaboration and discussion of the methodological triangulation results, which are the core findings of the triangulation process. These are stated as conclusions, where the issues not confirmed by the methodological triangulation will be used to contextualise the conclusions in greater detail. Subsequently each staff development dimension will first be displayed by a table and thereafter be discussed. Each staff development dimension is discussed separately in order to follow the illustration of data easier. In addition, the following icons are provided to visually enhance the interpretation, synthesis and evaluation purposes of the matrixes:

	Basic data explained
	Data confirmed by two sets of data
	Data confirmed by all data sets
	Misconception and contradiction highlighted
	Text highlighted by blue indicates a negative result
	Text highlighted by blue (italics) indicates a positive result
	Text in black indicates a neutral stance or one data set

Note: Where open blocks in the table are present, no relevant information is available nor being tested.

The first staff development dimension (Competencies) is displayed in Table 8.2 and discussed in 8.3.1.



Table 8.2: A summary of data- and methodological triangulation results of the first RBL academic staff development dimension

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. Data ▲	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
1 (Competencies)	*RBL practitioners agreed more knowledge and skills are needed regarding: -non-traditional/adult learners -RBL instructional design -the impact of career position on RBL performance -how to communicate and listen with cultural sensitivity.	*Facilitation skills are hindered by limited expertise, second language proficiency and cultural diversity. *RBL practitioners suggested Centre for Staff Development to serve as support system (act as RBL experts and address lacking competencies) and develop RBL instruction principles. *RBL practitioners indicated that there is a need for more accurate information on RBL concept.		*Misconception of the facilitation concept (Qual. Data ▲) *Misconception of RBL easy way to obtain a degree (lowering standards) (Qual. Data ▲)	*Data regarding to the lack of knowledge and skills (same areas) have been confirmed by both data sets *Data confirmed that cultural diversity, post level and nature of job negatively impacted on RBL performance.
	*RBL practitioners demonstrated positive attitudes towards: -multiple use of sources -shared responsibility relationship -use of new technologies			*Shared responsibility and new technology are vital in the learning process (Quan. Data ▲)	

Table 8.2: A summary of data- and methodological triangulation results of the first RBL academic staff development dimension (continued)

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. Data ▲	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
1 (Competencies)	*RBL practitioners identified a definite improvement need/ change in attitude regarding: -own communication skills with non-English speaking learners -learner-centredness	*RBL practitioners identified a definite improvement need/ change in attitude regarding: -own communication skills with non-English speaking learners -learner-centredness		*Attitude change would be a slow process due to diversity of RBL academic population (Qual. Data ▲) <i>*Suggest training and orientation sessions to shift the minds of academics and learners (Qual. Data ▲)</i> <i>Dis honesty with regard to the medium of instruction in market strategy (Qual. Data ▲)</i>	*Both data sets confirmed uncertainties regarding own language proficiency/lack of language instruction policies and learner-centredness.
	*RBL practitioners signified that successful application of RBL require: -planning ahead -managing the direction of the discussion	*RBL practitioners agreed that successful application of RBL require: -more planning and skills related to managing discussion -effective communication canals between Centre for Staff Development and library.			*Both sets of data confirmed the requirements for successful RBL application.



Table 8.2: A summary of data- and methodological triangulation results of the first RBL academic staff development dimension (continued)

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. Data ▲	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
1 (Competencies)	*RBL practitioners stressed more training for the following application areas: -effective group learning/dynamics -promoting of RBL material -implementing appropriate RBL strategies	*Obstacles of RBL application are limitations and inappropriateness of infrastructure and resources.		<i>*Provide a resource list or RBL package by overcoming availability, cost and access problems (Qual. Data ▲)</i>	*Both data sets confirmed the complexity and the difficulty of RBL materials.
		*RBL practitioners indicated that policies related to RBL have not been driven institutionally. *RBL practitioners agreed on the lack of support with RBL.		*Shift towards RBL driven by academic managers/leaders (Qual. Data ▲) *RBL practitioners acted positively and innovatively without a support system (Qual. Data ▲)	*Lack of institutional commitment is confirmed by only Qual. Data ▲
		*RBL practitioners uncertain at what level (first/second/third year) to introduce RBL.		*Introduction of RBL according to hierarchical order would deliver best results (Qual. Data ▲) *Logical and systematic introduction of RBL could decrease uncertainty and resistance (Qual. Data ▲)	

8.3.1 Resource-based Learning Competencies

It is evident that RBL practitioners are in the beginning of the RBL implementation phase because there are a number of competencies outstanding, various misconceptions/contradictions present, inappropriate RBL infrastructure and resources, uncertainty at what level to introduce RBL to learners as well as a lack of an RBL support system. The above-mentioned also confirms the need for a RBL Academic Staff Development Model, (*vide* Figure 9.3) not only to ease the implementation phase of RBL, but also as a tool serving as a systematic and strategic driving force.

It appears that RBL practitioners have only partly internalised accurate information and facts about RBL, because of the misconceptions about the RBL and facilitation concepts.

Although this study focused on the design and structural elements of an RBL Academic Staff Development Model in the literature study, the underlying aim was supporting RBL Excellence Performance. Significantly this study highlighted that there are certain contextual trends (South African specifics) that impact on the performance of academics, namely cultural diversity (both academic and learner), their post level and the nature of their jobs. This impact can be explained in terms of the multi-culturalism in a country like SA. Furthermore, in the light of all the policies regarding equity, which in turn results in actions such as rationalisation of staff also influence the performance of academics. These issues impact specifically on the cognition, affect (emotions) and behaviour of the RBL practitioners.

Despite the lack of institutional commitment towards RBL, initiatives and innovations are present among these RBL practitioners. For example, although infrastructure and resources hinder implementation, RBL practitioners try to create a more informal learning environment in the

classrooms and an environment to support group learning (where more training could be helpful). RBL is currently experimenting with RBL resource material development and would welcome more training on this aspect. The specific RBL training areas and delivery improvement strategies will be discussed and demonstrated (*vide* Table 8.4 & paragraph 8.3.3).

The second RBL Academic Staff Development dimension, namely RBL roles, are displayed and discussed (*vide* Table 8.3 & paragraph 8.3.2).



Table 8.3: A summary of data- and methodological triangulation. Results of the second RBL academic staff development dimension

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. Data ▲	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
2 (Roles)	*RBL practitioners emphasised the modification of the RBL facilitator's role. *Responses of RBL academics represent both sides of the continuum regarding the complicated level – where no complication is contradictory to evidence where own limited competencies and practice are acknowledged.	*RBL practitioners agreed that it is a complicated task to fulfil the eleven roles with the same competency level simultaneously.			*Data confirmed the need for training with regard to all the competencies necessary for the RBL facilitator's role – due to complexity of roles.



Table 8.3: A summary of data- and methodological triangulation results of the second RBL academic staff development dimension (continued)

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. data c	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
2 (Roles)	*RBL practitioners indicated that in the beginning the following three roles were prominent: -allocating tasks -traditional lecturer -still a novice in accommodating RBL. *RBL practitioners referred to own lack of competencies and limited practice that hindered RBL roles to be applied. *RBL practitioners noted that prior training is essential to fulfil RBL responsibilities. (contradiction)	*RBL practitioners indicated it was difficult to reflect on the change of roles (appears to be complex and difficult to pinpoint because RBL was not strategically and holistically being implemented).		*High uncertainty levels with RBL application (Quan. Data▲)	*Both data sets confirmed the complexity of changed roles if lack of competences are present.
	<i>*Reflecting on current RBL practice, RBL practitioners fulfil especially two roles, namely:</i> <i>-facilitating participatory discussion</i> <i>-guiding learners</i>	*RBL practitioners acknowledge that they are still experimenting as reflective practitioners.		*High uncertainty levels with RBL application (Quan. Data▲)	*Data confirmed that the application of RBL roles is in the initial phase.



**Table 8.3: A summary of data- and methodolog
development dimension (continued)**

Results of the second RBL academic staff

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. data c	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
2 (Roles)	*RBL practitioners indicated that RBL facilitator's role is not stressful. *RBL practitioners argued that they have insufficient time to efficiently do the job, due to high workloads. (contradiction)	*RBL practitioners clarify the contradiction of stress versus insufficient time with regard to new RBL roles – especially when a new subject is present. *RBL practitioners agreed that the resource developer's role needed improvement, because it is a very time- consuming task.			*Both data sets confirmed the presence of stress due to insufficient time to fulfil roles effectively.
	*RBL practitioners indicated high satisfaction levels with regard to information provider and role model roles.	*RBL practitioners highlighted the need for group dynamics competency in order to fulfil task competently with big classes.		*RBL practitioners confirmed the need for group learning and assessment training (Qual. Data ▲)	
	*RBL practitioners demonstrated minimum dissatisfaction with their roles as curriculum planner and evaluator, course organiser and resource developer. *Due to poor responses of RBL practitioners there was no indication of which roles are prioritised.			*High uncertainty levels are visible due to dissatisfaction with certain roles, lack of insight with regard to the prioritisation of roles and extent of time spent on each role (Quan Data ▲)	*The Qual. ▲ Data only, confirmed high uncertainty levels.

8.3.2 Resource-based Learning Roles

As illustrated by Tables 8.3, the complexity of the eleven RBL roles (*vide* 1.3.2, 3.3) are mainly due to the diversity among RBL practitioners regarding their competence and level of experience is acknowledged. The original contradiction in this regard was sorted out during the focus group, namely as being a misconception only.

RBL practitioners agreed that it was extremely difficult to reflect on their own change of roles, because the RBL implementation was not a clear-cut, holistic, strategic plan of action within the institution. In addition, they are still experimenting as reflective practitioners, which caused the high uncertainty levels. Furthermore, training appeared to be crucial in order to cope with these complex roles simultaneously. These academics' coping skills are further bombarded by high workloads and excessive demands for change, which in turn result in high stress levels. Insufficient time counteracts their RBL Excellence Performance. These statements demonstrated contradictions during the quantitative investigation.

Clearly the roles closest to the traditional roles had been the ones first adapted to, while those roles related to core issues such as curriculum and resources were identified as the difficult and more complex ones. It has also been highlighted that these issues are vital areas in need of training.

The third RBL Academic Staff Development dimension, namely RBL improvement strategies, will now be displayed and then discussed (*vide* Table 8.4 & paragraph 8.3.3).



Table 8.4: A summary of data- and methodological triangulation results of the third RBL academic staff development dimension

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. data ▲	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
3 (Improve-ment Strategies)	*RBL practitioners acknowledge the impact of RBL on their personal and professional development in terms of: -change in instruction methods -enhanced relationship with learners.	<i>*RBL practitioners revealed that RBL has influenced their personal and professional development and provided the following examples: -learning is more effective -learners are more skilful and equipped -own intellectual stimulation increased.</i>	<i>New HE instruction methods such as RBL challenge academics personally and professionally.</i>		<i>*Both data sets confirmed the impact of RBL on academics' personal and professional development.</i>
	*RBL practitioners' responses were unclear with regard to the availability, extent and value/relevance of RBL training courses.	<i>*RBL practitioners indicated need for RBL training courses.</i>		*RBL practitioners suggested training in group dynamics/ evaluation and developing RBL materials.	*Data concerning RBL training areas have been confirmed by both data sets.



Table 8.4: A summary of data- and methodological triangulation results of the third RBL academic staff development dimension (continued)

Dimensions of RBL Academic Staff Development	Quantitative (Quan.) Data ▲ results (Method 1)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 2)	Qualitative (Qual.) Data ▲ results (Method 3)	Issues confirmed by either Quan. or Qual. data ▲	Results of Method ▲ (Methods 1+2+3)
3 (Improvement Strategies)	*RBL practitioners hold a neutral stance with regard to the feedback on effectiveness of the RBL instruction and instructional problem-solving.				
	*RBL practitioners indicated extreme dissatisfaction with the following RBL instructional improvement strategies: -reading of RBL instructional practices -workshops/seminars on RBL instruction -conversations with colleagues on RBL -consultation with RBL experts -compilation of own RBL portfolio.	*RBL practitioners confirmed the dissatisfaction with RBL instructional improvement strategies due to lack of institutional commitment and the absence of a systematic and strategic support system.	<i>Lack of institutional support and commitment have a negative impact on RBL implementation.</i>	*RBL practitioners suggest a Centre for Staff Development to be responsible for driving the RBL instructional improvement strategies (Qual. Data ▲).	*Both data sets confirmed dissatisfaction with some of the identified RBL instructional improvement strategies.
	*RBL practitioners were very satisfied with their teamwork.	*RBL practitioners stressed the value of teamwork in RBL.	<i>Teamwork is crucial for active learning (could also be seen as negative).</i>		*Both data sets confirmed the value of teamwork in RBL (could also be seen as negative).
	*Academics demonstrated a neutral stance with regard to the overall effectiveness of RBL course, institutional commitment to RBL and support provided to undertake RBL by expertise of colleagues with RBL.				

8.3.3 Resource-based Learning Strategies

The majority of RBL practitioners have the same opinion regarding the impact of RBL on both the academics and learners. Thus they acknowledge its value (e.g. more effective learning, more equipped and skilful learners and enhanced intellectual stimulation of academics). By consent of the majority of RBL practitioners, training via an RBL Academic Staff Development Model could be the answer to various of their uncertainties and incompetencies. This could be a more systematic tool to circulate and present the RBL improvement strategies with which the participants had dissatisfaction, while their teamwork roles appears to be one of the driving forces of the current success.

Clearly RBL academic staff development could be the answer to various of the current unanswered questions. Although this study focused on only three dimensions of staff development, it seemed that these RBL competencies, roles and improvement strategies are inter-related, impacting on and influencing one another as well as strengthening one another.

8.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the results of the triangulation process and has therefore met the two empirical research aims (*vide* 1.4.2). The presence of some contradictory results confirmed the need of using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

It is also significant to note that the three staff development dimensions being investigated have an inter-related relationship by impacting on and strengthening one another. These dimensions are valuable within the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model, also representing a cyclical process.

In the next chapter the focus will shift to the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

Chapter 9

A PROPOSED RBL ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of the shift towards a learning-based approach, with special reference to RBL, has great importance for SAHE managers and providers. This would not only assist them to effectively cope with the consequences of this transformation which have already been illustrated (*vide* Chapter 1; Figure 1.1; Table 1.1; Figure 1.2; Figure 1.3; Chapter 2), but also be responsive as well as contributes to the human and knowledge needs of SA. This includes the transformation of traditional roles, forms of learning and new learning technology. Thus the HE practice has to be transformed. Based on this notion it was paramount that the roles of academic staff had to change and academic staff managers have to cater for these new situations. In addressing this I will first discuss in detail the criteria for RBL excellence as well as the core values and concepts of RBL practice. This highlighted that in this study staff development was one of the main tools to bring about change. The last section of this chapter will allude to the challenges to design and structure a proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

9.2 CORE VALUES AND CONCEPTS OF RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING

Core values and concepts of RBL imply embedded beliefs and behaviours (e.g. RBL is based on the majority of Constructivist principles about learning *vide* 2.5.4) found in high-performing institutions (Allen-Meaures, Radin & Radin 2000). These core values and concepts are the foundation for integrating market requirements/relevance within a result-orientated structure that creates a basis for action and feedback. Additionally, a description of these core values and concepts of RBL points not only to the issues that make for successful RBL, but also to identifying the goals for staff development for RBL.

9.2.1 Visionary Leadership in Higher Education

It was evident in this study that pressure from government (e.g. via policies and legislation) and industry drove senior academic leaders to set directions, clear and visible values and high expectations. These directions, values and expectations – with regard to RBL in this study - should not only balance the needs of all stakeholders, but also ensure the creation of strategies, systems and methods for achieving excellence, stimulating innovation and building knowledge and capabilities. In order to accomplish this, the above-mentioned leaders served as an inspiration and a motivation for their entire workforce and have encouraged all academics to contribute, develop and learn to be innovative. Clearly, these leaders act as role models through their ethical behaviour and personal involvement by reinforcing values and expectations, while building commitment and initiatives which are vital aspects for the proposed model throughout the institution.

9.2.2 Learner-driven excellence

According to the responses of all the participants quality and performance are judged by the institution's graduates/learners (Ivy 2001). Within this context, learner driven excellence (including RBL) has both current and future components, namely understanding today's learner desires as well as anticipating future learner desires and marketplace offers (*vide* 1.1; 1.3; 1.3.2; 2.2; 2.3.1). This is a crucial element in the proposed model.

In addition, values and satisfaction may be influenced by various factors. Learner-driven excellence is thus a strategic concept. This demands anticipating change in the marketplace (e.g. awareness of developments in technology and competitors' offers, as well as providing rapid and flexible

responses to learner and market requirements). This emphasises that RBL practitioners have to be open thinkers and active change agents.

9.2.3 Valuing academics and colleagues

An institution's success depends increasingly on the knowledge, skills and motivation of its academics and relationships between colleagues [Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) 2002]. In order to value RBL practitioners' commitment to their satisfaction, development and well-being is necessary. This involves more flexible, high-performance work practices tailored for academics with diverse workplace, personal and home life needs. This study's RBL leaders met the following challenges regarding the encouragement for RBL:

- Leaders demonstrated commitment to RBL academics' success (e.g. comments from the participants indicating that the support from the academic leader help him or her to progress).
- They shared their progression with their academics in order to provide a better service to their learners and to fulfil strategic objectives (e.g. commentary by participants about having an annual strategic workshop for staff, or that he or she had received a lot of support and encouragement from his or her academic leader to attend training opportunities).
- They created an environment that encouraged risk taking (e.g. remarks by participants such as having an annual strategic workshop for staff, or the guidance of the academic leaders which helped to bring his or her programme in line with the RBL requirements).

However, it appeared that the following challenges in the area of valuing RBL practitioners were lacking:

- Recognition that goes beyond the regular compensation system (e.g. participants note that there is no compensation for RBL Performance Excellence).
- Development and progression within the institution (e.g. statements from participants indicating that the academic plan which originally supported RBL, was non-existent or that no institutional driving force for RBL existed).

The above-mentioned are important points and relate to the need for system-wide implementation of RBL as well as changes in understanding workload and achievement. These challenges need to be incorporated in the proposed model. RBL practitioners have to receive recognition for motivational purposes as well as for institutional networking (e.g. by regular communication, evaluating progress and adapting to changing conditions). In addition, it is suggested that in some cases joint education and training opportunities could offer a cost-effective method for employee development for HE institutions (*vide* suggested areas in 6.3.3).

9.2.4 Agility

Success in globally competitive markets demands agility which is a capacity for rapid change and flexibility (Waghid & Le Grange 2002). This capacity is essential for RBL academics, who have to be cross-trained (e.g. being an expert as well as an educator) and able to empower academics to survive in a demanding environment. The participants indicated that this simultaneous drive towards improvements within the institution, quality, cost and productivity increased their stress levels. The latter implies that RBL practitioners are not resistant to change *per se*, but find it difficult to cope with the increased workload as a result of change (e.g. in this study shifting to a learning-based approach).

9.2.5 Focus on the future

During the focus group discussions it was evident that the RBL practitioners have a focus on the future (e.g. sign of good leadership), although they indicated that they did not have a choice within the current competitive HE and marketplace environment. These academics also demonstrated understanding of short- and long-term factors affecting their learning business and the marketplace. These factors include a lack of appropriate facilities, absence of institutional support from employees and colleagues, no co-ordination regarding relevant staff training and development opportunities, etc. To counteract these factors, participants must have strategic objectives and resource allocations to create opportunities for innovation and shared responsibilities.

9.2.6 Managing for innovation

Innovation can be defined as a meaningful change to improve an institution's products, services and processes and to create new values for the institution's stakeholders (Baldrige National Quality Programme 2002; HEFCE 2002). This would then lead to new dimensions of performance. The majority of responses confirmed that innovation has to become part of the RBL academic's culture and integrated into daily work. This emphasises that the proposed model should be cyclical, in order to revisit and reflect on RBL issues for personal and professional development.

9.2.7 Focus on results and creating value

The institution's RBL performance needs to focus on key results. These results should then be used to create and balance the value for key stakeholders such as customers (learners), academics, leaders (both governmental and institutional), the public and the community (Baldrige

National Quality Programme 2002; HEFCE 2002). By creating value for your stakeholders, the institution is building loyalty and contributing to growing economy. In order to meet conflicting and changing aims that balance values implies that the institution strategy should explicitly include stakeholder requirements. This will help ensure that actions and plans meet differing stakeholder needs and avoid adverse impacts on any stakeholders. Some of the results identified by the RBL practitioners in this study indicated the required short- and long-term priorities and provide a clear basis for improving results. The proposed model should include monitoring the actual RBL performance that is currently lacking.

9.2.8 Systems perspective

The above-mentioned criteria provide a systems perspective for managing an institution to achieve RBL excellence performance, while the identified core values and categories form the building blocks and integrating mechanisms for an institutional RBL system – also core issues for the proposed model. However, successful management of overall RBL performance requires institution-specific synthesis and alignment. Synthesis entails looking at the institution as a whole and building upon key business requirements, including the strategic objectives and action plans. Alignment implies using key measures/indicators to link key strategies with key processes and then align resources to improve the overall RBL performance. In this study the whole institution was not incorporated in this synthesis and alignment process and only its components managed to achieve success in RBL. For example academic leaders focused on strategic directions and the customers (e.g. external students/learners and internal staff). This implies that academic leaders monitor, respond to and manage RBL performance on business results (which is not only student enrolment and performance). However, a holistic synthesis and alignment are necessary for future success. This would imply changing the ethos of the institution as a whole, where all faculties and all

levels of staff buy in on RBL. In addition, to widen the focus on students and strategic direction by sufficiently focusing on staff.

All the above-mentioned core values and concepts for RBL performance excellence as well as identified, investigated and confirmed competencies, roles and instructional improvement strategies, will be embodied in the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

9.3 A PROPOSED RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODEL

A world class reputation by any HE institution depends on its ability to recruit and retain high quality staff. HE needs academics with expertise and the commitment to sustain and improve. In addition, SAHE academics have to change to new delivery modes (RBL). In the discussion on RBL Excellence and core values and concepts of RBL (*vide* 9.2-9.3), it became evident that RBL academics' capabilities, practices and results depend on a flexible mind and thought processes as well as different approaches, attitudes, behaviour and visions for the future. This emphasised that competent human resource management (HRM) and development, both now and in the future, will be crucial for RBL success.

This study started as an exploration of issues and processes, which influence the quality of RBL practice in order to identify RBL Academic Staff Development needs. Within this context, it became evident that certain factors exist that affect human resource (HR) strategies (*vide* Figure 9.1).

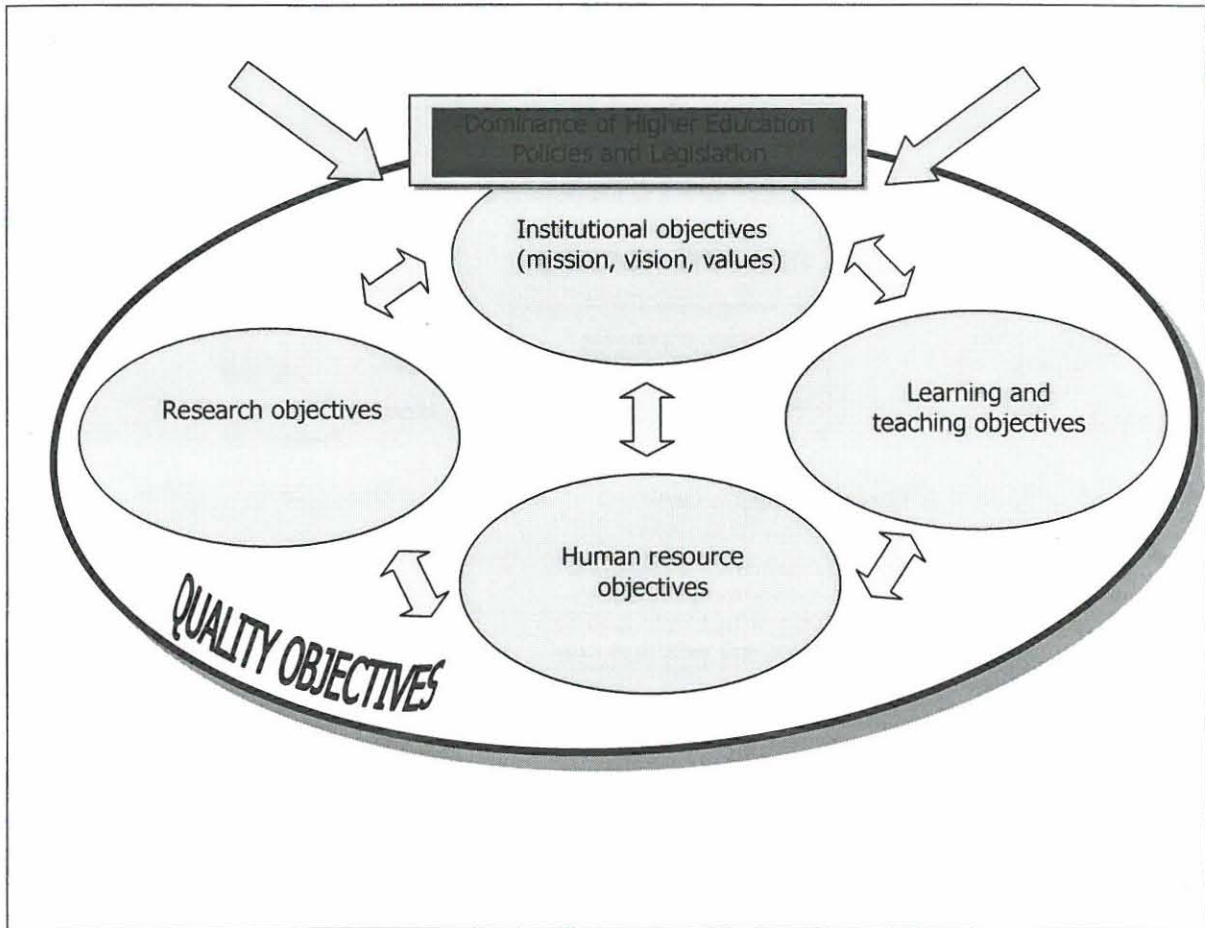


Figure 9.1: Factors that affect human resource strategies

Figure 9.1 illustrates the links between the external factors (e.g. the dominant role of policies and legislation) and the internal factors (e.g. various objectives), which are also the key elements that contribute to the achievement of HR objectives. The relationships between the elements are multiple and striving towards quality. In this study the focus were on the learning and teaching objectives (RBL) and the HR objectives (RBL Academic Staff Development Model).

In addition, quality RBL practice within an institutional context consists of core dimensions (*vide* Figure 9.2).

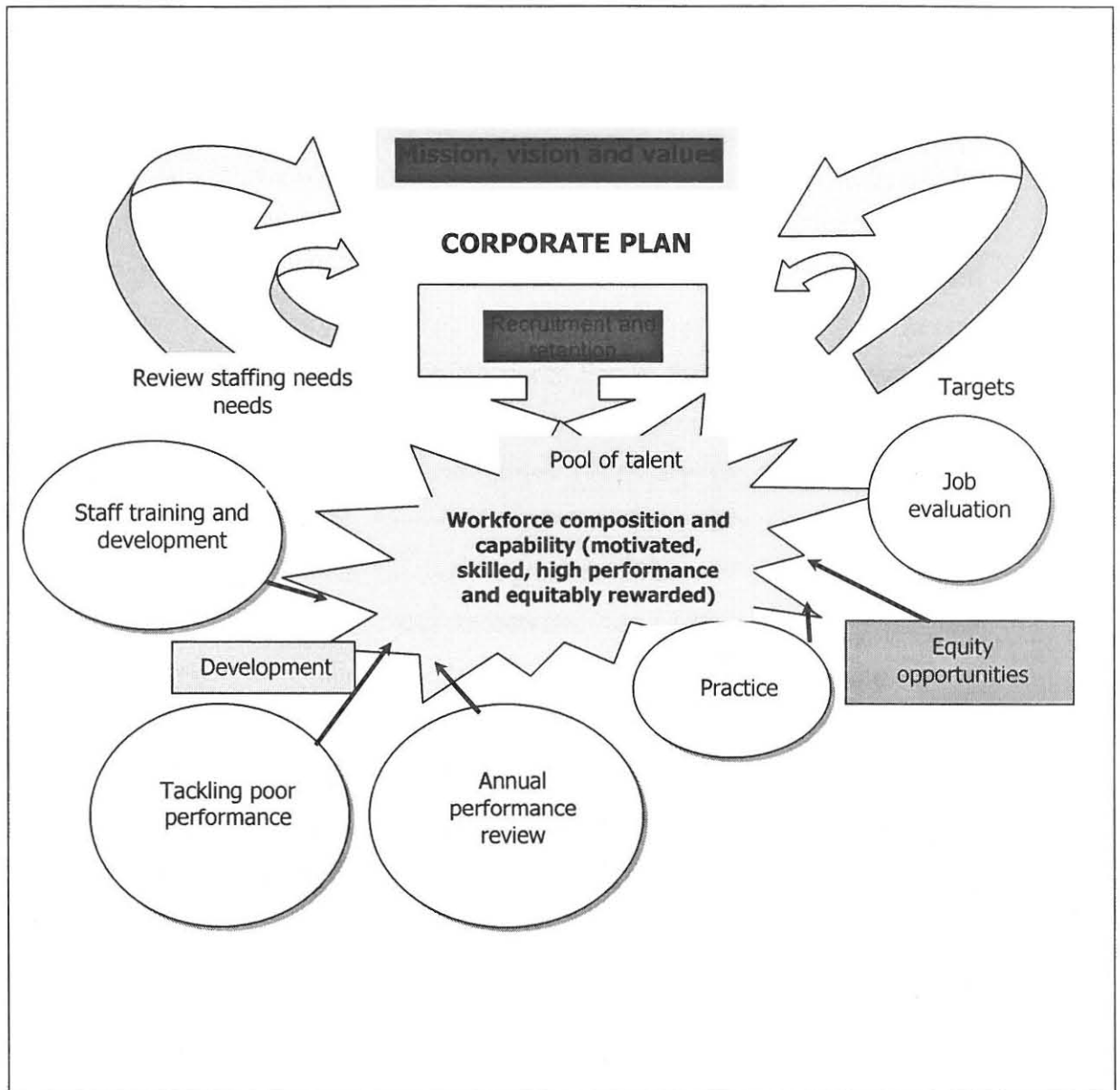


Figure 9.2: Core dimensions of institutions

In Figure 9.2 the starting assumption is that any HR strategy requires a well-motivated, appropriately trained, equitably rewarded workforce, which performs effectively in pursuing the institution's objectives, while the details will differ depending on the institution's mission and the context/location in which it operates. The second assumption is that the composition of the

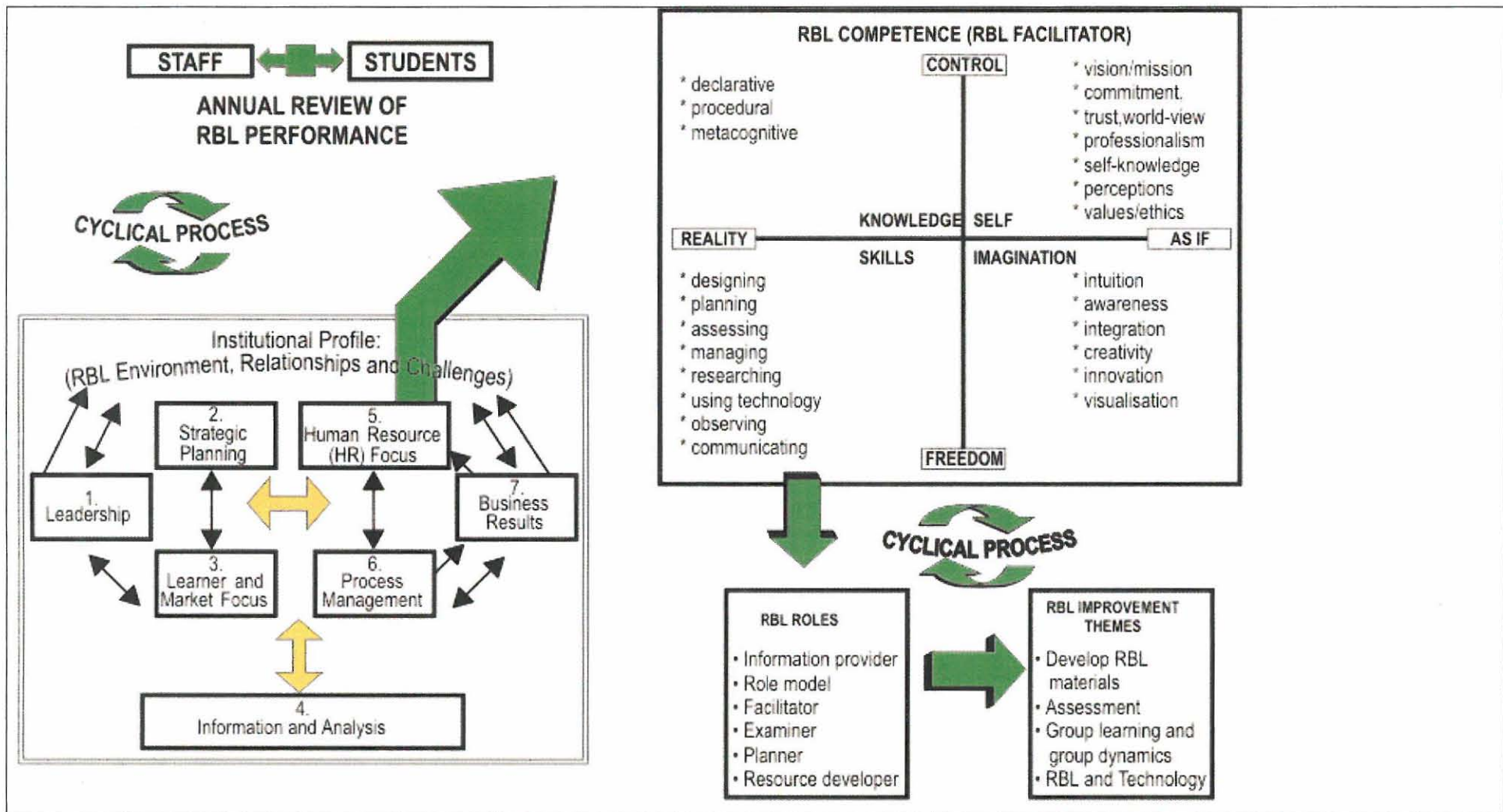
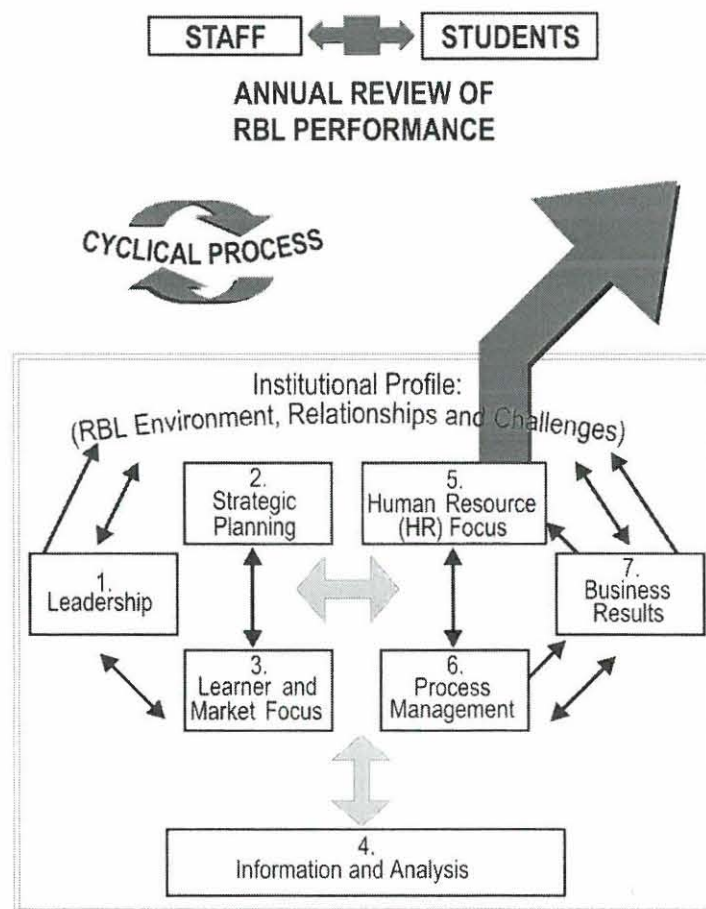


Figure 9.3: Proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model (Systems Perspective)

The main feature is illustrated in Figure 9.3, namely that the process should be **cyclical**, where new staff can be up-dated and experts can use it for reflection purposes. The proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model should fit into an environment which supports and enhances the RBL delivery mode. Thus, the model consists of the following elements:



▪ **Institutional Profile**

This profile sets the context for the way the institution should operate or suggests an operation for RBL Performance Excellence. Within this context the environment (infrastructure issues around RBL), key working relations and strategic challenges serve as a guide for institutional RBL performance management systems.

▪ **System**

The system is set in the centre of the figure that delineates the institution, its operations and its results.

The Leadership (Category 1), Strategic Planning (Category 2) and Learner and Market Focus (Category 3) represent the leadership triad. These categories are grouped together to emphasise the importance of visionary leadership as initial driving force for the paradigm shift towards RBL. Academic leaders are crucial for directing the institution and seeking future opportunities. In this study it was a vital aspect, which was present to indicate not only the progress of the RBL delivery mode, but also the directive, systemic and flexible leadership style required by RBL practitioners to encourage RBL implementation.

HR Focus (Category 3), Process Management (Category 9) and Business Results (Category 7) signify the results triad. Institutional academics (e.g. RBL academics) and their key functions accomplish the work of the institution that yields learning business results.

All the action points towards Business Results which are a composite of learner, financial and operational RBL performance results (e.g. including HR results and public responsibility).

The horizontal arrow in the centre of the framework links the leadership triad with the results triad, a linkage critical for RBL institutional success. Furthermore the arrow indicates the central relationship between visionary leadership (Category 1) and Business Results (Category 7). The two-headed arrow indicates the importance of feedback in an effective RBL performance management system.

This proposed model, although consisting of two triads, functions as a holistic, cyclical process. Within this RBL institutional profile there exist constant fluctuation, due to various rapid changes. Therefore these two triads need to be flexible in order to meet the challenges of the RBL environment and relationships.

- **Information and Analysis**

Information and Analysis (Category 4) are critical to effective RBL management of the institution and a fact-based system for improving performance and competitiveness. Information and analysis (e.g. Library) serve as basic foundation for the RBL performance management system.

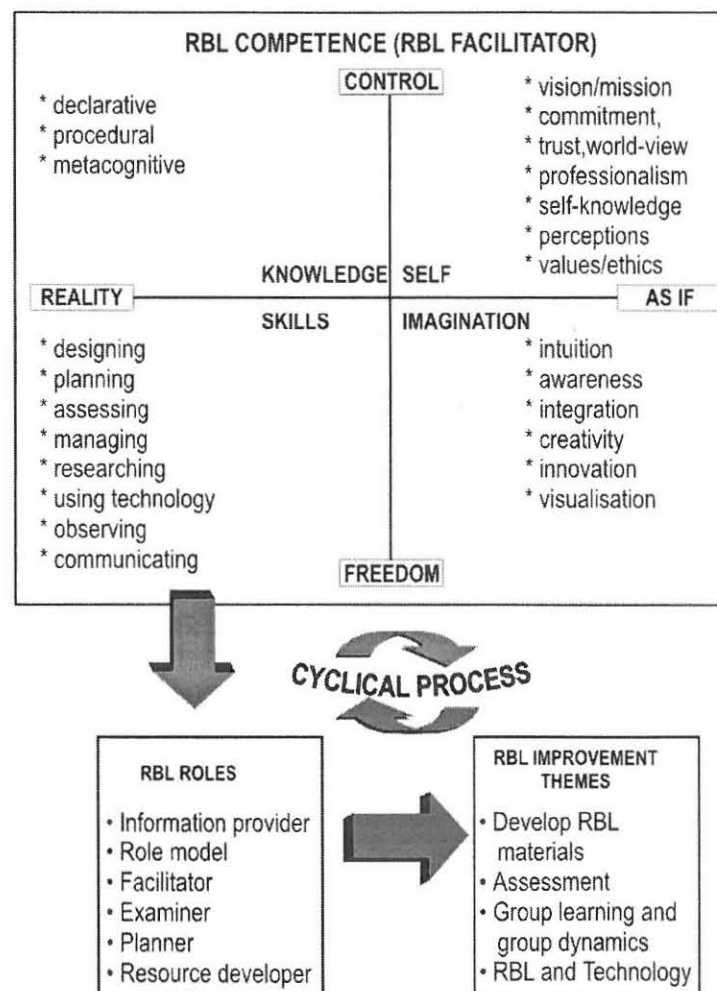
- **Annual Review of RBL Performance**

Although this forms part of the information and analysis section, the discussion is separated because both learners' and RBL academics' performance have to be addressed, and not only the learners' performance as in the above-mentioned sub-heading. The model represents a cyclical process due to the continuity of staff development and training. In this way weaknesses of RBL staff performance is identified and dealt with sensitively. Improvement plans are then developed, acted upon and monitored in order to address market relevance and to nurture RBL expertise. In addition,

extrinsic factors such as national policies can also influence the RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

In order to progress, monitoring is vital. In this study the monitoring of the RBL instruction mode focused on improvement of learning in the future.

Furthermore the RBL delivery mode implies a dual responsibility between learner and facilitator regarding the learning process: both parties need to be consulted during the annual review.

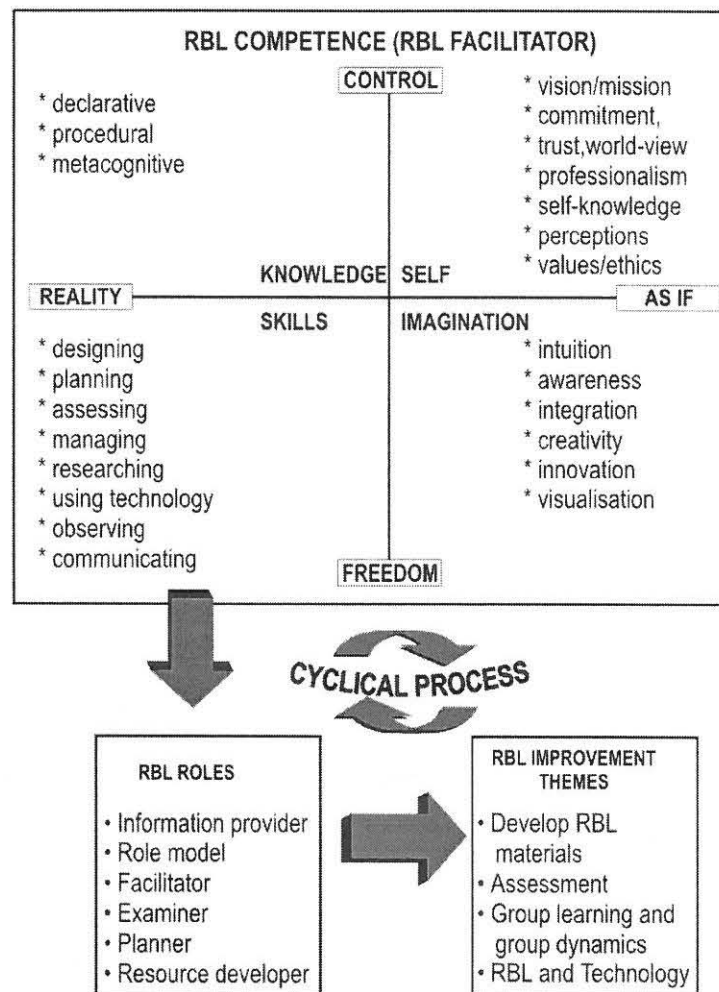


▪ RBL COMPETENCE OF ACADEMIC FACILITATORS

The extract on the competence of the RBL facilitator indicated the crucial requirements for facilitators of RBL. As a result it serves as the first building block towards RBL Excellence Performance, also the first step that HE institutions have to follow when the institutional profile is in order and then could continue towards more performance enhancement which is embedded in effective RBL roles and –improvement strategies.

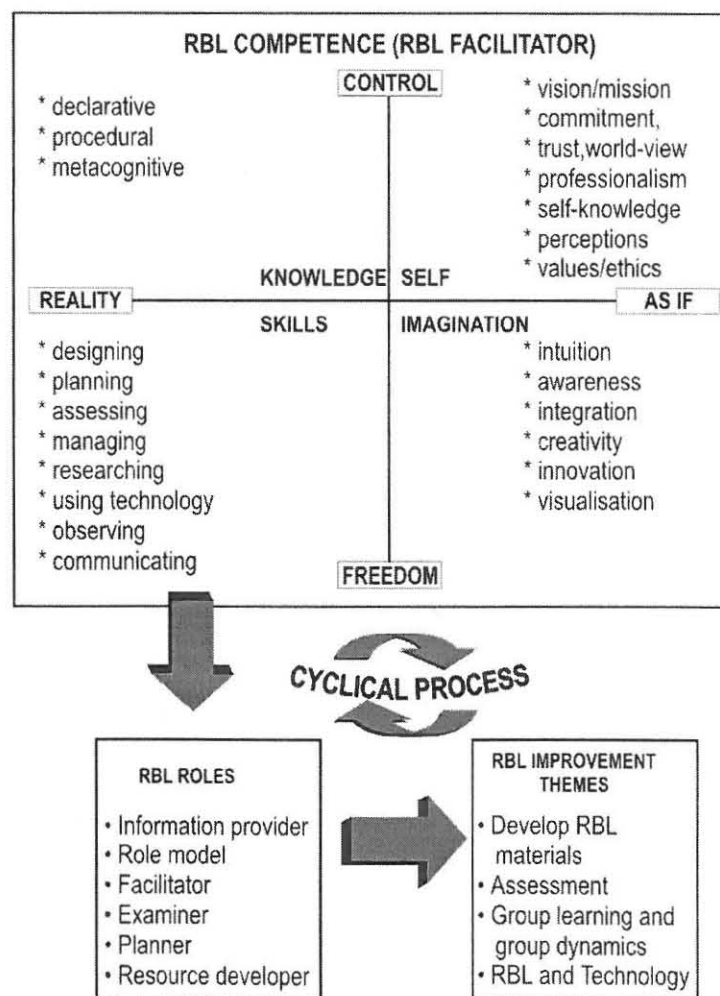
In this extract *freedom* and *control* are poles apart (to demonstrate the shift towards a learning-based approach) as well as *reality* and *as if*. These are the four broad categories of facilitator development (Muller & De Kock 2001). Four broad categories are presented, namely *knowledge*, *skills*, *imagination* and *self*. Within these four broad categories, the identified competencies, which were confirmed by this study, are vital for the professional development of RBL facilitators. These competencies should not be seen as confined exclusively to a specific category, but should be integrated in a flexible manner in the greater design. The *knowledge quadrant* refers to declarative knowledge, dealing with specific information, while the transforming of pedagogical information into *procedural* and *metacognitive knowledge* is vital. In the quadrant of *skills* there has already been success with areas such as presentations, assessments, etc. which mainly focus on the acquisition of declarative knowledge. Despite the fact that these are vital tools, when appropriately used, needs are identified with regard to communication, cultural and language diversity, being reflective practitioners, etc. Regarding the two remaining quadrants of the model, staff development and training have become even more evident. Personal (e.g. enhance self-knowledge; evaluate, confirm and reconceptualise attitudes, values and ethics) and professional development (e.g. vision, mission, commitment to future) have to be addressed. The last quadrant, *imagination*, receives hardly any attention in HE. According to various authors (Rogers 1983; Muller & De

Kock 2001) this implies significant learning, (e.g. combining logical and intuitive, the intellect and feelings, concepts and experiences as well as ideas and meanings). The new learning paradigm of RBL and the imagination quadrant, HE will provide assistance to move beyond institutional profile barriers and become a whole.



▪ RBL ROLES

According to Figure 9.3 it is evident that when RBL competence has been achieved or improved, the performance of RBL roles needs attention or results in improvement. The transformation of traditional roles (*vide* 3.3) has already been discussed. The end result of this activity was the subdivision into six main categories and 11 RBL roles (*vide* Figure 3.1). The two roles which have been highlighted as the most difficult during the empirical study were *facilitator* and *resource-developer*. These roles need special attention.



▪ **RBL IMPROVEMENT THEMES**

I suggest that in future the following themes in RBL Academic Staff Development should be addressed by workshops:

- **Develop RBL materials/study guides** (e.g. currently one of the major barriers for RBL facilitator respondents in this study).
- **Assessment issues of RBL** – due to the complexity of big classes. As well as the need to adapt the assessment strategy when the learning strategy has been changed.
- **Group learning and group dynamics during the contact session** is complex and urgent issues to be addressed.
- **RBL and Technology** need effective integration in order to improve quality.

The proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model (*vide* Figure 9.3) is created and designed from a systems perspective, in order to ease the implementation phase. The implementation phase is crucial, because this will ensure quality RBL academics. This proposed model provides only a structure, but requires constant regeneration and transformation to gear HE challenges not only for the moment but also for the future.

9.4 CONCLUSION

The paradigm shift towards a learning-based approach (e.g. the RBL delivery mode investigated in this study) requires transformation regarding the management and delivery of South African HE institutions. In this chapter the challenge to design and structure an RBL Academic Staff Development Model was contemplated. While the imparting of knowledge and the

acquisition of skills have been the main concerns of RBL facilitators, the roles and improvement themes have also received some attention (*vide* 3.3-3.5). All the above-mentioned would not be possible if not integrated within the institution as a complex network of interrelated phenomena and systems which was demonstrated as the institutional profile (*vide* Figure 9.3). RBL staff development practices should be adapted to serve the character of the institution. Different missions, institutional structures, resources and human capacities have to be reflected in the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model. Consideration of these differences is important when judging the quality of RBL Staff Development practices and when formulating plans for improvement and change.

To be effective and cost-effective, I suggested that the proposed model be a cyclical process – essential for up-dating and reflective purposes. In this model the resource-centredness in the learning process is supported by the learning partnership of RBL. It was also crucial that this collaborative effort to enhance RBL within an institution was signified.

I have identified what is important for quality RBL and have asserted that RBL needs to be implemented systematically. Quality RBL practitioners and RBL Performance Excellence are thus the driving force of the above-mentioned model. Through my analysis of results and through performance appraisal I could develop foci for RBL Academic Staff Development. This emphasised quality HR as the key to success and served as a focal point to exemplify the value and necessity of this study.

CONCLUSIONS AND **R**ECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge transmission and knowledge production (i.e. teaching and learning, research and community service) are the core functions of all HE institutions. In the SAHE context knowledge transmission is confronted with demands for transformation consisting of a range of issues that are relevant to maintain and improve the quality of learning. In this study the focus was on one of the new delivery modes of knowledge transmission, namely RBL.

RBL, as part of the shift towards a learning-based approach, encounters various other shifts that have to be dealt with during the implementation phase. Because quality staff is currently the key to success in HE, this study designed and structured an RBL Academic Staff Development Model not only to ease the RBL implementation phase, but also to provide theoretical contours within which RBL Excellence Performance can be maintained as part of a lifelong learning process.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold, viz. to summarise the research objective of this study to portray the findings and the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model in the form of conclusions and to conclude with the limitations of this focused study and recommendations for future research.

10.2 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY



The research objective of this study was to **design and structure an RBL Academic Staff Development Model**.

The proposed model aimed at meeting the staff development needs of RBL practitioners, especially focusing on the knowledge transmission and production function. The proposed research questions, which guided me in achieving the main objective, have already been stipulated (*vide* 1.6). These questions were explored in finer detail as the three core subsections of the questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A). The responses to these questions need to be discussed briefly in the next section.

Initially, a literature component was included to assist the exploration of the necessary RBL competencies, roles and improvement strategies of successful RBL practitioners(*vide* 1.3.2; 2.3-2.4; 3.2-3.5; 4.1-4.3). This study provided a systematic means of studying the RBL phenomenon in detail and allowed for growth as the process unfolded. It was evident that these three aspects were very complex and demanding due to the organisational dynamics and changing nature of institutions, pressures to transform institutional policies and processes and diversity among RBL academics. Thus, the target group in the academic context needed intensive knowledge, skills and attitude training, as part of a cyclical process.

The case study research design has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations (e.g. RBL) to bring about understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice. Furthermore, by improving the knowledge transmission and production function via the RBL delivery mode, the end result would be quality enhancement.

Using a multi-strategy approach regarding the data gathering techniques ensured triangulation, which in turn validated the results. The last question was primarily focused on the personal and professional development of RBL academics, which is demonstrated in the proposed model (*vide* Figure 9.3).

RBL forms part of the transformation process in the SAHE context. In this study, the case study research design presented itself as a means of personal and professional development as well as quality enhancement (*vide* 1.5; 5.2). The findings of this research have led to the design and structure of an RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

10.3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

10.3.1 Conclusions and recommendations from the theoretical perspectives on Resource-based Learning Staff Development, nationally and internationally

The following conclusions are followed by relevant recommendations which originated from the findings of the literature review of this study:

- a) The multifaceted nature of the RBL concept and staff development hinders common understanding and thus complicates the process of policy formulation surrounding it, leading to further difficulties in institutional RBL practice and implementation.
- b) Although it was not the focus of this study, it was crucial to ground RBL within a specific learning theory – not only to declare when effective learning and delivery occur, but also to validate the RBL definition. Thus it appears that RBL is founded in the constructivist perspective (*vide* 2.5.4) where the RBL academic manages the knowledge transmission, production

- and engagement as well as the sources within the learning context. This collaborative RBL facilitator-learner-relationship is now characterised by shared responsibility and intrinsic motivation.
- c) The paradigm shift towards a learning-based approach implies both a shift in pedagogical theory and practice for **RBL practitioners**– thus the focus shift from improving teaching towards improving learning. This entails at individual level, that the RBL academic deliberates about learning, while at the organisational level it involves the production of student learning and operation as a learning organisation.
- d) The transformation demands of the SAHE context resulted in the changing culture of HE institutions (e.g. increased information technology resulting in a revolution in the way knowledge transmission and production as well as management and leadership are being practiced). Accompanying this changing culture of the HE environment is the changing practice of RBL academics. This study confirmed that leadership is intertwined with culture formation (*vide* 1.2). The proposed model (*vide* Figure 9.3) could serve as guiding tool for academic managers/leaders to address this changed practice within the complex HE landscape. There is also an emerging reconceptualisation of institutional change that emphasises learning as the core process in organisational change and where organisations link all their practices towards the learning needs of their workforce. It brings about a new conceptual understanding of learning and of how learning is perceived.
- e) In order to ease the implementation of the simultaneous innovations in HE practice and institutional change, I attempt in this proposed model (*vide* Figure 3.9) not only to address RBL, as HE innovation, but also to address the required institutional environment and aspects necessary for RBL Excellence Performance at institutional level.

- f) Quality learning equals quality application of learning. This was a vital aspect to consider while designing and structuring an RBL Academic Staff Development Model, because RBL practitioners are the key to future success and thus need adaptation, a mind shift and training.
- g) The above-mentioned is very complicated, due to the composition of human resources in SA, which has resulted in a manifold HE system. In turn this makes the operationalisation of RBL delivery mode a complex undertaking. If RBL is implemented within a period of transformation, the interpretation of RBL is clouded by resistance to change.

10.3.2 Conclusions and recommendations from the theoretical perspectives on Case Study Research Design

- a) Case study research was the most appropriate research design and methodology for this study because it presents a credible and accurate account of the phenomenon (e.g. RBL delivery mode). In addition, this study was an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single phenomenon (e.g. RBL academics) during a specific period of time, and the use of a multi-method strategy (i.e. triangulation) resulted in the corroboration and validation of results.

10.4 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION

The quantitative investigation comprises a questionnaire (*vide* Appendix A) which disclosed the following:

- a) RBL practitioners are positive (i.e. on cognitive, affective and behavioural levels) and demonstrate innovative initiatives regarding the

implementation of the RBL delivery mode despite minimum uncertainty and negativity. This fluctuation between the two sides of the continuum provided evidence of active RBL practitioners who learn and improve as part of the trial and error mode during implementation.

- b) The target population illustrates homogeneous characteristics (i.e. majority are white women in their forties). During this life phase the driving force is to redefine self-concept and identity, describing more distinctly own values and life philosophy and providing more assistance to others. The core value, namely valuing employees and colleagues within the same discipline is definitely present, but not across disciplines at an institutional level. A central support system operating the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model with a more systematic and strategic approach could improve the value of colleagues across disciplines.
- c) Diversity regarding the post levels and nature of jobs of RBL practitioners accentuate the diversity of the RBL academic population. In order to accommodate this within one staff development model underlines the fact that it should function on a cyclical basis addressing both novice and expert RBL academics. In addition, this model could be used as a reflective tool when contextual problems arise.
- d) Competencies of RBL practitioners are complex because of the diverse RBL academic population. Areas that have been stressed by participants that hinder RBL delivery mode are their own incompetence (i.e. require training in connection with non-traditional/adult learners, communication and cultural skills, group learning/assessment and facilitation). Furthermore essential factors for successful implementation are to plan ahead and manage the direction of

discussion. These appear to be simple issues, but high workloads, a full curriculum and a lack of experience make it no easy task.

- e) The results of the set of complex roles which was highlighted (*vide* Table 1.1) where quality performance is harmed by participants' uncertainty and lack of competencies did not indicate the prioritisation of RBL roles nor that it is a time-consuming delivery mode. However, prior training was stressed as crucial to enhance multi-skilled abilities, which are essential in order to be fulfilled by learners. Although responses indicated no complication, additional evidence underlined the contradiction to previous evidence and acknowledgment of limited competencies and practical experience.
- f) Improvement strategies have to be strategically and systematically implemented (e.g. circulation of RBL reading material, workshops/seminars, conversations, consultations and the compilation of a own portfolio for future reference).

10.5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

The qualitative investigation proved to be a highly informative part of the study. Certain important conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from data provided by RBL academics.

- a) In line with the observation made (*vide* 2.5.4), that virtual environments facilitate constructivist learning and RBL, the following solutions to the problems in connection with the stipulated principles

and challenges for these delivery methods (*vide* 2.5.4) were suggested by the participants:

Principle A: Make use of collaborative virtual environments. Utilise shared software packages to manage the infrastructure and co-ordination and rely on learners to assist and facilitate when necessary during contact sessions.

Principle B: Design a learning environment that accommodates all learning styles or use specialised software to assess every individual's learning style and prior knowledge.

Principle C: Utilise technology-based assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment.

Principle D: Use collaborative electronic courseware design and development.

- b) Transformation of SAHE and the resulting rapid pace of being confronted with the implementation of large amounts and demands of new policies and legislation triggered resistance among RBL practitioners (e.g. the role of political transformation in HE cannot be ignored, because the government is the main funder of SAHE. In this regard role-players were bombarded with acts and policies). The negative impact on both the academic and the institution has to be addressed. Regular and systematic sensitising sessions or circulations are some of the ways academics could be guided.
- c) The lack of required RBL competencies, are not only due to the fluctuation of experience levels, but also to the need for specific adaptation skills (e.g. providing quality learning to equip people with

the essential skills for a transforming world) necessary for the application and implementation of RBL in the SAHE context (e.g. cultural and language sensitivity). In addition, despite the absence of a central support system for RBL academics, tremendous progress has been made. This may be because of the presence of core values and concepts of RBL, namely visionary leadership, valuing employees and focusing on the future by leaders. A staff development centre, with strong links with the library, and with effective communication canals and RBL experts are vital factors for not only successful institutional RBL implementation, but also for maintaining RBL Excellence Performance. The responses of participants indicated the necessity of an orientation session or even an RBL orientation study guide for new academics and for learners. This will not only assist with the comprehension of this new delivery mode (e.g. addressing feelings of uncertainty and resistance), but also with the holistic mind shift which will enhance the collaborative learning process. Regarding the cost, availability and access limitations of resources and inappropriateness of infrastructure for RBL within the SAHE context, the RBL practitioners proposed a resource list or RBL package. In order to address the misconceptions (e.g. RBL as an easy way to obtain a degree) which currently exist has highlighted the need for more accurate information concerning this phenomenon. Cultural diversity, also identified as an obstacle for RBL performance (e.g. different thinking processes and frames of reference) thus needs to be accommodated within the proposed RBL Staff Development Model (*vide* figure 9.3). Both the post level and the nature of the job influence RBL performance. In order to deal with this diverse academic population, the proposed model should emanate a cyclical process for constant personal and professional development.

- d) In line with the observation (*vide* 7.4.4) that the required roles of RBL facilitators are multifaceted, but the competency level is determined by the level of experience and the current workload, these roles are even more complicated when experiencing insufficient time. This results in increased stress levels. Two roles, which need improvement are the resource developer and group facilitator.
- e) Recommended improvement strategies are group learning and assessment. Despite the lack of this, a central support system will provide a systematic and strategic way of avoiding duplication and monitoring the training.

10.6 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE TRIANGULATION OF RESEARCH DATA

The necessity and benefits of triangulating research data, *inter alia*, by means of using a multi-strategy approach (i.e. both quantitative and qualitative) discussed in Chapter 1 (*vide* 1.5). Whereas the preceding sections of this chapter (*vide* 10.4-10.5) present conclusions drawn separately from the different parts of this investigation, this section endeavours to bring together those conclusions that surfaced in every part of the investigation, thus sustaining their validity and importance.

RBL Academic Staff Development is, above all, a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (*vide* 2.2-2.4; 3.2-3.5 & 4.1-4.3). The fact that RBL has different meanings to different people required not only grounding RBL within a specific learning theory (i.e. constructivist perspective), but also designing and structuring an RBL Academic Staff Development Model (*vide* Figure 9.3). This has been emphasised in SAHE, with special reference to the transformation demands as well as rapid change of policy documents and

legislation (*vide* 3.2; 4.1). These conclusions from the literature review were substantiated by a quantitative (*vide* Chapter 6) and a qualitative (*vide* Chapter 7) investigation, the triangulation of data (*vide* Chapter 8) as well as reflection of experts on the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model (*vide* Chapter 8).

RBL competencies, roles and improvement strategies were recurring themes/issues during the literature review (*vide* Chapters 2-4), the quantitative investigation (*vide* Chapter 6), the qualitative investigation (*vide* Chapter 7) and the triangulation of data (*vide* Chapter 8). RBL experts confirmed this. This conclusion underlines the importance of an RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

In addition, it was evident that the three RBL Academic Staff Development dimensions being investigated are inter-related, impacting and strengthening one another. It became clear that competence is the foundation for any quality performance (both the roles and improvement strategies as in this study). Competence is also seen as a stepping-stone in order to build confidence and for any reflective practitioner, the core element to enhance and retain high performance.

10.7 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING PRACTITIONERS

Several components for the structure and design of an RBL Academic Staff Development Model emerged from this research. The end-result of the above-mentioned entails an institutional profile (*vide* 9.4), an annual review process (*vide* 9.4), RBL competencies (*vide* 9.4) RBL roles (*vide* 9.4) and RBL improvement themes (*vide* 9.4). These components encompass the following key issues, viz. *leadership* (*vide* 9.3), *strategic planning* (*vide* 9.3), *learner*

and market focus (vide 9.3), human resource focus (vide 9.3), process management (vide 9.3) and business results (vide 9.3).

The following are recommendations derived from the findings of this case study research which can be used as a model for HE institutions striving for RBL Excellence Performance via RBL Academic Staff Development:

- a) *Leadership, strategic planning and process management:* From the perspectives of the RBL academic managers/leaders, one of the main challenges facing them was and still is the creation of an enabling RBL environment for academics, giving them the opportunity to be proactive, to take calculated risks and to be more positively orientated. Thus strong and strategic leadership (intertwined with culture formation) is crucial if successful adaptation to a changing HE environment is to take place.

Diversity and different cultures are also difficult to manage, especially with the perception that RBL results in lowering of academic standards, which, in turn, will have a negative impact on quality.

Academic managers/leaders also specify the dilemmas related to time management because of, among other things, the bombardment of policies and legislation at work. This also results in stress due to the continuous and rapid responses being demanded – increasing only their workload. Simultaneously the uncertainties and fears of RBL practitioners due to these changes and transformation lead to demoralisation of RBL academics. Considering these circumstances, a proactive approach to address these dilemmas has to be more human-centred (*vide* Figure 9.3). The proposed model is based on empowerment of RBL academics, which is regarded as one of the most important factors for success at any institution. This empowering element will not only improve the working relationship (which is vital for successful implementation of RBL at institutional level), but results

and market focus (vide 9.3), human resource focus (vide 9.3), process management (vide 9.3) and business results (vide 9.3).

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in a mind shift where conflicts become opportunities and problems are seen as challenges. It is thus evident that all the core values (*vide* 9.3) necessary for action and feedback are present in the investigated HE context which, in turn, confirm the progress despite the lack of a central support system.

- b) *Learner and market focus as well as human resource focus and business results:* In order to recruit and retain high quality RBL academics, the proposed model (*vide* Figure 9.3) is seen as a solution – not only by RBL academic managers/leaders, but also by international and national RBL experts. Furthermore the need of RBL practitioners to develop to the best of their ability (e.g. competencies, roles and improvement strategies) and a central support system complement the above-mentioned findings emphasising the need and value of the proposed model (*vide* Figure 9.3). The results also stressed the empowering, cyclical driving force which provide RBL academic managers/leaders with a purposeful direction in which to address these challenges in HE and face them in order to become — more effective and successful. In addition, within a learning-based approach the RBL academic's own needs are more evident, this requires quick awareness of individual and group needs.

10.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All research designs can be discussed in terms of their relative strengths (e.g. the rationale for selecting it as the most appropriate plan for addressing the research, as in this study *vide* 1.5; 5.1-5.4) and limitations. Despite my careful planning, there were certain pitfalls, especially because of the focal point of this study. One of the problems of this type of research is that the results are limited to the description, interpretation and evaluation of the

phenomenon, rather than predicting future behaviour. Generally, the end-product of the above-mentioned, rich descriptions and analyses of the phenomenon, may be too lengthy and too detailed for busy policy makers and academics to read and use. I provided the proposed an RBL Academic Staff Development Model to various national and international RBL experts and RBL practitioners for comments as a way to partly overcome this limitation and as part of my triangulation process. This way I re-aligned the model and enhanced the practical implementation.

Another limitation of this research type is limited generalisations. However, due to my holistic perspective of the RBL phenomenon in the literature study, certain findings could be generalised. According to various authors (Hamel 1993; Conrad *et al.* 2001) further limitations involve the issues of reliability and validity. These issues have been addressed by using triangulation and not only the typical qualitative case study design.

10.9 FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was concerned mainly with the overall development, implementation and evaluation of the RBL delivery mode, which would effectively address the staff development needs of RBL practitioners at HE level. Thus, focused on small-scale research at micro level, such as researching the specific features that cause RBL practitioners some difficulty, was not included and may be seen as a limitation of this study. Therefore a follow-up study is recommended where specific features of discourse are isolated for investigation with a view to improve the RBL delivery mode proficiency of academics.

A second recommendation emanates from what I perceived as another limitation of this study, viz. establishing exactly what RBL academic staff

development areas should be added to the proposed RBL Academic Staff Development Model, because this study was bound within the transformation of the knowledge transmission and production function (focusing on the competencies, roles and improvement strategies). I recommend future studies on RBL staff development areas such as project management and leadership as well as issues related to ICT development. This research could lead to valuable contributions, namely where these insights could shape the RBL practice and the proposed model and also ensure effective HE learning.

The final recommendation for future research includes an investigation into the issues and problems of RBL implementation, namely partnership, quality issues, student autonomy, learning resource framework and technology delivery. The results of this investigation will assist in informing the planning and elaboration of the cyclical RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

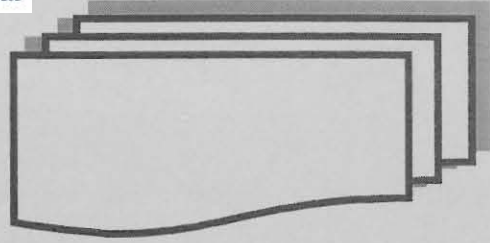
10.10 CONCLUSION

This study has researched the design and structure of an RBL Academic Staff Development Model.

The aim of the study was two-fold, viz. to find ways of improving the RBL delivery mode proficiency of academics and then provide an RBL practitionersStaff Development Model for institutions to maintain RBL excellence.

The methodology selected for this study was a multi-strategy case study design as it described, interpreted and evaluated phenomenon as well as the reliability and validity of the data strengthened by triangulation. The findings of this study led to an RBL Academic Staff Development Model for HE institutions and practitioners who are dealing with the implementation of RBL.

In addition, the concluding chapter indicated the limitations of this study and identified possible future research. This study was an attempt to find meaningful answers through educational research firmly rooted in the daily practicalities and difficulties of a transforming HE system in SA. This provokes and challenges RBL academics' thinking, beliefs and routines.



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Appendix A

TECHNIKON FREE STATE

2002

RBL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Compiled by

S.M. HOLTZHAUSEN

RBL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

BACKGROUND SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY

No one closely involved in higher education can deny that the paradigm shift from an instruction-based towards a learning-based approach is having a profound impact on the whole higher education arena. Thus, this shift affects not only the functioning of higher education institutions, but also the practice of the teaching and learning process itself. One of the fundamental developments of the above-mentioned is the new approach to teaching and learning, namely Resource-based learning (RBL). Recently it has become increasingly popular, partly because it reflects new trends and developments in the use of new technology and also because it serves as an umbrella term for other terms found in literature, such as open learning, flexible learning, individualised learning, computer-aided learning, problem-based learning and student-centred learning. Thus, this study would like to identify staff development needs to support lecturers in the adaptation and modification of their practice and role as RBL facilitator.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. It should take you no longer than 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The following issues are addressed in this questionnaire:

- Section A:** Demographic and background information (this information is required for comparative purposes only).
- Section B:** Competencies of RBL facilitators
- Section C:** Different roles of RBL facilitators
- Section D:** RBL Instructional Improvement Strategies
- Section E:** Comments on future RBL courses

These sections are to be completed by ALL respondents!

Please bear the following in mind when completing this questionnaire:

- ◆ Please encircle the number in the block next to the appropriate alternative/s or fill in your response in the space provided in the case of open-ended questions.
- ◆ Please provide frank and honest answers.

This questionnaire is anonymous to afford you absolute freedom in your answers.

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You are welcome to direct any queries about the content of this questionnaire to:

Mrs Somarié Holtzhausen

Tel: (051) 4012441

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Please return your questionnaire by contacting me. I shall then personally collect it.



Your response should reach me no later than **10 May 2002**.

GLOSSARY

Alternative instruction improvement strategies:

Other ways of providing instruction than the traditional teaching/lecturing method.

Facilitator:

A facilitator could be defined as a neutral educator helping with the learning and educational process of an individual or a group in a less directive way. This facilitator's role can be grouped in six areas, namely the information provider, the role model on-the-job, as mentor and learning facilitator, the student assessor and curriculum evaluator, curriculum and course planner, the resource material creator and study guide producer (National Extension College 1990; Harden & Crosby 2000; Le Roux 2000; Smith 2000).

Non-traditional learner:

The National Commission on Higher Education (1996) defined non-traditional students as those with characteristics such as out of school youth, out of work adults or neglected school pupils. Thus, the emphasis is on the exclusion of traditional high school pupils. South Africa is also unique in terms of absence of learning culture (for example where non-traditional students' parents did not follow a tradition to continue studying in higher education).

Resource-based Learning (RBL):

Resource-based Learning can be defined as an integrated set of strategies to promote student-centred learning in a mass education context, through a combination of especially designed learning resources and interactive media and technologies – thus learning that actively engages learners using various sources to acquire knowledge (Mullan 1995; Cannon 1997; Holtzhausen 1999; Ryan, Scott Freeman & Patel 2000; Scase & Scott 2001).

RBL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

		For office use only	
School:			1
Course:			2-4
		5	
		6	
SECTION A			
DEMOGRAPHICS			
1. What is your gender?			
Male	1		
Female	2		7
2. To which population group do you belong?			
Asian	1		
Black	2		
Coloured	3		
White	4		8
3. Your age group category:			
29 and younger	1		
30-39	2		
40-49	3		
50 and older	4		9
4. Your post level:			
Junior Lecturer	1		
Lecturer	2		
Senior Lecturer	3		
Associate Professor	4		
Professor	5		
Director or above	6		10
5. Your job is:			
Permanent	1		
Part-time	2		
Contract	3		11

SECTION B

COMPETENCIES

We would like some information about your competencies as RBL facilitator

Firstly, to rate the importance of the mentioned skills and knowledge to you by using the following applicable scale:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Strongly Agree (SA) |
| 2 | Agree (A) |
| 3 | Disagree (D) |
| 4 | Strongly Disagree (SD) |
| 5 | Undecided (U) |

Secondly, to rate your current level within each Competency. For example, I rate my RBL facilitation skill at a medium level.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Low (foundational knowledge base and basic understanding of RBL; basic interpretation of operational symbols/procedures/techniques of RBL; basic information gathering, analysis and presentation skills in RBL practice, evaluation of RBL) |
| 2 | Medium (solid knowledge base and informed understanding of RBL; effective selection and application of operational symbol/procedures/techniques of RBL, well-developed retrieval and presentation skills in RBL practice, self-evaluation of RBL practice) |
| 3 | High (comprehensive and systematic knowledge based and informed, critical understanding of RBL; effective selection and application of RBL methods; effective information retrieval and processing skills during RBL practice; effective presentation and communication of academic professional work based on RBL; accurate self-evaluation of RBL practice) |

Knowledge and skills of the RBL facilitator A RBL facilitator should:	Importance for my job as RBL facilitator					My current Level within each Competency				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3		
1.1 Develop the RBL facilitator role.	1	2	3	4	5					12-13
1.2 Demonstrate understanding of change theory and its strategies.	1	2	3	4	5					14-15
1.3 Demonstrate understanding of learning theories.	1	2	3	4	5					16-17
1.4 Demonstrate understanding of learning needs of non-traditional/adult learners.	1	2	3	4	5					18-19
1.5 Demonstrate understanding of instructional design components.	1	2	3	4	5					20-21
1.6 Actively apply appropriate instructional strategies.	1	2	3	4	5					22-23
1.7 Communicate effectively.	1	2	3	4	5					24-25

1.8 Listen with sensitivity by taking the culture of the learner into account.	1	2	3	4	5						26-27
1.9 Development needs with regard to any of the above-mentioned aspects?											28-29
											30-31
											32-33

☐

Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

Firstly, to rate the importance of the mentioned skills and knowledge to you by using the following applicable scale:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 5 | Strongly Agree (SA) |
| 6 | Agree (A) |
| 7 | Disagree (D) |
| 8 | Strongly Disagree (SD) |
| 5 | Undecided (U) |

Secondly, to rate your current level within each Competency. For example, I rate my RBL facilitation skill at a medium level.

- | |
|--|
| 1 Low (begin to take responsibility for RBL; evaluate RBL) |
| 2 Medium (capacity to take responsibility for RBL; self-evaluation to identify own strengths and weaknesses in RBL) |
| 3 High (personal responsibility and initiative in RBL; critical evaluation of own and others' RBL work with justification) |

Attitudes of the RBL facilitator A RBL facilitator should:	Importance for my job as RBL facilitator					My current Level within each Competency				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3		
2.1 Accept the shift towards a learner-centred approach.										34-35
2.2 Believe in the modifying RBL facilitator role.										36-37
2.3 Approve of the use of various sources.										38-39
2.4 Welcome the shared responsibility relationship.										40-41
2.5 Agree to the use of new technologies.										42-43
2.6 Adapt communication for the non-English speaking learner.										44-45
2.7 Development needs with regard to any of the above-mentioned aspects?										
										46-47
										48-49
										50-51

☐

Please tick if an extra information
sheet is attached

Application (planning, implementing & facilitating)	Importance for my job as RBL facilitator					My Level				
						1	2	3		
An RBL facilitator should:										
3.1 Plan the contact session/class ahead.	1	2	3	4	5					52-53
3.2 Manage discussions with direction	1	2	3	4	5					54-55
3.3 RBL facilitator's participation in discussion should be the minimum.	1	2	3	4	5					56-57
3.4 Manage interaction with direction	1	2	3	4	5					58-59
3.5 Foster group learning	1	2	3	4	5					60-61
3.6 Utilise RBL resources	1	2	3	4	5					62-63
3.7 Implement appropriate RBL strategies	1	2	3	4	5					64-65
3.8 Produce RBL materials	1	2	3	4	5					66-67
3.9 Implement the use of alternative strategies in own teaching/learning function	1	2	3	4	5					68-69
3.10 Development needs with regard to any of the above-mentioned aspects?										
										70-71
										72-73
										74-75

☐

Please tick if an extra information
sheet is attached

Problem-solving, synthesising and evaluating	Importance for my job as RBL facilitator					My Level				
						1	2	3		
An RBL facilitator should:										
4.1 Be able to self-evaluate the effectiveness of his/herr RBL facilitator role.	1	2	3	4	5					76-77
4.2 Be able to self-evaluate the effectiveness of his/her change strategies.	1	2	3	4	5					78-79
4.3 Be able to self-evaluate the effectiveness of his/her RBL instructional strategies.	1	2	3	4	5					80-81

4.4 Adopt evaluation instruments to own situation based upon goals and objectives.	1	2	3	4	5						82-83
4.5 Provide the learner with clear grading criteria.	1	2	3	4	5						84-85
4.6 Return assignments promptly with detailed notes.	1	2	3	4	5						86-87
4.7 Development needs with regard to any of the above-mentioned aspects?											
											88-89
											90-91
											92-93

☐

Please tick if an extra information sheet is attached

SECTION C										
RBL ROLES										
Next we would like to gain your perspective about your role as RBL facilitator										
6. Reflecting on your experience as an RBL facilitator, how would you describe your role in the beginning?										
										94-95
										96-97
										98-99
7. How do you find your job as RBL facilitator?										
Extremely stressful Not at all stressful 1 2 3 4										
7.1										100
8. Do you have enough time to do your job properly?										
Yes									1	
No									2	101
9. Please encircle your rate of satisfaction with the following aspects of your RBL facilitator's role:										
Very dissatisfied SATISFACTION Very satisfied 1 2 3 4 5										
9.1	Information provider	1	2	3	4	5				102
9.2	Role model in the learning setting	1	2	3	4	5				103
9.3	Mentor, personal advisor or tutor	1	2	3	4	5				104
9.4	Learning facilitator	1	2	3	4	5				105
9.5	Planning assessment	1	2	3	4	5				106
9.6	Curriculum planner	1	2	3	4	5				107
9.7	Curriculum evaluator	1	2	3	4	5				108
9.8	Course organiser	1	2	3	4	5				109
9.9	Resource developer	1	2	3	4	5				110
9.10	Study guide developer	1	2	3	4	5				111

10. Please indicate the percentage time spent on the following aspects of your RBL facilitator's role. The total amount must not exceed 100%			
10.1	Information provider	%	112-113
10.2	Role model in the learning setting	%	114-115
10.3	Mentor, personal advisor or tutor	%	116-117
10.4	Learning facilitator	%	118-119
10.5	Planning or participating in assessment	%	120-121
10.6	Curriculum planner	%	122-123
10.7	Curriculum evaluator	%	124-125
10.8	Course organizer	%	126-127
10.9	Resource developer	%	128-129
Total=100%			
11. Please encircle whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:			
11.1 My RBL involvement has been successful due to special prior training.			
Agree	1		130
Disagree	2		
11.2 As a facilitator I need to be equipped to fulfil my responsibility towards my learners.			
Agree	1		131
Disagree	2		
11.3 Multi-skilled facilitators are vital for RBL to be successful.			
Agree	1		132
Disagree	2		
11.4 RBL facilitation has required distinctive knowledge, skills and attitudes.			
Agree	1		133
Disagree	2		
12. With regard to your experience as RBL facilitator, how would you describe your role now?			
			134-135
			136-137
			138-139
13. Did the shift towards RBL, at any stage complicate your role as facilitator?			
Yes	1		140
No	2		
13.1 If yes, please specify the reasons:			
			141-142
			143-144
			145-146
13.2 If no, please specify the reasons:			
			147-148
			149-150
			151-152
SECTION D			
INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES			
Next we would like to establish if and how RBL has influenced your personal and professional development			
14. Please indicate your feelings towards each of the following statements:			

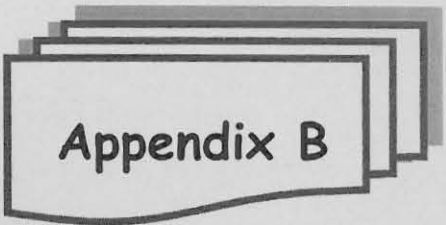
14.1	Facilitating a RBL course has resulted in a change in my instruction methods						
Yes						1	
No						2	153
14.2	I found my relationship with the students was enhanced because of RBL						
Yes						1	
No						2	154
14.3	My RBL involvement has not affected any aspect of my instruction methods						
Yes						1	
No						2	155
15.	Please encircle your rate of satisfaction with the following aspects of your RBL facilitator's role:						
	SATISFACTION Very dissatisfied Very satisfied						
15.1	Availability of information about RBL training courses	1	2	3	4	5	156
15.2	Opportunities to attend RBL training courses	1	2	3	4	5	157
15.3	Relevance of RBL training courses	1	2	3	4	5	158
15.4	Amount of work time allowed for RBL training	1	2	3	4	5	159
16.	Please encircle whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied regarding the use of some of the following instructional improvement strategies:						
16.1	Feedback regarding effectiveness of teaching/learning function.						
Satisfied						1	
Dissatisfied						2	160
16.2	Instructional problem-solving						
Satisfied						1	
Dissatisfied						2	161
16.3	Reading about RBL instruction practices						
Satisfied						1	
Dissatisfied						2	162
16.4	Selecting workshops/seminars on RBL instruction practices						
Satisfied						1	
Dissatisfied						2	163
16.5	Structuring constructive conversations with colleagues regarding RBL instruction practices						
Satisfied						1	
Dissatisfied						2	164
16.6	Consulting RBL experts						
Satisfied						1	
Dissatisfied						2	165
16.7	Compiling own RBL portfolio						
Satisfied						1	
Dissatisfied						2	166
The next set of questions relates to the academic environment in which you have practiced RBL.							

17. Please encircle your rate of satisfaction with the following aspects:							
SATISFACTION							
satisfied	Very dissatisfied					Very	
17.1	Intellectual stimulation due to active working relationship in RBL	1	2	3	4	5	167
17.2	Overall effectiveness of RBL in your course/programme	1	2	3	4	5	168
17.3	Institution's commitment to RBL	1	2	3	4	5	169
17.4	The support provided to you to undertake RBL	1	2	3	4	5	170
17.5	Range of expertise of colleagues with RBL in your school	1	2	3	4	5	171
17.6	Extent you and your colleagues work as team	1	2	3	4	5	172

SECTION E

Finally we would like your comments on future RBL courses				
18.	What are your concerns about the teaching/facilitating of RBL courses. Rank the following issues by filling in a number in the block provided with (1) as the issue of most importance, (2) as the second most important, etc.			
18.1	Time constraints			173
18.2	Facilitation of students			174
18.3	Assessment of students' learning			175
18.4	Communication with learners			176
18.5	Reduced time for classroom teaching			177
18.6	The unpredictable nature of RBL			178
18.7	Costs of learning material			179
18.8	No control any longer			180
18.9	Other (please specify)			
				181-182
				183-184
				185-186
19.	Reflecting on your RBL experience, do you have ideas for your next RBL class to improve the overall experience for you and your students?			
Yes			1	187
No			2	188

20. In which of the following aspects would you like additional training?			
20.1 New RBL instruction practices.			
Yes	1		189
No	2		
20.2 Internet and RBL			
Yes	1		190
No	2		
20.3 Effective RBL facilitators			
Yes	1		191
No	2		
20.4 Other (please specify)			
			192-193
			194-195
			196-197
Thank you for your co-operation!			



Appendix B

TECHNIKON FREE STATE

2002

**RBL STAFF FOCUS GROUP
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Compiled by

S.M. HOLTZHAUSEN

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

QUESTIONNAIRE — Positive
Negative FOCUS GROUP — Positive
Negative

- How did you experience the questionnaire? ▪ How do you feel about being here?

COMPETENCIES

NON-TRADITIONAL/ADULT LEARNER

- What needs do non-traditional/adult learners have?
- Identify your own knowledge or lack of it, comprehension, skills, attitudes to address the above-mentioned? (positive versus negative)

RBL

Probe:

- Instructional design issues (positive versus negative)
- Learner-centredness (positive versus negative)
- Alternative RBL strategies (positive versus negative)
- Group learning/dynamics (positive versus negative)

COMMUNICATION

Probe:

- Cultural sensitivity
- Non-English speaking learners (flexibility)

ROLES

REFLECT ON TRANSFORMATION OF ROLES

Probe:

- In the beginning versus now?
- Modifying role?
- Satisfaction (Information provider/role model)
- Dissatisfaction (Curriculum planner, evaluator, course organiser, resource developer)
- What aspects of the RBL role are a priority and what aspects are time-consuming?
- Discrepancy: RBL facilitator has no stress versus there is insufficient time to fulfil task effectively?
- How did RBL enhance academic's personal and professional development as well as relationship with learners? (Intellectual stimulation, overall effectiveness)
- Availability of RBL expertise?
- What relevant training or courses are available? (Value to academic?)
- How can reading, workshops and conversations on RBL be improved?

INSTRUCTION IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

THEMES

Probe

- New RBL practices
- RBL and the Internet
- Effective RBL facilitators

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT

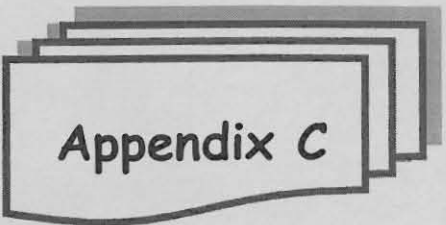
Probe

- How does the institution respond and what involvement does it demonstrate?

SHORT COURSES AND TRAINING

Probe

- What themes or areas?



Appendix C

