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## CHAPTER 1: PREVIEW OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

The Skills Development Act, Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA) (Republic of South Africa, 1998b) has had various challenging effects since its implementation in the workplace of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 1999. Reiner and Botha (2000:2), Greyling (2001:3), Botha (2003b:1) and Van der Westhuizen and Maharasoa (2004:39) note the challenges pertaining to the integration of HEI staff development practices with the requirements of the SDA. Strydom (2004:292) and Van Niekerk (2004:111) and Govender (2003:8) comment that staff development in HEIs is being hampered by the lack of support and guidance from government *vis-à-vis* the Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA), the statutory body to which HEIs are allocated. Fourie (2003:1), Botha (2003a:1-5), and Van Niekerk (2004:110), and Layton-Matthews (2004:1) are concerned about the extensive costs and the laborious process involved in registering the workplace learning programmes on the National Qualifications Framework,<sup>1</sup> (NQF). They are also concerned about the costs and the processes involved in the accreditation of workplace learning providers. The views of these authors, though rather brief, have presumably dictated the subjective interpretations made so far regarding the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs, since no reference is made in the literature to a public attempt to understand the intent of the SDA, and therefore to determine whether such an intent coincides with or differs from the view of staff development in HEIs. I do believe, however, that these authors' views are only the tip of the iceberg as far as the underlying problems associated with the implementation of the SDA in HEIs are concerned. A thorough review of the body of scholarship reveals that little is known about this particular issue in South African HEIs at present.

### 1.2 Problem statement

My desire to understand how SDFs perceive the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs, was the principal thrust behind the academic conundrum of this study

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<sup>1</sup> "The NQF is a framework on which standards and qualifications, agreed to by education and training stakeholders throughout the country, are registered" (Department of Education and Department of Labour, 2002:6).

(refer §1.3 below). The present study therefore endeavours to be a critical<sup>2</sup> interpretative study into the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development practices in HEIs. As such, it endeavours to draw on my personal experience of working in one of the HEIs (in my capacity as Learning and Development Manager) as well as on the experiences of the Skills Development Facilitators<sup>3</sup> (SDFs) working at HEIs.

From the above it is clear that the intellectual conundrum that is being investigated in this research study focuses on the following main question:

*How do the SDFs understand the effects of the SDA on staff development practices in SA HEIs?*

### **1.3 Aims of the research**

The aforementioned intellectual conundrum is operationalised in this research project in the following research aims:

- Research aim 1: To determine the nature and rationale of and reasons for staff development.
- Research aim 2: To determine the nature and rationale of and reasons behind the SDA.
- Research aim 3: To determine empirically how the SDFs perceive the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.
- Research aim 4: To develop an emancipatory critique of staff development in HEIs against the backdrop of the SDA.

### **1.4 Rationale for the study**

It is important to note from the outset that I have deliberately interspersed my narrative with a number of critical questions at certain points. Although these

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<sup>2</sup> Horkheimer (1972:14) describes the term “critical” as follows: “... to look behind the facts, to distinguish the superficial from the essential without minimising the importance of either.” Similarly, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000:135) and Kim (2003:6) describe critical studies as the idea to go beyond surface meanings. Box (2005:11) postulate that the term “critical” associated with Critical Theory refer to: “seeks to give people knowledge about their situation...working towards the future that is peaceful...instead of aggressive and competitive”.

<sup>3</sup> Compliance with the SDA requires employers to designate at least one person as the Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) to perform various tasks outlined in the regulations enacted under the Skills Development Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998b).



questions may, at first glance, seem purely rhetorical in their nature and intent, an attempt is made in the subsequent chapters to show that these questions do in fact represent critical navigational beacons in the search for an understanding of the SDFs perceptions of the effects that the implementation of the SDA has had on staff development practices in HEIs.

My interest in understanding what underlies the implementation of the SDA and how it affects staff development in the HEIs arose from my official job designation at a particular HEI. In 1999, while compiling this particular HEI's first Workplace Skills Plan (WSP), I informed the Skills Development Committee<sup>4</sup> (SDC) that compliance with the SDA would mean that the University's WSP would also have to demonstrate that a concerted effort was being made towards the workplace learning of designated academic as well as support staff members. Furthermore, the planned workplace learning had to be provided by accredited providers and it had to provide for the awarding of academic credentials to the staff members who successfully completed their workplace learning programmes. Since the majority of the university's planned staff development activities did not meet these criteria, the university's first WSP was a sketchy reflection of its total staff development plan. Nor did it exactly meet the minimum government requirements for the submission of the WSP. The members of the SDC responded negatively, arguing that the result of a sketchy WSP would be that the University would receive a WSP grant that would be less than the amount to which the University was entitled. Furthermore, the SDC members stated that it seemed unjust that the SDA should focus on accredited workplace learning while ignoring the HEI's workplace learning initiatives that had not been accredited. I also recall them asking why the University should highlight workplace learning for designated staff members in particular, when achieving the institutional goals depended on enhancing all staff members' competencies?

When reflecting on the SDC members' responses, I realised that their judgements about the SDA had been shaped by the ideologies<sup>5</sup> of the institution in which we worked (Horkheimer, 1972:213). This meant that the committee members felt comfortable about valuing staff development for its contribution towards institutional

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<sup>4</sup> The Skills Development Act recommends that a Skills Development Committee be established for the purposes of consultation on training matters (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26).

<sup>5</sup> Ideology refers to the general beliefs that became norms and rules of justice (Crossley, 2005:147). Harvey (1990:23) notes that ideology is present "*from the moment that social relations take a hierarchical form*".

interests. This meant that they essentially opposed the SDA because of its perceived bias. By implication, this indicated that staff development in the University where I am employed was being viewed, at the time, as an institutional mechanism for socialising employees into learning new ways of working and regulating their behaviours for the benefit of that institution (Valentin, 2006:17). Staff members of the particular HEI are therefore torn away from self-preservation, only to be viewed mechanistically as units in the chain of production (Baptiste, 2001:184; Ritzer and Smart, 2003:182; Valentin, 2006:17). This obviously restricts human freedom, and prevents the institution from becoming a more humane and better place for all (Habermas, 1968:72).

Taking into account the SDC's opposition to the implementation of the SDA, the first critical question that should be raised is: What are the ideologies of staff development in this particular HEI and why do the SDC members openly convey an arbitrary judgement of the SDA before attempting to understand the SDA? Exploring the underlying dominant perceptions about staff development in this particular HEI and also in the SDA, could assist us in understanding what might have influenced the views that the SDC members held about the implementation of the SDA in this particular HEI. My desire to reveal the underlying perceptions of staff development in HEIs, and how they influence the implementation of the SDA in HEIs, inspired me to undertake this investigation. In addition, I had been nominated by the former SA Universities Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA), which has since 2005 been replaced by the statutory body, Higher Education South Africa (HESA), to be involved in the establishment of the Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority<sup>6</sup> (ETDP SETA) under which the HE sector falls (Republic of South Africa, 2000:8) and to represent universities as employers on the ETDP SETA Board between 1999 and 2004.

During the establishment of this SETA and at Board meetings, there was a constant and ever-present tension between the views of the employer representatives that the core aim of the SDA was to promote institutional interests, and the contrasting view of labour representatives on the Board that the core aim of the SDA was to redress the wrongs of those deprived of training in the past. At the Board meetings I noticed that the members sought a compromise solution to decision making, instead of exploring the reasons for the ever-present tensions. It is my belief that as a consequence of this approach, irrational decisions were made for the sake of

progress in the Board meetings, because the criteria used to decide or simply interpret decisions had either become irrelevant or had been lost along the way. Another question that remains unanswered is: What is the rationale for the implementation of the SDA? If understanding is not mediated by social experiences (interaction), it will remain idealistic (Habermas, 1968:72; Habermas, 1972:10). As the deliberations of the Board did not cloud my understanding of the purpose of the SDA, I felt obliged to undertake this investigation.

There is a relative dearth of research literature which deals specifically with the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HE in South Africa. Some of the literature notes various challenges, yet the writers do not necessarily indicate what these challenges are, or why they may occur. For example, Greyling (2001:3) argues that: “[most] institutions of higher education will battle with reforming and transforming staff development towards national imperatives since conflicts of interest are imminent between the focus of staff development in HEIs and that of national imperatives”. This opinion does not prevail solely in HEIs. Kraak (2004:4), and Barry (2000:22) contend that South African organisations are reluctant to integrate their developmental initiatives with the broader aims of the SDA, and that they prefer to focus on narrow company-specific needs for human resources development. Adeniji (2002:10) and Cloete (2001:8) are of the opinion that private and public organisations are considering the SDA as another form of taxation. From my own experience I would venture the opinion that the ineffective implementation of the Act could, furthermore, inhibit line managers from clearly understanding its intentions – especially as far as the identification of training needs in the context of the SDA is concerned.

Botha (2003b:2) and Le Grange (2004:1) argue that HEIs generally tend to recover rebates based on the skills development levies they have paid, and that they do not generally seek to further the aims of the SDA *per se*. Mapesela and Strydom (2004:3), Mofokeng (2002:9), Gilbert and Gibbs (1998:14-19) and Gibbs (1998:11-14) state that the majority of HEIs implemented a performance management system to manage the requirements for institutional staff development, yet they refrained from including the broader aims of the SDA as a staff development imperative.

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<sup>6</sup> The ETDP SETA is a statutory body which oversees the implementation of the SDA in the education, training and development practices sector (Republic of South Africa, 2000:8).

Despite the profusion of the aforementioned publications, no explanations for the social dynamic that underlies staff development in HEIs (in the context of the implementation of the SDA) could be found in the literature. Valentin (2006:17) postulates that where staff development issues in organisations are reported on, it is usually: “to consider how [staff development] ... can be managed towards organisational competitiveness” and “despite the increased use of qualitative methods of social enquiry in human resources development, the underlying methodology ... are essentially positivist”. She acknowledges the value of research aimed at refining staff development methods and learning styles, but suggests that it does not shed light on the underlying factors associated with institutional power, politics and social dynamics. This study is an attempt to address this gap.

Consequently, the rationale for this investigation, which evolved from an initially personal to an abiding academic interest,<sup>7</sup> is to determine the social dynamics attached to the implementation of the SDA, and how and why these dynamics affect staff development in HEIs.

## **1.5 Contextualising the study**

In order to place the present study in a broader context and relate how and why the SDA affects staff development in HEIs, a brief overview is given of the rise of the SDA in South Africa and staff development in HEIs. My intention is to illustrate that the proclaimed rationale for the SDA differs from that of staff development in HEIs.

### **1.5.1 The skills revolution in SA since 1994**

After the first democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, it became a priority for the new government to transform and reform the education system of South Africa (Gibbon and Kabaki, 2006:125; Asmal, 2004:1; Govender, 2003:3; Coetzee, 2000:1). However, action aimed at the transformation of the education system had gained momentum since the 1970s (Department of Education and Department of Labour, 2002:5). One of the government's visible steps to counter the social-economic deficit of South Africa is the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (African National Congress, 1994a). As such, Van Dyk *et al.* (2001:57-58), Genis (1997:2) and Cloete (2005:7) comment that the RDP serves as a blueprint for further growth and development policies in South Africa.

Another visible step towards transforming South Africa's education system was the implementation of the first National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) in February 2001 and the establishment of an integrated National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The principal aims of the NSDS are firstly, to invest in training and skills development and secondly, to equip South Africans with the skills that the country needs to compete in the global economy (Department of Labour, 2002a:1; Department of Labour, 2005:1; Coetzee, 2000:10). By contrast, the aims of the NQF are to provide a: "framework on which standards and qualifications ... are registered" (Department of Labour, 2002a:6).

The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) established on 20 March 2001, are primarily, in collaboration with the Department of Labour, responsible for the implementation of the NSDS (Department of Labour, 2002b:3; Coetzee, 2000:10). This is why the levy grant system outlined in the Skills Development Levies Act of 1999 (SDLA), a subsidiary act of the Skills Development Act of 1998, supports the pursuit of the aims of the NSDS (Botha, 2003a:3; National Skills Authority, 2003:3; Coetzee, 2000:10). As mentioned above, the aims of the NSDS are to increase investment in skills development in order to equip South Africans with the skills that the country needs to compete in the global economy. These aims are also reflected in the SDLA and SDA, as follows: "To increase the level of workers' skills" and "to address the challenges of an unequal society by making society more inclusive and promoting greater cohesion" (Republic of South Africa, 1998b). The government's policy documents therefore indicate a thrust towards the regulation of the structures and the quality of workplace learning<sup>8</sup> in the South African workplace. The term "structure" refers, in this regard, to the investment in workplace learning and, as such, focuses on the development of previously disadvantaged employees. The term "quality" refers, in this regard, to the quality assurance of workplace learning provision and outcomes to meet the standards of the NQF. The SDA stipulates in Chapter 4 (Learnerships) and 5 (Skills programmes) that providers of workplace learning must be credentialed<sup>9</sup> and accredited<sup>10</sup> (Republic of South Africa,

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<sup>7</sup> Interest in this context refers to knowledge-forming interests (Habermas, 1971).

<sup>8</sup> I prefer to use the term workplace learning, as an umbrella term to include all the modes of education, training and development interventions aimed at employee development.

<sup>9</sup> The term "credential" refers to the "credits" *attached to a programme outcome that is pitched on a certain level on the National Qualifications Framework* (NQF) (Reid and Barrington, 1997:53; Department of Education and Department of Labour, 2002:9). Credentialed refers to the value of the credits attached to learning (Fevre, 1997: 11; Mercorio *at al.*, 2000:157; Cloete, 2005:22).

1998b). As a result of this stipulation, the programme outcomes that are achieved should provide workers with qualifications that are recognised nationally on the NQF (Republic of South Africa, 1998b:1; Memorandum of SDA, 1998:1; Layton-Matthews, 2004:11; Erasmus and Van Dyk, 2004:39).

Against this background, it is argued that the theoretical underpinning of the SDA and the SDLA is that investment in workplace learning and the awarding of academic credits are instrumental to the socio-economic development of South Africa. In other words, academic credits are instrumental to the economic prosperity of the individual. This seems to have close ties with Human Capital Theory. This theory holds that investment in education *vis-à-vis* training leads towards the economic prosperity of the individual and the country at large (McIntyre, 2002:2; Baptiste, 2001:178; Livingstone, 1997:9; Fevre, 1997:11; Baptiste *et al.*, 2004:32; Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4). In this regard, the third critical question that should be asked is: Why does the Skills Development Act support education and development as a basis for economic development yet simultaneously seems to prioritise education and training investment towards national imperatives and designated groupings in organisations? Prescribing the national education and training imperatives, as well as prescribing to whom education and training should be offered, deprives organisations and individuals of their rights to determine and invest in the kind of education and training that they perceive would best benefit organisational effectiveness.

Having placed the rise of national policy in perspective (which I discuss in Chapter 2) it is necessary to offer a broad outline of the distinction I draw between the broad aims of national policy (SDA, SDLA) and those of staff development, given the context of the present study.

### 1.5.2 Staff development in Higher Education Institutions

In an HEI, staff development<sup>11</sup> is a term that harbours a variety of semantic values. Some authors refer to staff development as an umbrella term, seemingly synonymous with terms such as in-service education, staff training or continuous professional development (Gall and O'Brien Vojtek, 1994:1; Greyling, 2001:38; Biggs,

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<sup>10</sup> The term "accredited providers" means "the formal approval and recognition of an education and training provider by an Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) body" (Department of Education and Department of Labour, 2002:8 and 105).

<sup>11</sup> I use the term staff development at this stage since one of the first books published on staff development is titled *Staff Development in Higher Education*, edited by Teather (Teather, 1979).



1999:42; Webb, 1996a:59-66). Other authors refer to staff development from a structural perspective, in other words, in terms of who manages or co-ordinates staff development (Sorcinelli, 1991:17; Webb, 1996b:3-6), or even from a contextual perspective (Brew, 1995:1; Denton, 1995:30; Bitzer and Kapp, 1998:19; Kapp, 1995:9-12; Zuber-Skerritt, 1995b:103; Zuber-Skerritt, 1997b: 4-11). There are also other authors who refer to staff development from an approach perspective, specifically as regards the enhancement or generation of knowledge and skills so that employees perform their roles more effectively towards achieving the broader goals of HEIs (Brew, 1995:15; Harrison and Kessels, 2004:16; Moses, 1988:80; Ramsden, 1992:8; Nais, 1993:145; Zuber-Skerritt, 1997:5; Zuber-Skerritt, 1997b:201). Although the above-mentioned variety of semantic values is attached to staff development, Bitzer *et al.* (1998:11) point out that staff development in HEIs only started gaining momentum from the early 1970s. It later became institutionalised in the 1980s as part of the various institutions' missions.

Brew (1995:4 and 91), Webb (1996a:2), Zuber-Skerritt (1995b:14) and Le Grange (2004: 91) maintain that staff development involves the individual and the institution in a mutual process of change towards the growth and efficiency of the institution. In other words, the principal aim of HE staff development is to enhance institutional growth and efficiency, implying that staff development is vested in a work relationship or contractual agreement on labour and staff development between the employer and the employee. This implies that Human Capital Theory (previously discussed) underlies the intent of staff development in HEIs. The notion that the process of learning (especially interaction and debate) in HEIs is valued, seems to have close ties with Social Capital Theory. What seems to be a contradiction, in this regard, is that government's epistemological take on staff development in HE in South Africa is that it is best understood in the conceptual parameters of Human Capital Theory (where employees are seen as cogs in the institutional machinery).

The contemporary view of Human Capital Theory is that investment in education and training is not necessarily a yardstick for economic growth. It claims, instead, that education enhances people's abilities to cope with change, to think independently and to apply changing technologies in an organisational context as they deem fit (Baptiste, 2001:187; Wozniak 1984:71). It also shows a close resemblance to Social Capital Theory (refer Chapter 2, §2.5) in the sense that it emphasises staff development's close affinity with the processes of interaction in the quest for skills and knowledge (Burt, 2005:11 and 93; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11). In other words, the

spin-off, by-product or surplus value of interaction proverbially triggers the individual into action (to cope with change) (Crossley, 2006:286; Svendsen, 2004:11-13 and 18; Collier, 2003:20; Gabby *et al.*, 2001:6; Lin, 1999:32).

Knight *et al.* (2006: 313), Blackmore (2006:377), Shahnaz *et al.* (2005: 578), Clegg (2003:41), Nicholls (2001:10), Zuber-Skerritt (1997b:178 and 201) and Boud (1995:210), argue that learning occurs whether or not there is formal instruction. These authors by implication draw attention to the value of the learning process. Similarly, Knight *et al.* (2006:313), Steyn (2004:217), Cowan *et al.* (2004:448), Wexley (2002:2); Boud (1995), Nicholls (2001) and Clegg (2003) argue that most of the learning that occurs in HEIs<sup>12</sup> is informal and may even be incidental. In addition, Frick (2007:1), Knight *et al.* (2006: 317), Steyn (2004:217) and Boud (1995:219) emphasise that the means of learning acquisition in HEIs is fundamentally driven by the concept of self-regulated learning rather than being founded on learning enforcement which depends on facilitators. This is informative because, as Harrison and Kessels (2004:16) and Clegg (2003:40) argue, the autonomy that employees (in particular HEI's employees) have in determining their own learning activities, minimises the control that both central policies and assigned facilitators have over employees' learning activities.

Against this background, it is argued that staff development in HEIs is not only a historical practice but also a divergent practice. The rationale behind HEIs staff development practices is to further the interests of both the individual employee and the HEI concerned. Staff development practices are valued, among other things, for the process of learning. Its primary focus is, therefore, not on providing the individual with a credentialled certificate or qualification after the successful completion of a learning intervention. Although it is not my intention to downplay the value of credentialled learning, I nevertheless concur with Blackwell and Blackmore (2003:27) when they claim that credentialled learning is desirable since it: "add[s] to coherence and academic credibility". My intention is rather to highlight the fact that one of the predominant characteristics of staff development in HEIs is its focus on the process of learning (in other words the interaction and reflection that occur during learning) and not on the awarding of credentials. In Chapter 2 I elaborate on this point by following a thematic approach.



## 1.6 Explanation of key terms

The following definitions, which act as conceptual and theoretical guides to the researcher's scientific frame of reference, are provided.

### 1.6.1 Higher Education Institution

The Higher Education Act (Republic of South Africa, 1997:8) defines a Higher Education Institution as "any institution that provides Higher Education on a full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is –

- a) established or deemed to be established as a public Higher Education Institution under this Act;
- b) declared as a public Higher Education Institution under this Act".

### 1.6.2 Skills Development Act

The Skills Development Act, No.97 of 1998 (SDA) (Republic of South Africa, 1998b) was enacted in 1998 to bring about major improvement in the quality of skills development at a national level, to reform training initiatives and create greater access to learning; and to make the workplace arena an active learning environment (Republic of South Africa, 1998b; Layton- Matthews 2004:1).

### 1.6.3 Skills Development Levies Act

The Skills Development Levies Act, No 9 of 1999 (SDLA) (Republic of South Africa, 1999) serves as the funding mechanism for the SDA (Botha, 2003a:3; National Skills Authority, 2003:3; Coetzee, 2000:10). In terms of the SDLA, employers are liable with effect from 1 April 2001 for the payment of a skills development levy equal to 1% of the remuneration paid or payable by an employer to its employees during any month. The implementation of the SDA and SDLA is regarded as a fundamental step in the development of the government's overall human resources development strategy (Cloete, 2005:7; Van der Westhuizen, 2004:50; Van Dijk, 2003:2; Department of Labour, 2001a:4-9; Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:12).

### 1.6.4 Staff development in HEIs

One of the most commonly used definitions of staff development is the definition given by Warren and Glatter (1977:25), namely: "A systematic attempt to harmonise individuals' interest and wishes, and their carefully assessed requirements for

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<sup>12</sup> Here, I refer to all learning that does not take place in structured study programmes and

furthering their careers with the forthcoming requirements of the organisation in which they are expected to work." Kapp (1995:11) broadens this definition of staff development by adding "... *all activities, actions, processes and procedures that an institution has developed or uses to enhance the performance and the potential of its human resources*". From the above it would seem that Kapp (1995:11) favours a Human Capital approach to staff development in HEIs, whereas Warren and Glatter (1977:25) favour a Social Capital approach to this.

### **1.6.5 Skills Development Facilitator**

The regulations made under the Skills Development Act on funding and related issues state that employers must nominate a Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) who will be responsible for the development, planning and management of the organisation's skills development plan and report (Republic of South Africa, 1999:11). The role of the SDF is: "to assist [the] employer and employee in workplace skills development" (Bellis, 2000:166).

## **1.7 Scope of the investigation**

This study spans the period 2004 – 2008 and focuses on the SDFs perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in their particular HEIs. The aim of this study, therefore, is to gain an understanding of the rationale for and the meaning of HEIs' employee staff development practices. It also aims to understand the rationale for and the meaning of the implementation of the SDA. In this regard it is important to investigate the match and/or mismatch between staff development practices on the one hand and the implementation of the SDA on the other. The intention of the study is not to take into account the visible changes that have occurred in HEIs since the implementation of the Skills Development Act, nor to make suggestions concerning the way in which HEIs should align their skills development practices with the SDA. The purpose is rather to identify and critique the underlying social manifestations (historical, structural and economic) of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

Although South Africa as a whole is the domain of the implementation of the SDA, the scope of this study is limited to the meaning of staff development in public HEIs in South Africa. Accordingly, the literature review is limited to the rationale for and the meaning of the implementation of the SDA and those of staff development in SA

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which does not end with the award of a formal qualification.

HEIs. Publications falling in the scope of staff development in SA HEIs are limited, however. I have therefore extended my literature review to cover the domain of staff development as it has evolved over time in national and international HEIs. The literature review on staff development was, therefore, not restricted to South African HEIs alone; it was also extended to include the historical rise of staff development practices in international and national HEIs in order to determine the critical features of staff development as these features emerged in SA and in other countries.

The domain of staff development in SA HEIs remains central to the present study, but the focus of this investigation is my endeavour to understand rather than generalise the participating SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the SDA on staff development in SA HEIs. Consequently, the aim of this study, as a critical emancipatory endeavour, is to understand the critical features of skills development in higher education and the critical features of implementation of the SDA by SDFs, including the match and/or mismatch between staff development practices on the one hand and the implementation of the SDA on the other.

## **1.8 Research design and methodology**

I have adopted the approach of critical theory<sup>13</sup> which posits that critique<sup>14</sup> leads to understanding which, in itself, is emancipatory (Box, 2005:6; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:26-28; Lee, 2004:1; Morrow and Brown, 1994:7; Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 88; Habermas, 1984:1-17; Habermas, 1992:3-8). Critical theory furthermore suggests that in any society there will always be some form of dominance and repression (based on differences of interests). The reason for the dominance and repression can, however, only be understood when considering the particular context (Box, 2005:6). As a result, the propositional lens through which I seek to construct meaning is vested in my academic conviction that the SDA should not simply be accepted – out of hand – as an unproblematic, democratic and fair solution to South Africa's skills development quest. It is through this lens that I aim to construct meaning from my reading of the body of scholarship as well as to relay the spoken and unspoken voices of the participants in this study in order to understand the

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<sup>13</sup> Although the rules of grammar dictate that Critical Theory be written in capital letters, I do not do so in this study because Critical Theory is a widely known and widely accepted epistemological paradigm.

<sup>14</sup> Critique in this regard refers to questioning the political and ideological context (Lee, 2004:1; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007:26). Another dimension of critique is that it is associated with the: "self-reflexivity of the investigator" (Morrow and Brown, 1994:7).

SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs' staff development practices.

The aim of the present study favours a critical ethnographic design that allows for a participatory, critical enquiry committed to social emancipation (Denzin, 2000:282-285; Patton, 2002:134; Henning *et al.*, 2004:43). Accordingly, I set myself the goal of immersing myself in the ways that people think about their own thinking. In a way, my intention strongly resembles a form of conscious self-criticism (self-reflexivity) in the sense that I am required to attempt to become aware of the ideological imperatives and epistemological presuppositions that inform the present study, as well as of my own subjective and inter-subjective claims, and my normative frame of reference. My study is therefore a transformative endeavour, unembarrassed by political labels and unafraid to espouse emancipatory goals (Denzin *et al.*, 2000:291; Henning *et al.*, 2004:23).

The participants in this study are the seven Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs) of seven HEIs in the Gauteng region as well as two members of staff in HEIs (one of whom works in an HEI in the Limpopo Province) who specialise in staff development in HEIs. The two members of staff were selected to serve as a monitoring group to help validate the investigative process and to assist me with designing the questions that would help me to answer my research problem. These participants form part of a purposive convenience sample in the sense that they are all SDFs in HEIs in the Gauteng Province. They were also deliberately chosen because of their representivity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and geographic proximity to the place where the study was undertaken. I regard myself as the eighth member of the SDF group, as I was an active participant-observer, as described in paragraph 1.2 above. Since the research is epistemologically embedded in a critical interpretative approach, I worked qualitatively. It should, however, be noted that my justification for using qualitative methodology can be found in the fact that the data that were gathered and reviewed for this particular study provided clear, unrestricted access to the practices (words, beliefs, underlying reasons or grounds for actions, the personally appropriated signs that mark one's place in social space) of the SDFs (participants) in the study. The data were discussed in the public sphere so that access could be gained to the underlying issues. My choice of methodology and research design is explained and justified fully in Chapter 3.

The extensive literature study pertaining to the rationale for and aims of the implementation of the SDA as well as staff development in HEIs forms the theoretical framework within which this study is located. It also highlights the lacunae in the knowledge base. I made use of multiple data sources and collection methods so that I could penetrate the varied standpoints and experiences of the SDFs and also strengthen the reliability index of the study. The following data sources and collection instruments for this investigation were chosen:

- Case studies<sup>15</sup> of HEIs regarding staff development. The case studies were analysed to determine how deeply historical inequities were woven into the fabric of staff development. The information given represents the larger context at a watershed point to confront the structures, policies, practices and relations that organise and ensure persistent inequality in staff development and the provisions of the SDA.
- An analysis of staff development policies and legislation on skills development. This allowed me to delve beneath the surface information to determine how certain ideologies privilege some and marginalise other employees.
- Semi-structured telephone interviews with the participant group.
- Face-to-face interviews with each individual in the participant group.

The views, responses and field notes obtained in the investigation were prepared for a computer-aided data analysis process. The computer-aided qualitative data analysis software identified for this particular study is *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>. *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> is a computer-aided qualitative data analysis program, which allows for the analysis of textual and audio visual data. *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> goes beyond coding and data retrieval to include "... visual displays of the hierarchical relationships between codes and the construction of conceptual diagrams or networks" (Willig, 2001:151). *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> facilitates the use of direct quotations to enrich the data representation. The use of computer-aided qualitative data analysis is specifically indicated when dealing with large amounts of unstructured textual material (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004:129). I envisaged a lengthy and intense process of coding, categorising and connecting themes in order to extract meaning from the selected data. The search for relationships, trends, spirit and values derived from introspection and self-reflection

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<sup>15</sup> "Case studies", in this regard refer to documentation pertaining to particular HEIs and what they did to manage staff development in their institutions. Here, it is not meant to refer to a particular research design type.

and placing these in the wider context of the investigation form part of the continuous critical interpretation process. The data have been presented in network displays and visually illustrate emerging trends, to enhance the understanding of these trends. It is envisaged that the outcomes of this study could contribute to a new understanding of SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development practices in HEIs.

### **1.9 Anticipated research constraints**

At the outset of this study, some of the anticipated research constraints should be noted and means of circumventing or reducing their impact suggested. My main concern relates to the spirit of this study: a critique<sup>16</sup> of contesting ideologies could easily set the tone of the study as negative critique simply for the sake of critique, eventually defeating the intention of the study. Kincheloe and McLaren (2000:279) and Kincheloe and McLaren (2005:304) postulate that any critical interpretative study is political in nature because it implicates the participant in moral questions about desirable forms of social relations. This means that the design of the study will stir emotions and therefore, to minimise the possibility of an emotionally aggravating tone, confrontational views were avoided at the start of the study. Instead, I preferred to explain the process and intent of the discourse in the hope that a relationship of trust would help me gain an insider's perspective of the working life of the participating SDFs. The point here is that critique is based on collaborative relations with the research subjects (Guba and Lincoln, 2005:201). I believed that if I did not proceed in this manner, I would defeat the aim of the study. Moreover, the knowledge that could be gained could easily turn into an account of the conflicts emanating from the implementation of the SDA, instead of focusing on the historical and socio-economic reasons for such conflicts. For this reason, I attempted to use a conversational style of interviewing, aimed at persuading the participants to produce a particular articulation of knowledge (Guba *et al.*, 2005:201). My reason for following a conversational style is that, apart from circumventing an anticipated confrontational relationship, I am a critical and curious person who tries to understand rather than to be understood.

Accessing information at the ETDP SETA and at the target HEIs could be a problem, since it is scarce and information might be classified or not available for public



scrutiny. Documentation pertaining to policy matters is traditionally not open to public scrutiny. SDFs or members of staff at the EDTP SETA might feel that disclosing information would jeopardise their position. This meant that permission had to be sought before releasing such information, and that this could be time-consuming. In any case, I preferred to seek the permission of the executive officer of the ETDP SETA and the human resources directors of the participant HEIs. At a national Higher Education Human Resources Directors Forum held in May 2005, the intention of this particular study was shared, although its aims were not disclosed. Since the directors were in principle not opposed to the study, this did in fact work to my advantage when I applied for permission to access information from the seven HEIs.

In conclusion, my research endeavour aims to understand rather than to generalise. As a consequence, I acknowledge that my study may have low transferability to other cases. I also acknowledge that I will be interpreting data from a Eurocentric point of view, when a deeper understanding of the current culture related to Skills Development in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa as experienced by existing (and racially transformed) HE governance structures may, in actual fact, be crucial.

### **1.10 Outline and organisation of the study**

The study is framed as a critical interpretative approach to determine the perceptions of the SDFs with regard to the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development in HEIs. This chapter provides background information on the aims of the SDA and staff development in HEIs as well as a summary of what the study entails. The remaining chapters will endeavour to show how the research aim presented in the first chapter was approached and addressed. Chapter 2 contains a review of the body of scholarship in order to contextualise the present study in the knowledge domain of the SDA and staff development in HEIs. Chapter 3 gives an explanation and justification of the choice of research design, and outlines the methodological strategies used to achieve the aims of this study. This includes a detailed discussion of the instruments employed as well as strategies for enhancing their reliability. In addition, the software package *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> used for data analysis is explained.

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<sup>16</sup> Critique does not simply refer to mere "criticism"; instead it refers to a deep examination of the conditions under which any particular form of thinking could operate (Ritzer and Smart,

The fourth chapter consists of a discussion of the empirical data findings. Chapter 5 is devoted to critical interpretative commentary, resulting in a nuanced understanding of the findings of the study, namely as indicated by the research title, skills development in public higher educations in South Africa. It is in this chapter where I endeavour to associate the theory and the data with each other. Here I provide a synthesis or summary of the data presented in the previous data chapters. In Chapter 5, I furthermore interpret the data in the light of my theoretical or conceptual framework described in Chapter 2. This chapter is absolutely crucial to my study, since it aims to take the data beyond the specific case that I have studied, and interprets its meanings in the broader national context of scholarship on the subject.

The lack of knowledge with regard to the effects of the implementation of the SDA within HEIs that may be identified in this study might invite scholars to undertake further investigations in this field. All the captured data and transcriptions on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> are provided on a compact disc for reference purposes.



## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE BODY OF SCHOLARSHIP**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 1 explains the context of this study, offering an overview of the rise of the Skills Development Act (SDA), and arguing that Higher Education institutions (HEIs) have made little attempt to understand the underlying intent of the SDA, and therefore to determine whether and why such an intent coincides with or differs from the view of staff development in HEIs. Although various authors (refer Chapter 1) note that HEIs encounter challenges with the implementation of the SDA, they do not, however, state why the challenges occur. This implies, as also argued in Chapter 1, that the challenges may be only the tip of the iceberg regarding the underlying problems that indicate a mismatch between the reasons for the implementation of the SDA, on the one hand, and for staff development in HEIs, on the other. The differences in reasons and why they occur should, therefore, be explored to achieve the aims of this study, namely to understand how SDFs perceive the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development in HEIs. Achieving the aforementioned implies that this study should interrogate discourses in order to unveil underlying perceptions, such as power relations, ideologies and meanings attached to the rationale for and means of achieving the goals of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. The aim of this study is not to determine which staff development practices have changed since the implementation of the SDA. It is also not the aim of this study to determine the number of staff development practices that have changed since the implementation of the SDA. Instead, it is to determine the reasons for the match or mismatch between the rationale for and means of achieving the goals of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. This is why it is argued in Chapter 1 that this study is positioned against the paradigmatic intersection of interpretivism and critical theory.

In this Chapter I provide a critical interpretation of the literature pertaining to the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and also of the rationale for staff development in HEIs, as separate fields of study. I intended to understand the nature of both staff development in HEIs and skills development as it is captured in the SDA.

To establish the rationale for and means of achieving the goals of the SDA, I have limited the review to the domain of skills development as envisaged in the implementation of the SDA (refer definition in §1.4.3). My fishing net was therefore

proverbially cast to find the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and the means to achieve its goals, as portrayed in the SDA. Subsequently, other publications which explain or report on developments within SA's legislative framework for skills development were also reviewed. The literature review culminated in presenting thematically the rationale for and the means of achieving the goals of the SDA. In conclusion, a critical interpretative summary (against the epistemological backdrop of this study, namely the intersection of interpretivism and critical theory) offers the reasons for and the means of achieving the goals behind the implementation of the SDA and its consequences for staff development in HEIs.

In order to gain a sense of the rationale for staff development in HEIs and the means of achieving its goals, the review was initially limited to publications dealing with the implementation of the SDA in SA HEIs. Although I found a number of publications that dealt with the effects of the implementation of the SDA in SA industry, I struggled, however, to find enough authoritative sources dealing with the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. In this regard, I found solace in the statement by Kapp *et al.* (2006:4) that South African studies are usually limited to single case studies of particular HEIs. As a consequence, I extended the review to include the rationale for and means (forms) of staff development as it evolved over time in national and international HEIs. My aim was to determine the core characteristics of staff development in order to establish the match or mismatch between the aims of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. Therefore, I document the characteristics of staff development in HEIs as historical and chronological themes. I conclude the review with a critical interpretative summary (against the epistemological backdrop of this study: Critical Theory) of the core characteristics of staff development in HEIs. Thereafter I table the match and mismatch between the reasons for and means of achieving the goals of the implementation of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs.

After an extensive review of the body of scholarship on the rationale for and means of achieving the goals of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs, I argue in this chapter that the mismatch between the goals of the implementation of the SDA and those of staff development can be summarised as follows: the implementation of the SDA is driven by a labour<sup>17</sup> perspective (which has arisen more visibly since

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<sup>17</sup> It is stated in discussion paper 1 of the National Skills Conference that the Congress of South African Trade Unions took the: "lead in developing a practical strategy for training reform" in South Africa (Department of Labour, 2007a:49).

1994 as part of the democratisation of SA), namely that investment in education and training would lead to the financial prosperity of the individual, employer and country at large. Against the background of this perspective (which seems to relate closely to Human Capital Theory) the employer (in this case, the HEIs) is held responsible and accountable for planning, funding and reporting on the development of staff members (prioritised for designated<sup>18</sup> staff members) as well as for contributing to the skills development of unemployed SA citizens. The government therefore introduced a levy scheme, compelling HEIs to budget for institutional as well as national skills development priorities and established the Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority<sup>19</sup> (ETDP SETA) to monitor within a certain prescribed time frame not only who should benefit from skills development but also what the quality of such development should be.

The aforementioned context of the implementation of the SDA contrasts with the core rationale for and means of staff development in HEIs. Staff development opportunities were available to all staff members in SA and international HEIs long before the implementation of the SDA. The structures such as policy, budget and practices (also referred to as means or forms) in support of staff development have consequently evolved over time to address the personal as well as the professional development needs of individuals in tandem with institutional development needs. Although numerous authors such as Knight *et al.* (2006:320), Kapp *et al.* (2006:4), Allen, Blackwell and Gibbs (2003: 66 to 78), Blackwell *et al.* (2003:3), Beardwell (2003:169), Ljubljana (1995:68-69) Zuber-Skerrit (1995a:106) and Bitzer *et al.* (1998:11) describe various forms of staff development and ways to enhance learning, the literature remains silent on the planning, recording and reporting of staff development activities in HEIs. This could be ascribed to staff development activities being viewed predominantly as self-motivated and informally driven (i.e. a voluntary activity by the individual). This implies that HEIs could encounter problems with the planning and recording of skills development activities that appear on the ETDP SETA template because information does not seem to be readily available. In my extensive literature review, I have not come across any instances either where staff members were willing to commit themselves to development opportunities with the intention of achieving a qualification that could be exchanged for financial benefits. It

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<sup>18</sup> Designated means black people, women and people with disabilities (Department of Labour, 2004:3; Department of Labour, 2007b:2).

<sup>19</sup> HEIs fall within the scope of the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) (Department of Labour, 2000a:8).

could, therefore, be argued that staff development is viewed mainly from a task accomplishment perspective, rather than from a financial perspective. This is why I argue in this chapter that the only match between the goals of the SDA and those of staff development is the fact that the SDA and staff development in HEIs both aim to provide opportunities for employee development. There is, however, a mismatch between the SDA and staff development in HEIs in terms of the rationale and process for achieving staff development.

In conclusion, I argue in this chapter that as the implementation of the SDA seems to relate closely to Human Capital Theory, it should be examined more closely. I thereafter discuss Social Capital Theory and argue that it is the key to understanding the SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. I also indicate what has already been achieved by previous research, what remains to be researched and how the present study may endeavour to address these lacunae. My review of the reasons for and means of achieving the goals of the SDA follows below, where I focus on the rationale and goals for achieving the aims of the SDA.

## **2.2 Review of the body of scholarship on the reasons for and means to achieve the goals of the Skills Development Act**

I have identified three recurring themes in the body of scholarship pertaining to the reasons why the South African (SA) government implemented the Skills Development Act (SDA) and the means to achieve its goals, namely:

- Investment in education and training towards economic growth
- The pursuit of equality in education and training
- The provision of structures to achieve the first two imperatives.

It should be noted that the above-mentioned three themes should not be seen as distinct and separate from one another. They are interrelated and their boundaries are blurred. An explanation of the above-mentioned three themes is given in the following sections (2.2.1 to 2.2.3).

### 2.2.1 Investment in education and training towards economic growth

The first reason for the implementation of the SDA is an economic imperative: to increase investment in education and training so as to improve workers<sup>20</sup> productivity as a means of increasing SA's economic prosperity. For example, the SDA *inter alia* states that [its] purposes are: "to develop the skills of the South African workforce – to improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers; ... [and] to increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4). In addition, the Memorandum<sup>21</sup> of the SDA notes that South Africa's poor economic performance can be attributed to the poor quality and relevance of skills in the workplace as well as the low levels of investment in education and training in the workplace (Memorandum of the Skills Development Act, 1998:46).

A *leitmotif* running throughout the Memorandum of the SDA and the statement of purpose of the SDA and its implementation, is the notion that skills development will improve employee productivity and in turn lead to the economic prosperity of individuals, industry and the country as a whole (Mdladlana, 2003a:2; Samuel, 1996: 17; Van Dyk *et al.*, 1997:41; Mercurio *et al.*, 2000:5 and 12; Shaik, 2001:3 and 50; Cloete, 2001:17; Cloete, 2005:7 to 10, Van Dijk, 2003:2). The aforementioned suggests that the theory of Human Capital is the underlying rationale for the implementation of the SDA (see §2.4).

The notion that investment in education and training will lead to economic gains is also clear from the various statements made by government officials in the past four years. For example:

- "[T]he single greatest impediment to economic growth in South Africa is the shortage of skills" (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006:7);
- [T]he SA economy is seen as a dualistic economy – a First-World economy based on a skilled labour force and a Third-World economy based on marginalised or unskilled workers regarded as unemployable (Department of Labour and German Technical Co-Operation, 2007:3; Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2007:2; Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006:8; Mbeki, 2003:1; Ernst, 2000:4);

<sup>20</sup> Worker in this context means the employed as well as the unemployed worker (Republic of South Africa, 1998b:2).

<sup>21</sup> Before any Act is promulgated in SA, a memorandum on a particular Act is compiled for discussion in parliament.

- “There is compelling evidence that points to the strong relationship between investments in human capital (education, training, health, nutrition) and economic growth and development” (Pandor, 2006:1); and
- "The organisations that stand to gain the most are those that equip their employees with knowledge, talent, skills and opportunities to deliver and create value. It is such organisations that will establish a culture of lifelong learning and that will ensure sustainable growth in our economy” (Mdladlana, 2003a:1).

The above-mentioned statements made by government officials also clearly demonstrate government’s assumption that investment in education and training is key to SA’s economic prosperity. This stance can even be traced back to policy documents preceding the implementation of the SDA. The policy document called the Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994), states: “Unless the types of knowledge and skills available to society are transformed, the apartheid labour market will continue to exist ... and economic development will remain stagnant.” (African National Congress, 1994b:8). Hence, an investment should be made in education and training to address the “economic inequality, fragmentation and environmental destruction caused by apartheid” (Samuel, 1996:34). Similarly, the initial concept of the Green Paper on Skills Development (1997), another draft policy document under the auspices of National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), refers to “skills” as the “project of employee development ... for economic purpose” (Department of Labour, 1997:Preface).

It is clear from the above-mentioned publications that precede the implementation of the SDA as well as in the previously mentioned governmental statements that the assumed economic value of investment in education and training is a firmly embedded government stance. However, it is of interest to note that in none of the aforementioned publications could I find any justification for the belief that investment in education and training would lead to economic prosperity, only verbal and written attempts to sell its assumed value to the general SA public. Nor did I find in the aforementioned publications an explanation of the meaning of the term, skills. For example the term “skills development” is elaborated on in the Green Paper on Skills Development, referring to “skills” as the “project of employee development ... for economic purpose” (Department of Labour, 1997:Preface), yet it does not explain the meaning of skills. Similarly the SDA refers to skills as: “to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills” (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4), yet it also



does not explain the meaning of the term “skills”. The SDA states that its purpose is to increase investment in education and training, which explains how skills would be enhanced, but not what the term “skills” means. I believe that it is important that I could not find scholarly research that indicates that HEIs' involvement in discussions would be a means of gaining an understanding of the meaning of the term skills and the intention of the SDA. Although government's media briefing on Accelerated and Shared Growth (ASGISA) refers to public enterprises being consulted in training and development matters, it is not clear whether HEIs were included (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006:1). In my opinion, the implementation of the SDA seems therefore to be little more than a popularised “labourism”.

Even if it were true that investment in education and training would lead to economic prosperity, it remains a moot point why the SDA recognises only workplace education and training as a means for creating economic prosperity but fails to recognise education and training outside the workplace. In this regard the SDA states: “to encourage employers to use the workplace as an active learning environment” (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4) and that workers (employees) should be encouraged to: “partake in Learnerships and other training programmes” (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4 and 16 to 18). It is also a moot point whether government is willing to recognise development that takes place outside the workplace. This may well be the case, since Learnerships and other training programmes are described in the SDA as learning directed towards workplace needs (Department of Labour, 2003:4). Therefore, the SDA (Chapters 4 and 5) sets out the development and provision of Learnerships and Skills Programmes that lead towards a qualification (Republic of South Africa, 2004:16 and 19) and that are directed towards particular workplaces, for example a Learnership or Skills Programme for Educators in Schooling (teachers) or Higher Education Practitioners (lecturers) (ETDP SETA, 2003:30). The significance of the aforementioned Learnership or Skills Programme is that it aims at enhancing the skills required in a particular workplace (schooling or practitioners in HE). The significance of formal qualifications differs, however, from Learnerships or Skills Programmes in the sense that they are intended to provide generic skills and knowledge (Geyser 2004:17; Hay and Marais, 2004:59 to 60; Drew, 1998:8) which are applicable across workplaces. An example would be a HE education or accounting qualification that does not restrict the individual to being an educationist in HE only. It also does not restrict an individual from being an accountant in industry only. A Learnership or Skills Programme qualification therefore refers to a specific workplace qualification and differs essentially from a formal

qualification provided by an HEI. This calls into question whether this implies that HEIs which train educationists, doctors, engineers, etc. by means of formal qualifications should now have to change their programme qualifications mix (PQM) to offer Learnerships or Skills Programmes for the sake of providing qualifications that would seemingly lead to SA's economic prosperity.

The Minister of Labour, who is responsible for the implementation of the SDA, refers to skills as: "gaining knowledge, talent, skills and opportunities to deliver and create value" (Mdladlana, 2003a:1). Similarly, the Minister of Labour said: "qualifications would come in very handy for the country" (Mdladlana, 2007:1). The message of the Minister of Labour is confusing because his message refers to skills development being somewhat broader than the definition that is tendered in the SDA, as previously discussed. It seems that the Minister's message does not restrict skills development only to Learnership and Skills Programme qualifications, but includes any form of learning that could lead to gaining knowledge, skills, etc. This again draws attention to the confusing messages that the meaning of the term "skills" seems to transmit. This leads to another question, namely whether the Minister's message implies that skills refer to knowledge acquisition as a skill, or whether the acquisition of knowledge, with the emphasis on the term acquisition, should be understood to be a skill.

In concluding this section – based on what has been said above, I argue, for the following reasons, that the economic inclination of the SDA seems to reflect a political ideology that is intended to govern investment in education towards achieving economic gains:

- No literature could be traced to substantiate the viewpoint that investment in education and training is the only foolproof recipe for economic gains; and
- the available literature does not refer to any attempt by government to consult with HEIs regarding the rationale and goals for achieving the aims of the SDA, nor to explain the meaning of the terminology contained in the SDA. The absence of public debate between HEIs and the ETDP SETA regarding the aims and rationale for the implementation of the SDA and how the latter matches or differs from those for staff development in HEIs could, therefore, be (as argued in Chapter 1) the reason why HEIs encounter challenges with the implementation of the SDA.



The next section explains that the ideological leaning of government towards investment in education and training as a seemingly foolproof recipe for economic prosperity is not the only reason for implementing the SDA; instead, the pursuit of equality seems to be the second reason.

### 2.2.2 Pursuit of equality in education and training

It is my contention that the second reason for implementing the SDA concerns social imperatives in pursuit of equality,<sup>22</sup> which involve redressing the past imbalances in the education and training of previously disadvantaged individuals. The focus on redressing past imbalances is obvious in the SDA, for example the statement of the SDA's purpose includes the following: "to improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility; ... to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:5). When he introduced the SDA, Labour Minister Mdladlana (Mdladlana, 2001:2) stated that the new legislation (SDA) sought to address the impediments to social development in SA in general, and the challenges of equity<sup>23</sup> in particular. Apart from legislating the government's intent to pursue equality in the SDA, various statements and publications made by government officials endorse government's notion of redress in education and training in SA (Samuel, 1996: 17; Van Dyk *et al.*, 1997:41; Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:5 and 12; Shaik, 2001:3 and 50; Cloete, 2001:17; Cloete, 2005:7 to 10; Van Dijk, 2003:2). A few examples are offered below:

- Only 8,7% of the economically active portion of the SA population received education before the democratisation of SA (1994) (Ernst, 2000:4; Van Dyk *et al.*, 1997:25);
- The current shortage of skills in SA is due to the policies of the apartheid era (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006:7);
- "[P]ast skills development practices have not provided the range, diversity, quality and level of skills needed for socio-economic development" (Department of Labour, 2002a:7).

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<sup>22</sup> Equality in this context means providing education and training opportunities to those adversely affected by SA's previous apartheid regime (Samuel, 1996:34).

<sup>23</sup> Equity refers to equal treatment and opportunities whereas access refers to entry to education, training and employment. Redress refers to the reversal of past unfair discrimination (Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:23).

The above-mentioned statements as well as excerpts from the SDA clearly indicate government's protest against the pre-1994 government's failure to allow all SA citizens equal opportunities for education and training. In this regard, it is interesting that Cloete (2005:9), Pick (2005:1), Mbeki (2003:1), Cloete (2001:2), Shaik (2001:48), Mercorio *et al.* (2000:18) and Samuel (1996:1) should postulate that the SDA has been implemented to redress past inequalities in education and training.

Policy documents in the course of the development of the SDA furthermore point to government's goal of achieving equality and redress in the current education and training dispensation (SDA). The policy document: the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), contends, for example, that the education and training system under apartheid was fragmented along racial lines and furthermore biased in its access to education and training (African National Congress, 1994a:58). Following the RDP, the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) released by the Department of Labour in February 2001 (Department of Labour, 2000b:1) and the NSDS(2) in 2005 (Department of Labour, 2005:2) are examples of government's efforts to redress the inequalities in education and training that were the legacy of the apartheid regime.

The NSDS(2) provides that education and training should be prioritised towards the so-called categories of designated people in SA, namely: "85% black, 54% females and 4% people with disabilities" (Department of Labour, 2005:2). In addition, the principle of employment equity also crystallised in another legislative policy, namely, the Employment Equity Act (EEA), with its strong emphasis on the education and training of designated employees (Republic of South Africa, 1998a:1). The EEA refers to the SDA in paragraph 15(2)(d), where skills development is regarded as an affirmative action measure to retain and develop people from designated groups and to implement appropriate training measures, specifically to accelerate the career progress of people from the designated groups. For this reason, Cloete (2005:15), Cooper (2004:25) and Mercorio *et al.* (2000:7,49 and 109) are of the opinion that the SDA, SDLA and SAQA Act are "interlocked" with the EEA. In other words, the SDA provides a platform for planning the education and training of designated groups (to redress past inequalities in the education and training policies of SA) in the workplace.

Neither the EEA and the SDA nor the documentation of the ETDP SETA describes how the previously mentioned percentages should be interpreted. One possibility is

that this implies that when HEIs prioritise their education and training needs, 85% should be earmarked for black people, while 54% of the 85% should be females and should include 4% people with disabilities. Another possibility suggests that 4% of an institution's education and training needs should be earmarked for people with disabilities (irrespective of race and gender) and 85% for black people. This leaves 11% that could logically be allocated to formally advantaged white people. This also raises the question whether the aforementioned percentages refer to the SDA's 1% levy rebate or to the total education and training budget of HEIs. What is important to establish is the political and ideological basis according to which these percentages should be calculated. In this regard, the following questions could be asked:

- Would HEIs forfeit their rebate if the education and training provided were for non-designated staff members where the majority of the staff members in that particular HEI fall in the non-designated categories<sup>24</sup>?
- Would a focus on designated staff categories be perceived as discriminating against non-designated groupings in HEIs.<sup>25</sup>

In concluding this section, I argue that the aforementioned historical and recent policy documents clearly demonstrate government's intention to redress the inequality in education and training in the workplace, resulting from the legacy of the apartheid regime. I could not, however, track down any publications on how HEIs could or should achieve redress in education and training among their employee cadres which, in the case of HEIs, also include employees in non-designated groupings. The only logical conclusion I could draw is that government's failure to provide for a debate (or guidelines) on gaining an understanding of how to achieve equality in education and training in HEIs (as argued in Chapter 1) is another reason for the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

The background provided so far offers an explanation for the first two reasons behind the implementation of the SDA, namely investment in education and training (see §2.2.1) and achieving equality (as explained in §2.2.2). The next section explains that the third reason for the implementation of the SDA (according to my understanding of the literature) is to provide structures that will ensure that the aims of the SDA are achieved.

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<sup>24</sup> As such, whites constitute 73% of staff at universities (Study South Africa, 2005:21).

<sup>25</sup> The SDA, as it is currently worded, seems to indicate that government's rationale for achieving equality in education and training is that it should be left to the HEIs to determine how best to manage this.

### **2.2.3 Provision of structures to pursue a return on investment in education and training, equality and quality**

The third reason for the implementation of the SDA concerns the provision of various national and institutional structures to ensure a return on investment in education and training, as well as equality and quality in same. In terms of national structures, the SDA states *inter alia* that the purposes of the SDA are to be achieved by: “establishing an institutional and financial framework composing of the National Skills Authority (NSA), ... sector education and training authorities (SETAs); ... a skills development levy-financing scheme as contemplated in the Skills Development Levies Act; ... [and] the South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA]” (Republic of South Africa, 2004:5). With regard to institutional structures, the SDA requires *inter alia* the: “appointment by employers of workplace skills development facilitators” (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) and that employers should consult with employee representatives on matters dealt with in the SDA (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26).

The implementation of these national and institutional structures demonstrates that the realisation has dawned at governmental level that investing in and achieving equality and quality in education and training not only costs money but also requires structures (as previously described) to support the aims of the implementation of the SDA (as explained in §2.2.2 and §2.2.3). The opinion of authors such as Cloete (2005:9), Mdladlana (2001:2), Shaik (2001:25), Mercorio *et al.* (2000:5) could be mentioned in support of this statement. Although the aforementioned authors endorse the value of these structures as far as achieving the aims of the SDA is concerned, they do not draw attention to the possible effects that these structures might have on the tradition of staff development in a particular industry (and in HEIs in particular). HEIs might view the implementation of the aforementioned structures as an invasion of institutional autonomy and privacy. Lee (2002:4), Ziderman, (1996:313), as well as Whalley and Ziderman (1990: 377), for example, caution that industry might view the levy-financing scheme as an additional form of taxation. What seems to be of greater concern is government's attempt to govern (and invade) HEIs' staff development traditions. The SDA, for example, requires the establishment of an institutional Skills Development Committee to serve as a consultative forum regarding the implementation of and reporting on employee skills development to government (ETDP SETA) (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26). This leads to the

question why the management of HEIs' staff members' education and training practices cannot proceed without employee representative interaction and consent? Does this imply that HEI management is not, in the eyes of government, fit to manage the education and training of its own staff members, or is it merely a matter of government attempting to govern HEIs' staff development traditions?

With regard to the national structures put in place to achieve the aims of the SDA, the SDA outlines the functions and responsibilities of SETAs (HEIs belong in the ETDP SETA) to: “develop a sector skills plan in the framework of the national skills development strategy ... allocating grants<sup>26</sup> in the prescribed manner and in accordance with any prescribed standards and criteria to employers, education and training providers ... [and] to monitor education and training in the sector” (Republic of South Africa, 2004:6-10). What can be concluded from the above-mentioned functions of the ETDP SETA is that they attempt to intersect with the manner in which staff development is managed in HEIs. In this way it endeavours to monitor the planning and quality of staff development in HEIs on the one hand. On the other hand, based on HEIs performance in this regard, it endeavours to pay a rebate to HEIs. By implication the HEIs are compelled firstly to plan and report on a prescribed ETDP SETA template their staff development initiatives within a time frame spanning from 1 April to 28 March annually. Secondly, to plan and report on staff development initiatives against NSDS targets; and thirdly to indicate the NQF level<sup>27</sup> of education and training initiatives. Although the template provided by the ETDP SETA does not restrict HEIs from planning and reporting on their education and training initiatives for staff members in designated groups only, the criteria used for evaluating South African industries' plans and reports are based solely on the previously described NSDS targets (percentages) (Republic of South Africa, 2004:10).

The background so far clearly illustrates that government has established various structures to ensure that the goals of the SDA are achieved. I found ample examples in the literature referring to the role that a SETA should play in monitoring industries'

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<sup>26</sup> The Skills Development Levies Act (SDLA) outlines the levy grant system. With effect from 1 April 2000, South African employers must pay a levy of 0,5% and from 1 April 1% of their total payroll. The levy is paid to the SETA. Employers receive training rebates from the SETA when their workplace skills plan and report reflect compliance with national imperatives, are submitted within the prescribed time frames and have been approved by the relevant stakeholders (Cloete, 2005:13; Republic of South Africa, 2004:1; Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:77).

<sup>27</sup> The level of the programme is based on national standards, hence recognised under a single national credit-based qualifications framework called the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as outlined in the SAQA Act (Republic of South Africa, 1995).

compliance with the SDA. Refer for example to the publications of authors such as Cloete (2005:11), Nxesi (2005:25), Vuma (2004:4), Möhr and Fourie (2002:34 and 128), Greyling (2001:38), Shaik (2001:25), Mercurio *et al.* (2000:2, 48 and 50), Bellis (2000:10) and Pretorius (1998:5 and 6). I have not, however, found literature that speak to the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs nor on the attempts made between the ETDP SETA and HEIs to gain an understanding of the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. What further complicates the communication between the ETDP SETA and the HEIs is the fact that various categories of education and training providers fall inside the scope of the ETDP SETA structure (Republic of South Africa, 2000:8; ETDP SETA, 2007:6). As such, HEIs' education and training matters are deliberated on in one of the two ETDP SETA chambers (in this case, the Levy Chamber) (ETDP SETA, 2007:6). The first chamber is the Budget Chamber under which the Department of Education (the umbrella body of public schools) falls. The second chamber is the Levy Chamber that includes ten categories of education and training providers that pay levies on their payroll for employee development. This includes providers such as trade unions, independent schools, political parties and libraries and archives (ETDP SETA, 2007:6) that, in my opinion, differ considerably from HEIs with regard to the nature and role of the institution and their government subsidies. With regard to how the skills development matters of HEIs are discussed at chamber level, it is assumed that matters submitted by the Skills Development Facilitators working in the 23 HEIs (Study South Africa, 2005: 3) are captured by nine ETDP SETA skills advisers (one skills adviser in each of the nine provinces of SA). The ETDP SETA skills adviser structure does not, however, provide for a co-ordinating function so that the HEI-specific needs from the nine provinces can be consolidated for presentation to the ETDP SETA Levy Chamber. This implies that, as the skills development matters submitted by HEIs are not co-ordinated, they cannot be presented as HEIs' collective needs to the ETDP SETA Levy Chamber.

In concluding this section, I reiterate that the implementation of various structures (as outlined in this section) is the third reason for the implementation of the SDA. The above-mentioned background to this study has a twofold significance. Firstly, it seems that the government places a higher value on the education and training of the designated groupings than on the capacity of the internal resources required to educate and train in HEIs or on the benefit that learning has for the individual or the institution (apart from economic gains). Secondly, the implementation of the aforementioned structures indicates that government seeks interaction between itself



on the one hand, and the ETDP SETA and the HEIs on the other. This implies that government recognises that the value of social capital (see §2.5) is pivotal to achieving the SDA's aims. This also implies that if there was a break in interaction (consultation and debate) between the ETDP SETA and HEIs as far as staff development matters are concerned, it could lead to social disorder or social deficit. In Chapter 1 I argued that HEIs have made little attempt to understand the underlying intent of the SDA and therefore to determine whether and why such an intent coincides with or differs from the view of staff development in HEIs. This is an indication that there is a measure of social deficit between the ETDP SETA and HEIs.

An extensive review of the literature indicates that the ETDP SETA has made little or no attempt to use the structures established under the SDA to promote communication and debate between HEIs and the ETDP SETA. For this reason, it is argued firstly, that the implementation of the SDA will remain a governmental political ideology unless efforts are made to ensure that skills development matters are debated between the HEIs and the ETDP SETA. Secondly, the failure of the ETDP SETA to provide fora for debate in order to develop an understanding of the rationale for the implementation of the SDA in the context of the HEIs' staff development could be the reason why HEIs encounter challenges (as argued in Chapter 1) with the implementation of the SDA.

Against this backdrop (§2.2.1 and §2.2.3), a critical interpretative summary will now be offered of the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and its consequences for the education and training of staff members in HEIs.

#### **2.2.4 Critical interpretative summary of the reasons for the Skills Development Act and its consequences for staff development in Higher Education Institutions**

The implementation of the SDA projects the government's view that the education and training policies and practices of the apartheid era were ineffective. As the implementation of the SDA is seen as a useful tool for SA's socio-economic development, as outlined in §2.2.1 to 2.2.3, the main reasons for the implementation of the SDA are as follows:



2.2.4.1 Investment in education and training would lead to economic prosperity in South Africa, and the education and training of those disadvantaged by the education and training policies and practices of apartheid should be prioritised.

Government's aim for the implementation of the SDA is, juristically, to govern workplace education and training so as to improve productivity and competitiveness in the industrial, commercial and service sectors and in this way ultimately to promote the South African economy. Hence, HEIs are compelled to invest in the education and training of their staff members, giving priority to people disadvantaged by apartheid. Consequently, if HEIs can afford to pay only for the development of designated staff members, the development of non-designated staff members will be neglected. For this reason, the SDA could not only create a negative social relationship between HEIs and their employees but could also hamper the HEIs' capacity to enhance the quality of student learning. I contend that the SDA's focus on preferential treatment for certain staff categories in HEIs is another example of the way in which Human Capital Theory is embedded in the fabric of the SDA, because prioritisation implies that organisations have to implement decision-making systems which, by implication, manage humans in a way similar to managing machines in a production chain (Baptiste, 2001:185). In addition, it implies that the SDA as an instrument now becomes an objective in its own right. Because government assumes that there is no tradition of educating and training staff members, it has implemented the SDA at a juristic level to govern HEIs' workplace education and training so as to give priority to those disadvantaged by apartheid. It is therefore questionable whether government, in its quest for economic prosperity, recognises the value of the staff members who did benefit from education and training under apartheid. It could furthermore be questioned whether investment in education and training has a direct correlation (causal effect) with economic prosperity. Even if there were a direct correlation, how can HEIs maintain or enhance the efficiency of their core tasks of teaching and research when expenditure on education and training needs should be prioritised for training those disadvantaged by apartheid? Alternatively, does this mean that the HEIs' budget for education and training expenditure should be increased to be higher than the levy amount to ensure that the staff members who benefited under apartheid also have an opportunity for education and training?



From the point of view of South African macro socio-economic development, the thrust towards skills development is accepted in principle by various authors, such as Cloete (2005:31), Govender (2003:12 and 71), Pretorius (1998:5), Shaik (2001:47) and Genis (1997:2). Similar sentiments are also echoed in the broader African context. King and McGrath (2002:119) argue that: "Skills development can be seen as an important tool linking social and economic agendas and ensuring that globalisation is infused with a social inclusion and poverty eradication focus." After all, it remains one of the responsibilities of government to provide a national structure for the development of human resources (Möhr *et al.*, 2002:73 and 131; Ernst, 2000:4). The above-mentioned authors do not, however, express the notion that education and training should be legislated to ensure the education and training of employees from certain groupings, nor that the education and training of employees should be governed by bodies external to an organisation (in this case the HEIs).

#### 2.2.4.2 The SDA would provide the structures and resources to ensure that the former two aims of the SDA are achieved

The structures established in terms of the SDA indicate that the government realised that achieving the aims of the SDA would not only cost money but would also require structural support. By imposing a levy grant system and establishing the ETDP SETA and the NQF structure the government therefore intends to make HEIs co-responsible for funding the education and training of not only their own employees but also the unemployed population of the country. These structures and aims have the following consequences for HEIs:

- HEIs are compelled to pay a levy of 1% of their payroll. On the basis of compliance (with various criteria as previously described), HEIs earn a rebate from the ETDP SETA. The levy grant system indicates that government does not seem to trust the ability of HEIs to budget and use education and training funds responsibly. It can, therefore, be questioned whether the education and training budget of HEIs has not decreased after the implementation of the SDA, because the mandatory grant (rebate) only equates to 50% of the HEIs' levy amount paid (Republic of South Africa, 1999:8-15).
- HEIs are compelled to provide credentialled workplace skills programmes. The SDA favours credentialled<sup>28</sup> training, that is, NQF-accredited<sup>29</sup> education

<sup>28</sup> Credentialled training means programmes that are standard-based and have credits attached to the standards accredited on the NQF (Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:157; Cloete 2005:22).

<sup>29</sup> The SDA outlines the implementation of Skills Programmes and Learnerships that by their nature, are both accredited learning programmes (Republic of South Africa, 2004).

and training programmes which lead to a qualification. This implies, as previously argued, that government is not interested in the process of learning but in its outcome. This furthermore implies that government is trapped in the paradigm that investment in education and training will lead to economic prosperity, which resonates with the tenets of Human Capital Theory (refer to §2.4). It also implies that HEIs' workplace education and training programmes for staff members should be developed on the basis of unit standards, be accredited on the NQF and be registered with the ETDP SETA. The quality of the education programmes provided by HEIs is, however, quality assured by the Higher Education Quality Committee, and it is based on the principle of self-accreditation (Naidoo, 2004:3). In other words, the programmes provided by HEIs are not recognised by SETAs as registered programmes based on unit standards. This calls into question whether the SDA attempts to overshadow the accreditation process of HEIs regarding staff development.

- HEIs are compelled to liaise with the ETDP SETA with regard to Workplace Skills Plans and Annual Training Reports. However, the virtually non-existent interaction between the HEIs and the ETDP SETA, as previously explained, indicates that the problems that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA (as explained in Chapter 1) will remain for the foreseeable future. My view is that what is of greater importance and value, but not visible between HEIs and the ETDP SETA, are the actual and virtual resources that accrue during interaction. This refers to the value of Social Capital (refer to §2.5). For this reason, I argue that the government's failure to focus on the value of Social Capital could create a dissonance between industry's (HEIs') and the government's view of education and training. It therefore stands to reason that the ETDP SETA's failure to create fora for debate has reinforced the view that the SDA is merely the government's political ideology and could be far removed from the realities that HEIs are facing.

Although it is not my intention to depoliticise government's intention for the implementation of the SDA, I propose that "political ideologies", despite being a dominant motivating force, are only effective to the extent that they have been communicated and when there is mutual understanding between all stakeholders (government and industry).

In conclusion: §2.2 explains the underlying rationale for the implementation of the SDA and its consequences for HEIs. In addition, the underlying reasons for the

implementation of the SDA are questioned with a view to indicating the possible causes of the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA (as outlined in Chapter 1). This section concludes by proposing that the implementation of the SDA will remain a governmental political ideology if no effort is made to enhance communication between the HEIs and the ETDP SETA. To this end, the ETDP SETA should provide fora for debate so that the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA can be overcome. The theory of Social Capital is positioned in this study as key to understanding the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development in HEIs.

In this section I explained the underlying reasons for the implementation of the SDA and also indicated its theoretical basis, which resonates with Human Capital Theory. In addition I noted the implications of the implementation of the SDA for HEIs and also posed questions that remain unanswered due to the lack of interaction between the ETDP SETA and the HEIs. In the next section, I attempt to paint a picture of the rationale for and goals of staff development in HEIs. Thereafter I highlight the critical characteristics of staff development in HEIs and also point out the possible match and mismatch between the aims of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs.

## **2.3 Review of the body of scholarship on the underlying reasons for staff development in SA HEIs: more than meets the eye**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

My review of the body of scholarship on the nature of staff development in HEIs indicates that this is a recurring topic. Several international and country-specific (including South African) perspectives can be found in the recorded literature. My Internet searches (e.g. SABINET ONLINE, OCLC and EBSCOhost) on 17 August 2007, using key words such as: staff or educator or academic or professional learning, skills, training, education, development in Higher Education Institutions, produced 247 publications of possible value. However, of all the publications reviewed (including the Internet responses), only nine publications were found to be vaguely related to the aim of this study, namely, the SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act (SDA) on staff development in South African HEIs. In the majority of these publications, with the exception of Greyling (2001) on "Skills Development in HE", the focus of the research was either on other sectors in SA or on the attempts made to provide a model for skills planning

in South African industries (for example, Adeniji (2002); Gordon-Davis (2002); Mkhwanazi and Baijnath (2003); Kaplan (2003); Scott, (2003); Le Grange (2004); Mapesela and Strydom (2004); and Von Stapelberg (2006); Damian (2001)). As such, these publications did not provide any clues regarding the SDFs' perceptions of the effects that the SDA has on the staff development practices in HEIs.

Since publications falling in the scope of this research project are few and far between, I extended the review to the domain of the rationale for and means (forms) of staff development that have evolved over time in national and international HEIs. My review of the body of scholarship was, therefore, not restricted to South African HEIs only, but extended to include the historical rise of staff development in international and national HEIs in order to determine the critical features of staff development as it emerged in SA and in other countries. In addition, I argued in Chapter 1 that the absence of feasible explanations for the problems that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, seem to indicate that it involves a great deal more than meets the eye.

As previously described, this study is positioned against the epistemological intersection of interpretivism and critical theory. By implication the literature review that follows is similarly positioned.

### **2.3.2 Staff development extends beyond the mere improvement of skills**

One of the first books published on staff development is entitled *Staff Development in Higher Education*, and edited by Teather (1979). This book consists of an international compendium of papers contributed, in the main, by practising staff developers from 12 parts of the world: Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, East and West Germany, the Indian subcontinent, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America. Each writer defines staff development and discusses the staff development approaches and practices that seem appropriate to the country concerned. Together they describe a vision of far-reaching development beyond the mere improvement of skills. The definitions offered in Teather (1979) suggest that staff development includes the processes, structures and programmes that harmonise individual and institutional interests towards mutual growth. A few examples are offered below:

- “A systematic attempt to harmonise individuals' interests and wishes, and their carefully assessed requirements for furthering their careers with the

forthcoming requirement of the organisation in which they are expected to work” (Piper and Glatter, 1977:14).

- “Staff development involves the individual and the institution in a mutual process of change” (Greenaway and Mortimer, 1979: 61).
- “Staff development refers to improving the skills and knowledge of the faculty” (Shore, 1979:77). Shore (1979) furthermore notes that the improvement of skills and knowledge is “only part of the story of improving teaching in a university. Some improvements can be made by changing the reward system for good teaching, upgrading it *vis-à-vis* the publishing, committee and administration achievements, which are in practice, the main criteria for tenure and promotion. Other improvements can be made by offering better media service” (Shore, 1979:77).
- “Staff development is conceived in terms of in-service training” (Isaacs, 1979:82).
- “Staff development should promote understanding between various kinds of staff and different levels of administration” (Jalling, 1979:209).
- “[I]nstructional design of conditions of learning, faculty or organisational development” (Gaff, 1979:237).

The above-mentioned definitions provide clues to the nature of staff development (at least as perceived up to 1979). Firstly, since staff development matters have been widely published since 1979, it could be argued that staff development is a historical given in HEIs (Fraser, 2005:158; Webb, 1996b:1). Bitzer *et al.* (1998:11) note that while staff development units in most SA historically privileged HEIs were established during the late 1970s, there was a significant rise in staff development in SA HEIs during the 1990s (Bitzer *et al.*, 1998:11).

Secondly, the value of staff development is perceived as the key to responding to and shaping individual and institutional goals. Thirdly, the references to action learning and research, discussions, mentoring in learning, careers and creating understanding among staff in various categories, indicate that the vision of development extends well beyond the mere improvement of skills. Instead, staff development is perceived as including the structures, processes and programmes that support employee development.

This leads to the fourth and perhaps most prominent characteristic of staff development in HEIs. In none of the previously mentioned definitions are attempts

made to base the value of staff development on the acquisition of monetary wealth, but rather on growth in skills and knowledge. By implication, this denotes the irrelevance of accreditation (category<sup>30</sup>) attached to an opportunity for staff development, as long as the opportunity contributes to the individual's skills and knowledge in harmony with institutional needs. I therefore argue that it is not surprising to note that the terms associated with those opportunities which HEIs recognise to be staff development opportunities are widely divergent. In the next section I will, therefore, elaborate on the different uses of terms associated with staff development practices in HEIs.

### **2.3.3 Staff development opportunities make use of widely divergent terms**

The report of Foster and Roe (1979:17-37) is based on the findings of a national Australian survey of HEIs, and makes the following points:

- Staff development activities include formal<sup>31</sup> courses leading to a qualification. These are, however, not common in Australian universities (p. 25).
- Staff development activities include short informal courses. These take a variety of forms, ranging from scheduled programmes to impromptu events arranged to suit the needs of a particular group or department (p. 25).
- Staff development activities include other forms of development, such as seminars, workshops, guidance from a colleague, finding out what other people are doing (pp. 22 and 23), the secondment of staff (ranging from a few months to a year) and/or joint inter-institutional research projects (p 30).
- Staff development activities are provided in-house or external to the institution on a classroom or self-instruction basis (p. 25). With regard to the provision of in-house programmes, Forster *et al.* (1979) note that the research and development units in most Australian universities provide or co-ordinate staff development activities. In some Australian HEIs where there are no research and development units, advisory committees (known by various names) provide consultations or various development activities (p. 18).
- Participation in staff development is voluntary (p. 18).

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<sup>30</sup> Formal, informal or non-formal programmes that are either accredited or not. Category, in this case, refers to the nature of the programme: is it a degree, a short course, a unit standard a diploma, certificate etc.

<sup>31</sup> In South Africa formal qualifications are referred to as those programmes that are credentialled and recognised on the National Qualifications Framework (Republic of South Africa, 1995; Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:157; Cloete, 2005:22).



In a similar vein, Nisbit and McAleese (1979:38-56) summarise the 1979 position of staff development in British universities as follows:

- "Initial training": generally available, short (one-week) courses, usually specific to the university, including an induction element.
- "Formal provision for experienced staff to develop their teaching": beginning to grow, still mainly in the form of short conferences for discussion, often in a single discipline, regional or national.
- "Informal provision within universities" (often in departments: well established for research, quite extensive for teaching, but not organised, and wide variations).
- "Other aspects (training and supervision for research students, courses in administration): beginning of awareness of a need" (Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:46).

The above-mentioned staff development activities in British universities noted by Nisbit and McAleese (1979:38-56) clearly match the previous summary of staff development drawn from the Foster *et al.* (1979:17-37) report on a survey of Australian universities. It is, however, of interest to note that Nisbit *et al.* (1979:37) use the term formal when referring to programmes being structured whereas in the previously mentioned report of Foster *et al.* (1979:17-37), the term formal refers to a programme leading to a qualification. This difference in the meaning attached to the term formal, for example, once again reinforces my view that the meanings attached to various staff development opportunities are widely divergent. For ease of understanding in the present study, the term formal, therefore, refers to those programmes leading to a qualification, in contrast to the term "non-formal" that refers to any other structured programmes that do not necessarily lead to any qualification (i.e. a short course). Informal also refers to learning through group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery and learning from one another (i.e. in a seminar, workshop, group discussion).

The report of Shore (1979:76-86) on Canadian universities provides strands of practices similar to those discussed in the previously mentioned reports. In addition, Shore argues, however, that the improvement of skills and knowledge in a faculty (the term faculty refers to members of academia) is only part of the story of improving learning and teaching (Shore, 1979:77). Some improvements can also be made by: "changing the reward system for good teaching, upgrading it *vis-à-vis* the publishing, committee and administration achievements, which are in practice the main criteria for tenure and promotion" (Shore, 1979:77). Shore emphasises that staff

development is regarded not only as the obvious, previously defined, structured formal or non-formal staff development programmes but also as the structures in HEIs that support staff development. Shore (1979:77) also notes that most Canadian HEIs have opted for consultations, discussions and guidance from more experienced staff members as the means for staff development. In other words, staff development not only consists of formal, non-formal or associated structures but also includes informal activities (consultations, discussions, and guidance).

With regard to informal activities forming part of staff development, Nisbit and McAleese (1979:42) also note: "It is customary also for universities to stress the informal training in departments by the experience of working alongside colleagues" (Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:42). These authors state, however, that the provision of this kind of training is so informal and disorganised that it did not fall within the scope of their survey. I contend that although no good examples are provided in the reports of Nisbit *et al.* (1979) and Shore (1979) respectively, their reports do illustrate that staff development in HEIs involves more than meets the eye.

Against this background, it follows that terms are used in a widely divergent manner when it comes to the various strategies applied in HEIs to achieve staff development. In the present study, the various staff development strategies as previously stated are, therefore, categorised as formal (credentialled<sup>32</sup> programmes leading to a qualification), non-formal (structured programmes not leading to any qualification, such as short courses), and informal development (i.e. a group discussion, workshop, seminar, conference, guidance from mentors). The widely divergent use of terms, alluded to above, does not, however, end here. In the next section I explain that the terms "training" and "development" each have particular semantic values in different HEIs.

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<sup>32</sup> Credentialled training means programmes that are standard-based and have credits attached to the standards accredited on the NQF (Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:157; Cloete, 2005:22).

### 2.3.4 Meaning of the terms “training” and “development” in HEIs

The report of Nisbit and McAleese (1979:51) in particular provides clues to the meaning attached to the term “training” in HEIs. The survey of Nisbit and McAleese (1979:53) reveals that virtually all universities make some kind of provision for structured non-formal courses in British universities. These courses are structured in a way that allows individuals to develop their own competence and understanding rather than imparting to the novice a set of values and/or generally accepted standards predetermined by someone else, where he/she has limited freedom to question such predetermined standards or values. Nisbit *et al.* (1979:50) argue, therefore, that the extensive use of the term “training” is an “unfortunate choice” for describing the professional requirements of teachers in British universities (Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:50). In other words, the terminology is misleading. These authors argue that the term “training” implies that “there is a body of knowledge or a set of skills to be imparted to the novice, and has the connotation of a limited and even unquestioning acquisition of an accepted practice” (Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:50). Jalling (1979:218) make the same point, stating that: “training is designed to make people and their actions conform”. Nisbit *et al.* (1979:48) argue that although the notion of imparting a set of skills to a novice is communally understood as training or development in industry, this does not hold true for HEIs which regard staff training as a wider approach. Staff training or development in HEIs is an activity of debate towards finding solutions for a particular need. Nisbit and McAleese (1979:48) argue that training, as applied in British universities, has a standard pattern or design which includes discussion sessions, small-group teaching and assessment, and videotaped recordings of each course member in action (Nisbit and McAleese 1979:48). In other words, the programme is designed to allow debate and self-development, not to enforce certain set standards predetermined by someone else.

The report of Isaacs (1979:173) on universities in the Netherlands and the report of Gaff (cited in Teather 1979:232) on universities in the United States of America reveal that courses in those countries are designed in a similar fashion. Isaacs (1979:173) notes, for example, that: “[t]he course consists of the training of pairs of people ... Diagnosis of deficiencies is facilitated by videotaping a lecture by each of the trainees prior to the commencement of training. Training consists mainly of practising the desired skills in the trainee’s normal lectures; background is supplied by a course book and feedback and support by the trainees to each other – each attends the other’s lectures” (Isaacs, 1979:173). Similarly, Gaff (1979:283) notes that:

“... faculty members have recorded their classes with either video or audiotapes and have discussed the tapes with students and/or colleagues.”

Against this background, it is clear that the meaning attached to training in HEIs differs from its meaning in industry. Training is perceived in industry as an activity to “pull” people towards a standard of practice determined by someone else. By contrast, HEIs view training in a similar light as self-development. Nisbit and McAleese (1979:50) argue, therefore, that the concept of training in HEIs is linked to that of development, since development: “shifts the onus from the trainer to the staff member himself [*sic*]: it is his task to develop his own competence and understanding, and it has the connotation of personal growth and maturity” (Nisbit and McAleese, 1979:50). In a similar vein, Jalling (1979:218) emphasises that: “staff development, on the other hand, aims at increasing the readiness to accept and promote innovation”. It seems that the above-mentioned understanding of training applies not only to teaching skills but also to the acquisition of research skills. Nisbit and McAleese argue that the research scholar: “learns his [her] skills alongside a skilled researcher”. Similarly, Isaacs (1979:165) notes (albeit with a touch of irony) that academic staff members do seem to manage to develop their research skills on their own or by osmosis or by apprenticeship in the course of their work.

The conclusion that could be drawn from the previous two paragraphs concerning the meaning attached to training in HEIs is that employee development is about matters such as debate, support, guidance, critical reflection and self-awareness. The approach followed is, therefore, not about the enforcement of a set of generally accepted practices; instead, it relies on debate which, by implication, leads to self-development but not to forced development. Nisbit and McAleese (1979:54) argue that: “there has been a move towards interpreting the task [training] as one of development by building up a coherent body of knowledge from which scholars can draw as they do from the scientific theories of their own disciplines” (Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:54). I am furthermore of the opinion that the report of Nisbit and McAleese (1979) illustrates the attempts that staff developers in British HEIs have made to distance the nature of staff development from the concept of training which is a common practice in both business and industry.

In this section I have explained that the terms “training” and “development” each have a particular meaning in HEIs. In the next section I explain another critical characteristic of staff development in HEIs, namely the perceived differences in the

programme delivery strategies for staff development opportunities of academic staff members and support staff members.

### **2.3.5 Perceived differences in the programme delivery strategies of development for academic and support staff members**

Greenaway and Mortimer (1979:71) argue that although the basic approach of academic development is no different from the development of other categories of staff in HEIs, the time scale for achieving this development differs. For convenience, the present study refers from this point on to the other categories of staff members as support<sup>33</sup> staff members. Greenaway and Mortimer (1979:71) add that it takes longer to perfect teaching skills than it does to learn manual or administrative tasks. A great deal of staff development for support staff takes place on the job, by learning new tasks from more experienced colleagues or from the activities provided by the professional body to which the person is affiliated (Greenaway *et al.*, 1979:73). The tasks in the academic profession are, however, more complex, as the following example shows. The task of curriculum development and course design entails various design methods, internal validation procedures, submission to an external validating body, as well as monitoring and evaluation procedures. To complete this process may take up to five years, after which the programme has become obsolete as far as newest content and up-to-date data is concerned. Greenaway and Mortimer (1979) furthermore explain the longer length of time needed to perfect teaching skills (compared to the time it takes to acquire skills related to the clerical profession) as follows: “Perhaps the greater difference is created by the loneliness of teaching compared with the interactive group nature of most non-teaching work. Teaching involves mostly a single teacher meeting a group of students. Non-teaching work usually relies on the performance of various tasks by several people who each contribute one, or at the most, a couple of activities. The product is identifiable and can usually be measured and assessed. The opportunity for each to learn from the other while actually doing the job is therefore much greater” (Greenaway and Mortimer, 1979:72). The point they make is that the concept of teamwork is strong among support staff, in contrast to the relative loneliness of the academic during teaching and research. The timescale for perfecting teaching-related skills differs, therefore, from the shorter time it usually takes to acquire administrative skills.

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<sup>33</sup> Brew (1995b:7) bemoans the lack of an all-encompassing term to describe all the categories of university members other than academic staff. They are variously referred to as allied, general, support or even non-academic staff. In the USA, academics are referred to as

The conclusion that can now be drawn is that staff development opportunities are available for all categories of staff members in HEIs. The perception in HEIs is, however, that as the development needs of support staff members are bound to a relatively fixed task, they could easily acquire skills in a fairly short space of time through on-the-job training, short non-formal courses in the institution or through development activities provided by professional bodies. The development needs of the educator profession are rather differently perceived from those of support staff members. Not only do educators have to take cognisance of the continuing expansion of knowledge and theories in their own disciplines (Nisbit and McAleese, 1979:54) but they are also bound to the lengthy time-span involved in the process of programme and curriculum design, implementation and evaluation. I argue, therefore, that the difference can be ascribed merely to perceptions, since the report of Greenaway and Mortimer (1979) does not provide sufficient evidence to substantiate the claim that the nature of staff development differs as far as the teaching and support-related professions are concerned. No explanation or examples are furthermore given of the skills that academic staff members may require outside the range of their teaching-related duties. Moreover, during my extensive review of the body of scholarship, no publications could be found which specifically address the nature of the difference between staff development opportunities for academic and support staff. The question that was previously asked has, therefore, been only partially answered. Although there is a dearth of literature on this topic, this does not imply that there is no merit in the attempt that Greenaway and Mortimer (1979) are making to suggest this difference. Instead, their attempt draws attention to the gap in scholarly research on this particular topic. It is equally important to record the observation that virtually no research has been reported on the development of support staff in SA HEIs who comprised 35 367 employees out of the total number of 53 230 (Mouton, 2007:1) employees in the South African HE sector in 2004.

So far, I have discussed the rationale for staff development (§2.3.2), the various strategies (formal, non-formal and informal) to reach its aims (§2.3.3) and the meaning attached to the terms “training and “development” in §2.4.4. I furthermore discussed the perceived differences in the programme delivery strategies for staff development opportunities that exist for academic and support staff members respectively in this section.

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faculty and the rest are referred to as staff. In Australia, the term general staff has become the



In the next section I discuss what I consider to be the core characteristic of staff development in HEIs, namely the learning process.

### **2.3.6 Learning process: the core of staff development in HEIs**

As to whether there has been a change since the 1970s in the various programme delivery strategies (previously described as formal, non-formal, informal) and the associated structures of staff development, the evidence suggests that it has remained largely unchanged. There is a strong indication, however, that academic staff development has shifted from a focus on aspects of general teaching facilitation towards the development of capabilities acquired as a consequence of localised social practices (Knight *et al.*, 2006:320; Kapp and Frick, 2006:4). The focus of academic staff development has, consequently, shifted towards learning facilitation in the context of the discipline that the lecturer presents (also referred to as course-specific) and the social practices (i.e. debate, reflection, discovery and learning from one another) that are considered to be the core of the process of learning. In this section I indicate, firstly, that staff development strategies and the associated structures (i.e. units and funding to promote staff development in HEIs) have remained largely unchanged since the publication of Teather (previously referred to) in the late 1970s. Secondly, I focus on the social practices viewed as the core of the process of learning that have gained prominence in recent years.

Kapp (1995:14 and 15) presents the results of an international survey on policies, practices and procedures in staff development in higher education with responses from 109 HEIs (including universities in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and in a number of sub-Saharan countries in Africa). This report was published almost 15 years after the compendium of papers edited by Teather (1979). The survey by Kapp (1995) reveals that the majority (57,8%) of the HEIs have staff development units. The mission statements of these staff development units focus mainly on instructional development (67%) and professional development (63,3%). The student feedback services seem to be the most effective, followed by decentralised programmes, consultation and centralised programmes for staff training. Other services provided by some of the units include mini-grants for individual development efforts and non-formal education programmes. These units

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accepted norm.

employ various strategies for their staff development practices. The most frequently used practices – also rated as the most effective strategies for staff development – are workshops, seminars and courses by staff of the unit (96,1%). The types of programmes mentioned in the survey include induction programmes for new staff members, individual teaching consultation, grants for research, joint publications with colleagues and a staff development library.

The findings of Kapp's survey (1995) suggest that the various staff development strategies (previously described as formal, non-formal and informal and associated structures) have remained largely unchanged. Kapp (1995:14) notes, however, that the emphasis on staff development became predominantly focused on excellence, quality and changes in the learning industry and in technology, and that demands for accountability and staff development programmes include themes such as co-operative learning (79%) and active learning (84%). It is my contention that these strategies point to the shift that staff development practices have begun making towards an emphasis on the learning that accrues during the learning process.

In another example, Ljubljana (1995:68-69) notes the following staff development practices in Slovenian universities over the past 15 years: courses, workshops, summer schools and conferences as well as staff development connected to action research projects. This is another example that the various staff development strategies (formal, non-formal and informal and associated structures) have remained largely unchanged. It is interesting to note, however, that Ljubljana (1995:68) specifically reports on the staff development practices connected to learning, where learning is acquired from group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery and learning from one another. Ljubljana (1995: 69) adds that the evaluation of gain from different methods and approaches among 214 participants spread over 11 workshops, indicates that informal discussions and experiential methods (mini-lectures with video feedback) rate among the highest scores. It therefore stands to reason that the reports of Kapp (1995) and Ljubljana (1995) both clearly illustrate that the various strategies of staff development have seemingly remained unchanged since the 1970s. A shift has, however, taken place towards a focus on the process of learning. Both the above-mentioned reports illustrate that social activities (i.e. group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery, learning from one another or methods of learning previously referred to as co-operative or active learning) are considered to be core elements to the process of learning in HEIs. Social activities such as group discussions and learning from one another seem to have close ties to

the theory of Social Capital. Field (2004:12), for example, refers to forms of debate as networks that provide the basis for the social cohesion that is central to the theory of Social Capital, which is discussed in §2.5.

In another example, Zuber-Skerrit (1995a:106) notes that many Australian HEIs now offer coherent, rather than short one-off programmes. Zuber-Skerrit (1995a:106) comments that, apart from the usual seminar and workshop programme format, the Griffith Institute of Higher Education also provides various one- to two-year programmes. This is yet another example that the various strategies of staff development have seemingly remained unchanged since the 1970s. Of particular importance in Zuber-Skerrit's (1995b) report are the methodological frameworks of the programmes mentioned, and not necessarily whether the programmes are formal, non-formal or informal in nature. Zuber-Skerrit (1995a:108 to 117), who reports on six case studies undertaken between 1992 and 1994, states that action learning and research were the predominant methods of staff development. Zuber-Skerrit (1995a:118) concludes by ascribing the success of action learning and action research in all of the six case studies to: "discussion and reflection in action and on action". This is a clear example that seems to substantiate the inference that the process of learning (at least in the development of academic staff) has not only become more visible since the 1990s, but has also become recognised as a key ingredient in learning. It is, however, important to note that none of the case studies mentioned so far has made reference to or given examples of the recording of the social activities in the process of learning. All the above-mentioned case studies give reasons only for the importance of the social practices that are the core of the learning process.

A recent report by Allen, Blackwell and Gibbs (2003:66 to 78) notes the trend towards the value of the learning process in staff development. Allen *et al.* (2003: 66 to 78) discuss four illustrative case studies of subject-based academic development practices. The emphasis in these four projects was on involving educational development specialists and organisational development specialists in working with the end users (students). The results of the case studies prove the positive potential of subject-based development (previously referred to as the discipline) approaches, as well as the importance of informal learning opportunities such as group discussions and learning from one another. Moreover, these case studies clearly illustrate that informal development has a specific meaning in HEIs. As such, the authors argue that informal development accrues from planned interventions focused

on addressing a certain need (subject-based) and not on the learning that accrues incidentally from normal interaction (general socialisation) with people (Allen *et al.*, 2003: 68). These four projects furthermore employed a learning methodology which relates closely with Zuber-Skerrit's (1995b) notion of action learning and action research, which essentially values social activities such as debate and reflection. The informal subject-based academic development practices mentioned by Allen *et al.* (2003) can be summarised as follows:

- Informal development included discussion fora with the aim of deliberating on particular subject matter. Participation in the discussion fora was not restricted to subject-matter experts (educators), but included members of staff from various stakeholder groupings (such as student representatives) (p. 67).
- Seminars and conferences were presented to a broader group to share information, advice, guidance, material and success stories, resulting in a valuable supportive community which was helpful to those not yet experienced in managing subject-based development projects (p. 68-69).
- Development, either that of subject knowledge, facilitation or research, was undertaken in the form of action research projects (p. 69).

The findings of these case studies substantiate the claims in the literature that informal development is a proven method of academic development in HEIs. These case studies also indicate that informal learning, which has been one of the strategies of staff development in recent years, has been raised to the level of strategic importance. Strategic in this context refers to the influence of HE legislation and the collaboration of various role players (such as clients *vis-à-vis* student representatives and specialists in academic staff development) in subject-based academic development (Blackwell *et al.*, 2003:3-5). Blackwell *et al.* (2003:5) argue that staff development can no longer take place in isolation from the academic environment. For this reason, academic development should remain as close as possible to the academic subject discipline and should include meeting the needs of the wider institutional context (Blackwell *et al.*, 2003:3-5; Kapp *et al.*, 2006:4). In other words, the learning gained through informal social practices has become pivotal to the learning process in HEIs. It is, however, important to note that the case study reports of Allen *et al.* (2003) and Blackwell *et al.* (2003) make no reference to the recording of informal development activities.

Against the background of the case studies reviewed so far, it is clear that informal learning is regarded as the core of the process of learning in HEIs. None of the

above-mentioned case studies, however, provides any evidence of the recording of informal development opportunities, although various publications point to the value of social interaction as the core of informal learning. This probably indicates that the exact date or moment when informal development occurs is either difficult to determine, or that recording is regarded as an administrative burden. I am furthermore of the opinion that the absence of recorded informal development opportunities is an indication that the recording and archiving of such learner records is not considered to be an important enough administrative function towards the achievement of credentialled qualifications which can be exchanged for external rewards. In my opinion, if such credentialled qualifications would have been exchanged for external awards, the records of such informal development opportunities would have been made widely available, long ago already. I highlight the lack of records on informal development in HEIs for the following reasons: the SDA acknowledges for rebate purposes (as explained in §2.2.3) only the recorded education and training interventions. The reason for this can be ascribed (as explained in §2.2.1) to the assumption that investment in education and training is believed to lead to the economic prosperity of individuals, institutions and the country at large. In contrast to the aforementioned legislative prescriptions, informal development seems, however, to be an increasingly important but not-yet-recorded means of development in HEIs. This could be one of the core reasons why HEIs encounter problems with the implementation of the SDA. In an attempt to substantiate my contention that social practices (debates, interaction between people, etc.) – although not properly recorded – are generally applicable to staff development (which falls in the realm of informal development) in HEIs, I offer some more examples.

Beardwell (2003:169) gives an account of informal staff development activities in an academic department at the De Montfort University in the United Kingdom (UK). This case study included academic staff members as well as support staff members, setting out specific forms of staff development activities. These activities included self-organised “away-days” and discussion in routine meetings, textbook projects (short courses or seminars or formal mentoring arrangements), conference participation and leadership and management development for the heads of departments. What is also of interest is that the methods of staff development mentioned in this report mirror the various historical staff development strategies (formal, non-formal and informal) in HEIs. In addition, this case study (although it is only one case study) not only reveals the importance of informal learning

opportunities as part and parcel of the learning process of individuals but also indicates that informal learning can be equally applicable to support staff members.

Shahnaz *et al.* (2005) report on a case study at the Bowling Green State University (Ohio) on the development needs of 92 departmental chairs. The response rate of 60% to a questionnaire survey revealed that the departmental chairs believed that the most successful training interventions were round-table discussions or off-campus speakers from other higher education institutions (Shahnaz *et al.*, 2005:588). This case study again illustrates that informal development is recognised as a learning strategy, yet it does not provide a clear record of when such events took place or of their duration. Similarly, Blackmore *et al.* (2006:373-387) report on an interview survey completed by 18 leaders in academic staff development at universities in the English Midlands. They found that these academic leaders: “learn informally and ‘socially’, seek and use feedback, usually of an informal kind” (Blackmore *et al.*, 2006: 377). This is yet another example that informal development is recognised as a strategy of development in HEIs. No mention is made, however, of the proper recording of such interventions nor that such informal learning opportunities could be used as a means towards obtaining a qualification. Blackmore *et al.* (2006:377) adds that although just over half the sample had completed PhD degrees and a quarter had no formal qualifications of any kind in education, not one academic leader was engaged in formal education. I argue that this proves the inference that informal development processes have come to be regarded as essential to staff development in recent years. Blackmore *et al.* (2006) also argue that: “one of the most powerful ways of ensuring that leaders in academic development understand the worlds of those they seek to assist is by offering them similar combinations of experiences” (Blackmore *et al.*, 2006: 380). For this reason, these authors suggest that: “the challenge is to bring informal processes of learning into the development of the leaders in keeping with findings of leaders’ ways of learning reported earlier. Reflection may be assisted through peer mentoring, coaching, co-facilitating events and activities and action learning and ‘critical friend’ support” (Blackmore *et al.*, 2006: 384). In other words, Blackmore *et al.* (2006) draw attention to the value that HEIs still attach to formal or non-formal staff development strategies, although social activities *vis-à-vis* informal development opportunities are viewed as the core of the learning process in HEIs. It should, however, be stressed that the report of Blackmore *et al.* (2006) provides no details of how informal development opportunities should be recorded.



Another survey conducted by Kapp and Frick (2006) on the current nature of staff development in HEIs, reveals trends similar to those discussed so far. The purpose of this project was to reflect on the origins of academic development, analysing the present and predicting the future through an informed forecast. Their literature review included an investigation of the web pages of centres/units in academic staff development across Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom, as well as interviews with 10 representatives of the academic staff development units at 10 universities. The questionnaire survey and web analysis revealed that the main changes in academic staff development during 1995 to 2005 included the change in the profile of academic staff development and the acceptance of continuing professional development in academic staff development, in contrast to the train-and-release approach of the past (Kapp *et al.*, 2006:6). In my opinion, the postulation that there has been a change in the profile of academic staff development and continuing professional development clearly demonstrates the prominence of learning processes in recent years. In addition, Kapp *et al.* (2006:6) also point out that the provision of training programmes to staff members has continued. This illustrates that training is of particular importance to maintaining good standards of practice in HEIs (Brew, 1995:20; Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:52). These authors, based on their literature survey, furthermore, claim that: “it seems that academic staff development seems to have evolved from a singular focus on teaching, to an understanding of teaching in a broader framework (the context of the institution), to programme design, to learner- centeredness, to networking and the integration of technology” (ibid). This is yet another example where the focus of academic staff development has shifted towards learning facilitation in the context of the discipline that the lecturer presents (also referred to as subject-based) and social practices (networking), which are considered to be at the core of the process of learning. It should be pointed out in this regard that the report of Kapp *et al.* (2006) also does not provide details about the recording of continuing professional development or of networking opportunities.

Against the background of this section, some clear conclusions may be drawn about the characteristics of staff development in HEIs:

- Staff development opportunities have been available and/or provided to all categories of staff members. This implies that staff development could be referred to as inclusive. The aim of staff development furthermore reaches beyond the mere improvement of skills. Staff development is, therefore, an

all-encompassing term referring to the programmes, structures, policies and processes required to create and enhance a continuing staff development culture in HEIs (Webb, 1996b:1; Blackwell *et al.*, 2003:23; Kapp and Frick, 2006:1; Denton, 1995:34). A recent definition of staff development in HEIs by Blackwell and Blackmore (2003:13) offer reasons for this contention. Blackwell *et al.* (2003) define<sup>34</sup> staff development as: “development for all staff in their work roles and throughout their working lives”.

- Staff development concerns the furthering of a university staff member’s knowledge, skills and potential in harmony with the requirements of the HEI (Kapp, 1995:11; Brew, 1995b:1, Webb, 1996b:1; Blackwell *et al.*, 2003:23). The term “requirements” is of particular importance since it highlights the fact that staff development is a managed process aimed at enhancing a mutually and reciprocally advantageous relationship between individual and institutional performance (Blackwell *et al.*, 2003:23). This study, therefore, argues that the value of staff development is a key component to responding to and shaping institutional strategy (Blackwell *et al.*, 2003:5).
- Conversely, this study hypothesises that the value of staff development does not lie primarily in the financial gains which may accrue to the individual, the institution or the country at large.
- Widely divergent categories and labels attached to development interventions indicate that staff development strategies are divergent in HEIs. This study argues, however, that staff development strategies generally refer to development which is formal (leading to a qualification), non-formal (structured programmes which do not lead to a qualification) or informal (such as unrecorded subject-matter debates or reflection sessions) in nature. Of greater importance, however, is the methodological approach that the aforementioned strategies take. As such, the emphasis is on the learning process of elements such as debate, networking, support, guidance, critical reflection and self-awareness, and not on the transfer of particular pre-determined standards. In HEIs the term “training”, therefore, seems unacceptable because of the connotation it has to learning transfer, instead of social interaction as the core of development. For this reason, this study proposes that the nature of staff development (with reference to informal development) should be closely related to the theory of Social Capital.

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<sup>34</sup> Anheier (2005:39) contends that definitions are neither true nor false, since they are judged by their usefulness in describing a part of a reality of interest.

- The least-recorded development strategy in HEIs is informal development, although it is viewed as the most desirable strategy and the core of the process of learning in HE.
- Lastly, a distinction is drawn between the amount of time it takes to acquire skills for teaching-related and support-related tasks. This implies that although there is a distinction drawn in the literature between the structure and design of development for the teaching-related and the support-related professions, I argue that such a distinction in fact is not of crucial importance. The data gathered during the empirical investigation support this conclusion because it showed that the distinction is not, in fact, crucially important and that it lies on a different level, in any case (refer §4.3.2.2).

In this section I explained the underlying reasons for and goals of staff development in HEIs. I also pointed out the theoretical basis of staff development in HEIs. In addition I posed a number of questions with regard to the recording and archiving of informal staff development opportunities, as well as with regard to the preferred position that Human Capital Theory seems to take compared to Social Capital Theory as far as staff development in HEIs is concerned. In the next section, based on my literature review, I table the match and mismatch between the underlying reasons for and goals of the implementation of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs.

### **2.3.7 Match and mismatch tabled between the underlying rationale for and goals of the Skills Development Act and those of staff development in Higher Education Institutions**

Against the backdrop of the underlying rationale for and goals of the implementation of the SDA (explained in §2.2) and the underlying rationale for and goals of staff development in HEIs (explained in §2.3) the match and mismatch between these two areas can be tabled as follows:

**Table 2.1 Match and mismatch between the underlying rationale and goals of the Skills Development Act and those of staff development in Higher Education Institutions**

<b>Underlying rationale for and goals of staff development in Higher Education Institutions</b>	<b>Underlying reasons for and goals of the implementation of the Skills Development Act</b>
<b>Staff development:</b>	<b>The implementation of the SDA:</b>
Is a historical (widely published) function in HEIs.	The SDA is a fairly new piece of legislation in SA and, consequently, a fairly recent function.
Is viewed inclusively. In other words,	Is viewed inclusively but the measures

opportunities are available and/or provided to all categories of staff members on an equal basis.	taken to prioritise development of designated groups typify the SDA as exclusive.
Concerns the furthering of a university staff member's knowledge, skills and potential in harmony with the requirements of the HEI.	Concerns investment in education and training as a tool for SA's socio-economic development. This assumption has close ties to the theory of Human Capital.
Reaches beyond the mere improvement of skills and is an all-encompassing term, referring to the programmes, structures, policies and processes for staff development.	Reaches towards skills development through education and training. Structures to reach the SDA's goals are firstly in the form of a levy grant system, that in essence holds HEIs co-responsible for funding the education and training of not only their own employees but also the unemployed population of the country; and secondly the SETA structure that serves as external monitoring system.
Is valued for its process towards growth in skills and knowledge, but not for the acquisition of external recognition such as credentialled development. In other words HEIs value the actual and virtual resources that accrue during interaction. This perception has close ties to Social Capital Theory (refer §2.5.1).	Is valued for its outcome in terms of credits on the NQF. In other words, government values the investment in education and training as a means to achieve the economic prosperity of the individual, institution and country. This perception has close ties to the theory of Human Capital (refer §2.4.1).
Includes formal (programmes leading to a qualification), non-formal (structured programmes that could be registered and quality assured by the CHE) or informal (such as unrecorded subject-matter debates, reflection sessions or participation in conferences, workshops and seminars) programmes. However, informal development is the least recorded form of development, although it is viewed as the most applicable method of learning in HEIs.	Gives prominence to credentialled <sup>35</sup> training, namely NQF-accredited <sup>36</sup> education and training programmes. This implies that HEIs' education and training programmes for staff members should be developed on the basis of unit standards, be accredited on the NQF and be registered with the ETDP SETA. Hence, HEIs should plan their reports on their education and training by using a prescribed template.
Has overshadowed the term staff "training", <i>per se</i> , in HEIs. Development is retained to refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development.	Has been focusing, <i>per se</i> , on education and training outcomes as the means for achieving economic prosperity.
Draws a distinction between the duration of time needed to acquire skills for teaching-related and support-related tasks.	Draws no distinction between participants' tasks.

<sup>35</sup> Credentialled training means training programmes which are standard-based with credits attached to the standards accredited on the NQF (Mercorio *et al.*, 2000:157; Cloete, 2005:22).

<sup>36</sup> The SDA outlines the implementation of Skills programmes and Learnerships that, by their nature, are both accredited learning programmes (Republic of South Africa, 2004).

The table (2.1) above clearly indicates that the implementation of policy to govern the institutional practices of staff development intersects, yet in some cases contrasts starkly with staff development in HEIs.

In conclusion, I argue that the mismatch between the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and those for staff development in HEIs can be ascribed to the difference in their underlying ontological, epistemological and conceptual basis. The SDA promotes the theory of Human Capital, whereas HEIs desperately want to promote the theory of Social Capital as far as staff development is concerned. The question that should be asked, however, is whether or not the theory of Human Capital assists in any way towards promoting economic wealth? In the next section I attempt to answer this question by explaining the background and development of the theory of Human Capital against the epistemological backdrop to this study, namely the intersection between interpretivism and critical theory.

## **2.4 Human Capital Theory**

The theory describing the relationship between investment in education and economic prosperity is called Human Capital Theory (Llop, 2006:xi; Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4; Field, 2004:12; Harrison *et al.*, 2004:12; Nafukho *et al.*, 2004:545; Livingstone, 2002:1; Möhr *et al.*, 2002:34; Baptise, 2001:195; Quiggin, 2000:130; Lin, 1999:28; Fevre, 1997:1; Livingstone, 1997:9; Hlavna, 1992:47; Stewart, 1997:108). Since the late 1950s, Human Capital Theory has become the dominant approach for explaining the relationship between investment in education and economic development, making it an appropriate basis for education policy (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4; Livingstone, 2002:1; Baptise, 2001:195; Quiggin, 2000:130; Fevre, 1997:1; Livingstone, 1997:9; Hlavna, 1992:47). Carnoy *et al.* (2005:4) state that the force of Human Capital Theory in society can be observed in the large sums of money that governments, individuals and taxpayers spend on education annually in almost every country of the world, based on the belief that there is some connection between a better-educated labour force and greater economic prosperity. South Africa is certainly not excluded from this view, because various prominent role players in South Africa stress the relationship between investment in education and economic gains (Pandor, 2006:1; Asmal, 2004:1; Reddy, 2004:40, Johanson *et al.*, 2004:15; Bartell, 2003:10; Mdladlana, 2003a:1).

In essence, the proponents of Human Capital Theory believe that investment in education creates upwardly spiralling social and economic gains for individuals, organisations and ultimately for society as a whole (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4; Field, 2004:12; Quiggin, 2000:130; Shaik, 2001:56; Erasmus *et al.*, 1996:89; Hlavna, 1992:47). Since investment in education is perceived as providing social and economic gain, the notion is perpetuated among the developers of education policy that individuals, organisations and society are inevitably in partnership to achieve economic prosperity (Hlavna, 1992:47; Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4). There are notable examples of this partnership perception with regard to education investment in South Africa. The use of State funds to subsidise the education sector and the implementation of the SDA to regulate workplace education and training are merely two examples. The importance of this particular conceptual background to this study is that it gives a clear indication that the perceived value of Human Capital Theory is embedded in the SDA. The question is whether there is any evidence to prove that the relationship between investment in credentialled education and training does in fact lead to economic gain.

Harrison *et al.* (2004:24), Baptiste (2001:184) and Baptiste *et al.* (2004:39) contend that the proponents of Human Capital Theory wittingly or unwittingly exclude human behaviour as a key determinant when offering reasons for espousing this theory. Consequently, these proponents usually give a one-sided view of Human Capital, based upon the perceived economic benefit as the prime value of this theory, while downplaying human behaviour and the interests of those who participate in education (Baptiste, 2001:198; Quiggin, 2000:136). Livingstone (1997:9) argues: "Human Capital equates workers' knowledge levels with their levels of formal schooling... [to] estimate individual economic returns to learning." Lin (1999:29) postulates that the proponents of Human Capital Theory portray the value of investment in education as an ideology for influencing the masses to internalise the values of this theory. For this reason, Lin (1999:29) argues that Human Capital Theory is a capitalist scheme embedded in society, where the dominant class<sup>37</sup> calls for investment to be made in human beings to capture the surplus value generated. Lin (1999:29) comments that the term "capital" in Human Capital Theory is highlighted to refer to certain elements. The first element is the surplus value generated and pocketed by the capitalists, and the second element is the investment by the capitalist, with expected returns in a marketplace (Lin, 1999:29). Lin (1999:29), therefore, asserts that Human Capital

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<sup>37</sup> The dominant class refers to those in power (Lin, 1999:29 and 31).



Theory is based on the “exploitative social relations between two classes”. In other words, investment in education becomes the one-sided individual's, organisation's or State's euphemism (hidden agenda) for economic growth. What is important in terms of the epistemological backdrop to this study (critical theory) is that Human Capital Theory could be perceived as an exploitative ideology.

Fitzsimons (1999:10) and Baptiste (2001:184) both reason that the responsibility for a better education lies largely with the needs and expectations of the individual, not with the prescriptions of anyone else. Baptiste (2001:184), for example, comments that those who choose education as a profession might be doing so because they wish to alleviate social maladies, not necessarily for the capital gains that the Human Capital theorists assume these educators might desire. Schultz (1961:1), one of the leading proponents of Human Capital Theory, writes: “[a]lthough it is obvious that people acquire useful skills and knowledge, it is not obvious that these skills and knowledge are a form of capital, [or] that this capital is a substantial part of a product of deliberate investment.” Moreover, empirical evidence to prove the direct economic relationship between investment in education and economic gains is fraught with errors of logic<sup>38</sup> (Livingstone, 1997:10; Hyde, 2006:4).

The description above indicates that there seem to be unsubstantiated beliefs that investment in education will create economic prosperity. Moreover, it could be argued that Human Capital Theory regards human beings as “capital” that can be managed through policy rulings by the dominant class. This implies that people are inferior to policy and cannot make their own decisions. This raises the question of how Human Capital Theory became entrenched as one of the more popular conceptual frameworks in which a significant amount of thinking and praxis with regard to contemporary education are cast.

The next section describes the thinking processes that led to the assumptions contained in Human Capital Theory, in order to explain how this theory became embedded in society. This is of particular importance to the present study, because the aim of this study is to understand the perceptions of SDFs as far as the effects of

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<sup>38</sup> Livingstone (1997:10) states that either the average examination results of one group are compared with earlier enrolments, or “specific bits of knowledge are used to argue an increasing general ignorance thesis”, which does not tell the whole story. Moreover, Quiggin (2000:132) comments that the number of education enrolments and a country's economic performance are compared with those in other countries when claiming that the one country's human capital is higher than that of another country.

the SDA on staff development in HEIs is concerned, which I contend is based upon assumptions embedded in Human Capital Theory. My contention is based mainly on the notion that the SDA's intention to invest in education and training is a utilitarian<sup>39</sup> approach to enhancing the economic prosperity of SA.

#### **2.4.1 The development of Human Capital Theory**

The approach of viewing people as capital and claiming a reciprocal relationship between investment in education and future economic gain as the basic premise of Human Capital Theory can be traced back to 1959. Shultz and Becker (described in *The Wealth of Nations*) articulated the formal theory of human capital (McIntyre, 2002:2; Baptiste, 2001:178). The body of knowledge seeking to describe, explain and validate investment in education and economic earnings is, therefore, called Human Capital Theory. In this regard, it is important to note that Human Capital Theory gained prominence in the aftermath of World War II and in the context of the Cold War, when industrialised countries were entering the age of mass production, when people's earnings increased and there was significant growth in formal schooling (Livingston, 1997:9; Baptiste *et al.*, 2004:32). In other words, Human Capital Theory was "discovered" during the era of industrialisation (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4). Clearly, the growth in formal schooling and similarly the economic boom after World War II gave rise to the notion that investment in education would lead to economic prosperity (the core logic of Human Capital Theory) (Livingstone, 2002:1; McIntyre, 2002:1; Baptiste, 2001:185; Shaik, 2001:21; Livingstone, 1997:9; Field, 2004:12; Schuller and Field, 1998:226).

During the era of industrial growth, people came to be considered as an organisational resource to be combined with other resources (capital and technology) that could be used as productive activities for the economic benefit of the organisation. Similarly, education became viewed as another form of resource that, when added to labour, would enhance workers' capacity to produce (Harrison and Kessels, 2004:21 and 88; Reid *et al.*, 2004:3; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11). Baptiste (2001:187) contends that the economic orientation to humans implicitly demonstrates how humans became torn away from self-preservation only to be viewed mechanistically as part of the chain of production. By contrast, Harrison *et al.* (2004:18) do not regard humans (employees) as a capital resource but as suppliers of labour, as problem solvers, sensitive receptors of information, potential improvers

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<sup>39</sup> A utilitarian approach means the use of utensils in the making of products (Fevre, 1997:3).

of humankind and innovators. Though a capitalist economy makes it possible for people to sell their labour, there ought not to be a market for human beings similar to the market for machines (Harrison *et al.*, 2004:28; Baptiste, 2001:184; Quiggin, 2000:133; Livingstone, 1997:12; Silver, 1991:266). The above-mentioned conceptual background to this study is important in that the notion of Human Capital was “discovered” (Livingstone, 1997:12) during the era of industrialisation when more people enrolled in schooling. Consequently, the term “discovered” denotes a logical connection between investment in education and economic prosperity but is not necessarily based on empirical data or facts.

The assumptions underlying Human Capital Theory have, however, been increasingly called into question since the 1970s when average incomes stagnated, employment rates declined and graduate under-employment,<sup>40</sup> under-utilisation or unemployment increased despite the fact that school enrolment rates continued to rise (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:6; Quiggin, 2000:136; Connor, 1997:169; Livingstone, 1997:9). As a result, it is not clear whether educated people are necessarily more productive or wealthier than uneducated people (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4; Livingstone, 2002:1; Livingstone, 2002:1; Baptiste, 2001:195; Quiggin, 2000:130; Livingstone, 1997:9; Hlavna, 1992:47). In other words, I believe this implies that Human Capital Theory is an ideology dominated by ambitious claims about the seemingly positive and supposed vital link between education and economic growth. I concur with Fevre (1997:3) that Human Capital Theory is simply “a logical outcome of reasoning”. Yet, in order to substantiate Human Capital Theory amid economic stagnation, a screening model was employed by government and employers (Baptiste, 2001:187; Livingstone, 1997:9).

Using the screening model, people are screened for admission to education, based on their academic record (examination results). Ranking people according to their examination results perpetuates the tenet of Human Capital Theory that people with high levels of academic achievement can work in high-status jobs and be highly productive. Educational credentials are therefore a substitute for the qualities that employers want (Marginson, 1993:44). The screening model claims that an organisation which employs highly qualified people will outwit and outperform another company which may employ less-qualified people. Harrison *et al.* (2004:33), Quiggin (2000:133) and Hlavna (1992:48) state that there are no fully developed findings from

studies of the screening model that would justify the tenet that a well-educated staff member will be more productive than a less-educated staff member. These authors contend that the rate of return (education:profit rate) can only be accurately assessed after a substantial length of time. This is important to this study because Human Capital Theory seems difficult to prove empirically; which is why various tactics (such as the screening model) were introduced in an attempt to keep validating the theory artificially. As explained above, the relationship between investment in education and economic prosperity has not, however, been proven empirically.

Baptiste (2001:187) states that the contemporary phase in the development of Human Capital Theory highlights the value of education in terms of acquiring the knowledge and abilities needed to cope with change. This concurs with Wozniak's (1984:71) argument that education should not be seen as an income-determining factor, but rather as a mediating factor which enhances people's ability to think and to acquire knowledge. Wozniak (1984:71) is of the opinion that: "[by] augmenting the ability to learn and the capacity to adjust to disequilibria, education helps workers meet the creativity and flexibility of an advancing technology." The proponents of Human Capital Theory recognise that the focus should not be on the outcome of education but on the value of the educational process. Stated differently, the value of education should not be assessed according to its outcomes (economic prosperity) but according to the visual and virtual abilities, knowledge and skills generated during education. This view relates, however, closely to Social Capital Theory (Burt, 2005:5; Crossley, 2005:284; Field, 2004:2 and 15; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:4).

The contemporary phase in the development of Human Capital Theory is of particular importance for this study owing to its claims that investment in formal education is not necessarily a yardstick for economic growth. Instead, it claims that education enhances people's abilities to cope with change, to think independently and to apply changing technologies in an organisational context as they deem fit. In other words, Social Capital has become the key to understanding Human Capital. In his rationale for the latter, Baptiste (2001:188) argues that the contemporary phase of Human Capital Theory gives prominence to the question of who should bear the cost of education. Marginson (1993:49) comments that those who invest in higher education

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<sup>40</sup> The term under-employment or under-utilisation refers to graduates in jobs that do not require graduate qualifications (Connor, 1997:100).

might be rewarded with “higher earnings,”<sup>41</sup> and therefore there is no obvious reason why the rest of the community should be expected to meet their study costs”. It is, therefore, generally accepted that the individual should bear the costs of formal higher education (Johanson *et al.*, 2004:27; Flanagan *et al.*, 1998:10). Hlavna (1992:3) contends, however, that it is neither equitable nor cost-effective to expect taxpayers to subsidise the attainment of qualifications.

The picture painted above indicates that most authors are currently questioning the assumptions of Human Capital Theory, because if there were unequivocal proof that investment in education did, in fact, lead to economic prosperity, there should be no question about who should be paying for it, namely those who would benefit from it. In other words, if the organisation requires that employees should acquire a particular skill, then the organisation should pay (Hlavna, 1992:3). Similarly, if the individual wants to acquire knowledge and skills to satisfy particular personal needs (not required in the individual's work context) then the individual should pay for such development.

I argue that the contemporary view of Human Capital Theory has shifted its emphasis from the outcome of investment in education (economic prosperity) towards the value of education for its content in terms of the processes that lead to acquiring skills and knowledge (Ferrier, 2001:489). In other words, debate, reflection, support and interaction between learners or between learners and learning facilitators *vis-à-vis* the value of Social Capital has come to the fore as the key to understanding the underlying assumptions of Human Capital Theory. This study, therefore, argues that the SDA's intentions, which are captured in a Human Capital ideology, have apparently become outdated because the contemporary view of education has close ties with Social Capital Theory. The next section explains Social Capital Theory, discusses the relationship between Human Capital Theory and Social Capital Theory and offers reasons for the contention that Social Capital Theory is key to our understanding of Human Capital Theory.

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<sup>41</sup> Margison's (1993:49) theory of earnings in this context may also refer to intrinsic and not only to extrinsic rewards.

## **2.5 Social Capital Theory as key to understanding Human Capital Theory**

### **2.5.1 A brief history of Social Capital Theory**

The notion of social capital is believed to have first appeared in Hanifan's discussions of rural school community centres (Hanifan, 1916, 1920). He used the term to describe those tangible substances that count for most in the daily lives of people (Hanifan, 1916:130). He was concerned with the cultivation of goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social interaction among those that 'make up a social unit' (Smith, 2007). It took some time for the term to come into widespread usage. Contributions from Jacobs (1961) in relation to urban life and neighbourliness, Bourdieu (1983) with regard to social theory, and Coleman (1988) in his discussions of the social context of education moved the idea into the academic arena. However, it was the work of Robert Putnam (1993, 2000), Fukuyama (1996, 1999) and Field (2003) that launched social capital as a focus for research and policy discussion. Social capital has also been picked up by the World Bank as a useful organising idea. The Bank argues that "increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable" (The World Bank, 1999).

In 1983, Bourdieu (1983:249) explained that social capital could be understood as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. In 1994, Coleman (1994:302) surmised that social capital was defined by its function. He was convinced that it was not a single entity, but rather a variety of different entities with two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals in the structure. The World Bank (1999) indicates that social capital refers to the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. It concludes that social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together.

In 2000, Putnam (2000:19) compares social capital with physical and human capital. In his opinion, physical capital refers to physical objects, whereas human capital refers to the properties of individuals. Social capital, Putnam maintains, refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In this sense, social capital is closely related to



the concept of "civic virtue". Social capital calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a network of reciprocal social relations. For Putnam, a society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital.

John Field (2003:1-2) argues that the central thesis of social capital theory is the fact that relationships (especially of trust and tolerance) do matter. Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to one another, and to knit the social fabric. He argues that a sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks could benefit people greatly. Trust between individuals thus becomes trust between strangers and trust in a broad fabric of social institutions; ultimately, it becomes a shared set of values, virtues, and expectations in society as a whole. Without this interaction, trust decays; at a certain point, this decay begins to manifest itself in the kind of social problems that South Africa currently has. The concept of social capital implies that building or rebuilding community and trust requires face-to-face encounters which depend, *inter alia*, on mutual recognition, neighbourliness, reciprocity, social commitment and social justice (Beem, 1999:20).

The work of Fukuyama (1996; 1999: passim) helped to expand this relationship between social capital, community rebuilding and trust to include the concepts of "sharing" and "co-operation". In particular, he describes social capital as the existence of a specific set of informal values or norms shared among members of a group, which permits co-operation among them. There is evidence that communities with a good "stock" of such "social capital" are more likely to benefit from lower crime figures, better health, higher educational achievement and better economic growth, Smith (2007) states. However, there can also be a significant downside, because groups and organisations with high social capital have the means (and sometimes the motive) to work to exclude and subordinate others. Furthermore, the experience of living in close-knit communities can be stultifying – especially to those who feel they are "different" in some significant way.

### **2.5.2 The value of Social Capital Theory**

Social Capital refers to the sum of the actual and invisible (virtual) resources that humans accrue during interaction with a phenomenon and that endures beyond the actual moment of interaction (Burt, 2005:5; Crossley, 2005:284; Field, 2004:2 and 5; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:4 and 11; Collier, 2003:19; Krishna and Uphoff, 2003:85; Lin,

1999:30 and 33). The value of social capital is that it not only triggers the individuals' perceptions of the value of what they have encountered, but also endures as a force beyond the actual moment of acquaintance or interaction. Social Capital could be described as the residue (in the minds of humans) of elements such as trust,<sup>42</sup> belief, an attitude or a feeling of willingness, ties of kinship, inter-dependency, commitment, obligation or support that people gain or perceive as being gained from interaction (Burt, 2005:11 and 93; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11). Social Capital can, therefore, be regarded as the spin-off, by-product or surplus value of human interaction (Crossley, 2006:286; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11,12 and 18; Collier, 2003:20; Gabby *et al.*, 2001:6; Lin, 1999:32). Grootaert and Bastelaer (2003:2) emphasise the fact that: "Social Capital is 'social' because [it] involves people behaving sociably" and "[it] could be described as a form of 'capital' because [it] refers to a resource that produces action" (Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:18; Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2003:2; Gabby and Leenders, 2001:6; Lin, 1999:40). Field (2004:8), contends, however, that the term "capital" in Social Capital Theory is used as a metaphor to parallel the postulations about the economics of investment in Human Capital Theory. In addition, since Social Capital is regarded as an intangible or non-measurable resource, Svensen *et al.*, (2004:1) and Lin (1999:31) postulate that Human Capital Theory does not account for Social Capital. This background indicates that although Social Capital is interwoven with Human Capital, it differs distinctly from the concepts in Human Capital Theory.

Human Capital Theory refers to a scheme of a capitalist society, where the dominant class makes an opportunistic tangible investment with expected returns in the marketplace (Lin 1999:29 and 31). By contrast, Social Capital Theory refers to an intangible resource that spontaneously accrues during social interaction and serves as the impetus, trigger or motivation to act (Collier, 2003:22). Collier (2003:22) and Svendsen (2004:40) argue that Social Capital is of "capital" value when its effects persist, and that this occurs when people continuously interact with the role players of interest. Crossley (2005:284) and Putnam (2000:19) claim that Social Capital is most likely to be established in networks among interested parties. In this regard, Putnam (2000:19) postulates that the value of social networks is that they "foster general reciprocity and trust, and in turn facilitate mutual collaboration", which cannot be achieved (or is difficult to achieve) when the individual works in isolation (Field, 2004:1 and 45).

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<sup>42</sup> Trust may be viewed in this context as both a source and an outcome of social relations

Svendsen (2004:40) claims that Social Capital: “does not exist *per se* – [it] can be lost and must, therefore, continually be renewed”. This means that continuing interaction produces for example an openness of expression, a sharing of feelings, an exchange of norms, values and understanding. This interaction could result in an outward-looking Social Capital orientation that benefits all the parties involved in the work relationship (Harrison *et al.*, 2004:16; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11; Taylor, 1999:134). By contrast, when there is no interaction among people, the individual’s Social Capital loses its value and this could trigger an inward-looking orientation of distrust, leading to a lack of co-operation. Collier (2003:19) asserts that when interaction does not produce Social Capital externalities, interaction becomes a mere act of “social labour” – people accept or commit themselves to performing tasks for the sake of compliance. In other words, the value of Human Capital cannot achieve its full potential without the value of Social Capital.

Against this background it is clear that Social Capital and Human Capital are interwoven in the efficiency and effectiveness of human performance (Burt, 2005:4; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11). Social capital is therefore the contextual complement to Human Capital (Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11; 12) or, in other words, the proverbial glue that holds people together to fulfil certain aims which could not be attained without it (Burt, 2005:2; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11; Lin, 1999:31 and 32). Harrison *et al.* (2004: 18) believe that the role of Social Capital in organisations can be described as a “psychological contract”<sup>43</sup> between employees and employers. Therefore, when a “psychological contract” (positive or negative) has been established, the psychological contract serves as the trigger for performance. Lin (1999:31) gives three reasons why Social Capital tends to enhance performance. Firstly, it provides individual(s) with useful information; secondly, Social Capital acts as a certification of the individual’s social credentials, thus providing an “added” resource beyond the individual’s personal capabilities, which could be useful to the organisation; and thirdly, investment in Social Capital reinforces individual identity and recognition. In this regard, Lin (1999:31) contends that the individual “being assured and recognized of one’s worthiness as an individual ... not only provides emotional support but also public acknowledgement of one’s claims to certain resources”. Investment in Social

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(Harrison *et al.*, 2004:18).

<sup>43</sup> Harrison *et al.* (2004:26) mention that the “psychological contract” between the individual and the institution refers to each party’s implicitly felt and perceived expectations, wants and rights. It comprises a dynamic and reciprocal deal with expectations evolving over time.

Capital, by building and sustaining relationships<sup>44</sup> among people, results in a higher level of outcomes (a collaborative “good”) than could be achieved by the individual alone (an individual “good”). For this reason, Social Capital is a public good, not only an individual good<sup>45</sup> (Coleman, 1994:312).

Field (2004:8), Grootaert and Bastelaer (2003:9), Putnam (2000:19) and Coleman (1994:314) furthermore postulate that when investment in Social Capital collapses, it could adversely affect the Human Capital value of the individual, organisation and members of a community.

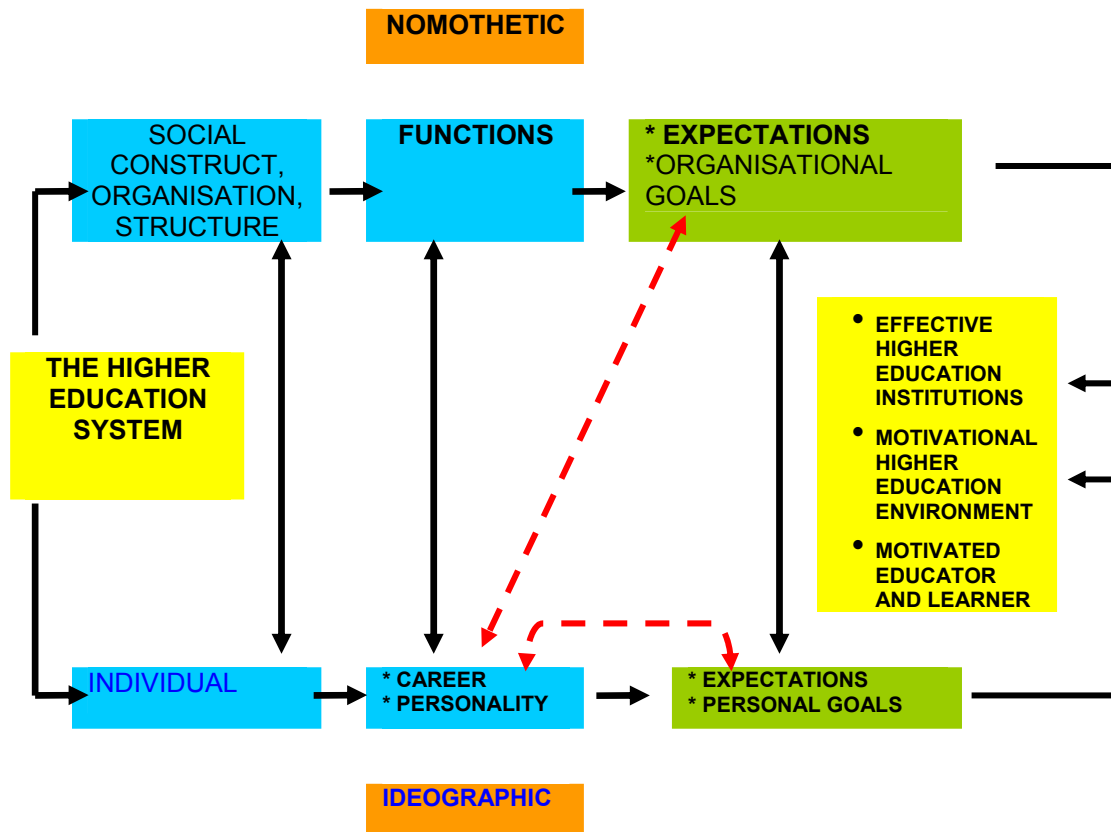
In Chapters one and two I argued that HEIs have made little attempt to understand the underlying intent of the SDA, and therefore to determine whether and why such an intent coincides with or differs from the view of staff development in HEIs. As this indicates that there is a Social Capital deficit between the ETDP SETA and HEIs, it is argued in this study that Social Capital is the missing “link” that would help to optimise the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. As previously explained, Social Capital development is the proverbial trigger for elements such as belief, attitudes or feelings of willingness, ties of kinship, inter-dependency, commitment, obligation or support towards goal achievement. Even if the SDA were implemented with the best of intentions or reasons, a break in social capital could adversely affect the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

Erasmus and Van der Westhuizen (1996:197) illustrate that social capital is the key determinant of individual and organisational success, as portrayed in the following graphic illustration:

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<sup>44</sup> Relationships could result in a formal contractual agreement between the individual and the organisation. In this regard, Albrow (1997:26) argues: “The employee’s commitment to his [or her] organizational role will depend partly on how the individual is put in the position to negotiate on his [or her] commitment.”

<sup>45</sup> However, the intent of social capital investment may be negative. People or organisations unionise, for example, to protect their interests, but the protection of interests might be unfavourable to other parties concerned (Field, 2004:74 and 76; Putnam, 2000:21).



**Figure 2.1 The relationship between individual and organisational goals and the Higher Education system (adapted from Erasmus and Van der Westhuizen, 1996:197)**

Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between the individual's career and personal goal expectations and the effectiveness of HEIs. One of the first conclusions drawn from Figure 2.1 is that the effectiveness of HEIs depends on the alignment of the individual's career, personality, personal goals and expectations to the organisational goals. The second inference is that organisations are social constructs; meaning that structures should be available to enhance Social Capital so as to attain the individual's and organisation's goals. When such structures are sound, they link personal goals with organisational goals, resulting in an effective and motivational HEI environment, and in motivated educators and learners.

Erasmus and Van der Westhuizen's (1996) illustration (adapted in Figure 2.1 above), depicting the value of Social Capital in achieving organisational efficiency, could be key to the implementation of the SDA. In other words, the effectiveness of the implementation of the SDA depends on Social Capital (feeling of willingness, ties of kinship, inter-dependency, commitment, obligation or support) that accrues during interaction between the ETDP SETA and the SDFs at HEIs. If interaction between

the ETDP SETA and SDFs at HEIs leads to the accrual of Social Capital, it would in turn facilitate mutual collaboration (Field, 2004:1 and 45) to address the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. Parker (2003:1) comments that the ETDP SETA has not, however, established a strong presence or identity in HEIs. The workshop held by the ETDP SETA on 19 and 20 June 2003 with all the HEIs is the only instance found in the literature (1998 to 2007) of an national attempt made by the SETA to engage in some kind of dialogue to create an in-depth understanding of the HE sector (ETDP SETA, 2003).

This leads me to conclude that the challenges inherent in staff development due to the implementation of the SDA will remain largely unresolved – at least for the foreseeable future – unless a deliberate effort is made to create Social Capital between HEIs and the ETDP SETA. Harrison *et al.* (2004:12) state that a European Community advisory committee for vocational training has been established in the United Kingdom. This committee consists of representatives of the government, labour and employee bodies with the purpose of discussing training and, as part of a “social dialogue”<sup>46</sup>, of encouraging education and training. This may be a solution to overcome the challenges HEIs currently face with the implementation of the SDA.

Research confirms that when there is a free flow of communication among parties so that they gain a mutual understanding of what needs to change and how the change will be implemented in a plan of action, people are more open to accepting and coming to grips with such changes (Randell and Bitzer, 1998:143). Employees will be sceptical of any initiatives taken by management if they perceive that they are not involved or consulted (Greyling, 2001:29). Likewise, HEIs will be sceptical of any initiatives taken by the ETDP SETA if they perceive that they (the SDFs in this instance) are not involved or consulted.

The literature review indicates that HEIs have made vague attempts to understand the underlying intent of the SDA, and therefore to determine whether and why such an intent coincides with or differs from the view of staff development in HEIs. The comments of Strydom (2004:292), Van Niekerk (2004:111) and Govender (2003:8) that staff development in HEIs is being hampered by a lack of support and guidance from government through the ETDP SETA, are grounds for believing that there is a

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<sup>46</sup> Social dialogue refers to a process involving all social partners in discussing matters of mutual interest so as to form joint opinions on certain matters (Harrison *et al.*, 2004:12).



break in social capital between the HEIs and the ETDP SETA that hampers the integration of the SDA in HEIs.

## **2.6 Concluding remarks**

A deliberate attempt has been made to place this research project in the intersection between interpretivism and critical theory as its overarching epistemological home. I have also demonstrated how Human Capital Theory, as well as Social Capital Theory provides the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study. This chapter offers an overview of the literature available on the rationale for the implementation of the SDA as well as those for staff development in HEIs. In addition, the differences between the underlying rationale for the implementation of the SDA and for staff development in HEIs are pointed out. It is therefore argued in this study that Social Capital is the “missing link” in the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. Accordingly, I shall endeavour to ground my research project in a critical interpretative approach to uncover the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, in order to test the validity of the contention described in this chapter, namely that there is a mismatch between the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and staff development in HEIs. In other words, the aim is to confirm what has been noted about staff development in HEIs and to identify and gain an understanding of the unique critical features of staff development in the context of SA HEIs, as well as an understanding of the perceptions of SDF about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology of this study and explains how this study was approached empirically.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 sketched the context of this study, arguing that the challenges the HEIs face with the integration of the SDA in their workplaces are an indication of the mismatch between the intent of the SDA, on the one hand and that of staff development in HEIs, on the other. It was furthermore explained that HEIs have made little attempt to understand the underlying intent of the SDA, and that they have therefore struggled to determine whether such an intent coincides with or differs from their view of staff development in HEIs. In Chapter 2 I discussed the history of the implementation of the SDA and that of staff development in HEIs, and I offered a succinct critical perspective of the underlying rationale for the implementation of the SDA and of staff development in HEIs. I also alluded to the mismatch between the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and that of staff development in HEIs (as tabled in §2.3.6). The literature study presented in Chapter 2 is not aimed at the methodologies that HEIs employ in training or developing their staff members; but instead at highlighting the underlying assumptions and theoretical basis that inform the very nature of the SDA, as opposed to those that inform staff development in HEIs, as well as the challenges that these differences hold for staff development in HEIs. For this reason, the literature review has been positioned so that it could reveal the absence of dialogue between HEIs and the ETDP SETA as well as the fact that the results of this absence of dialogue has not yet been explored scientifically, especially as regards the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design used for the empirical part of the research as an extension of the theoretical reasoning in the first two chapters. Using a critical interpretative approach, this study explores the perceptions of the Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs) in HEIs with regard to the effect of the SDA in staff development in HEIs.

The chapter is divided into two sections providing the golden thread that runs towards an integrated approach to achieving the aims of this study. Section 3.2 explains the theoretical and ontological underpinnings of Critical Theory as an epistemological paradigm. Section 3.3 describes the design of this study against the background of this epistemological paradigm. As stated in Chapter 1, empirical and non-empirical data collection methods were employed in tandem for this study, because these combined methods enhanced the

critical<sup>47</sup> qualitative nature of this study. In §3.4 details about the research programme are outlined while, in §3.5, the research methodology employed in this study is explained, as well as the points made by critical theorists about the methodological approach of Critical Theory to empirical research. I also analyse the Habermasian triple hermeneutic approach. This chapter concludes with a description of the methods that I have employed to enhance the validity of this study as well as a short description of the limitations of this study.

### **3.2 Implication of Critical Theory for research: background to the research philosophy of this study**

Critical Theory, as a research framework, is well established as a rigorous discipline and has been employed by notable academics in the social sciences, such as Reason and Bradbury (2006), Valentin (2006), Henning (2004), Box (2005), Denzin *et al.* (2005), Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004), Neuman and Kreuger (2003), Ritzer and Smart (2003), Alvesson *et al.* (2000), Carspecken (1996) and Carr (1995). These authors' use of Critical Theory as a basis for the construction of knowledge, acknowledges the importance of Critical Theory in the broader domain of critical qualitative research.

In Chapter 2 I explained that this critical interpretative study is set against the backdrop of Critical Theory associated with Jürgen Habermas. Habermas's version of Critical Theory was selected for two reasons: (1) Habermas is considered to be one of the most influential contributors to current Critical Theory (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000; Held, 1980), and (2), I have – as a result of my own academic and intellectual schooling – a close affinity with Habermas's ideas on the epistemology and methodology of the construction of knowledge. The following sections briefly discuss the ontology, epistemology and methodology associated with Critical Theory.

#### **3.2.1 Ontology of Critical Theory: background to the design of this study**

One description of Critical Social Theory is that it seeks to bring to the fore the structures of socio-economic classes, that are taken for granted. In other words, the theory holds that the organisation of society should empower human beings to rise above the constraints placed on them by socio-economic classes and related ideologies which tend to control people

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<sup>47</sup> Critical refers to researchers who are concerned about social inequalities and who are directed towards positive social change (Carspecken, 1996:3).

(Crossley, 2006:180). This refers to the emancipatory<sup>48</sup> interest of Critical Theory. By revealing (or bringing to the surface) the taken-for-granted structures and views of communities (which were formed in a historical, socio-economic and political context), Critical Theory serves to counteract people's false consciousness (assumed reality). This implies that critical theorists support an ontology of historical realism (Neuman and Kreucer, 2003:84; Ritzer and Smart, 2001:180; Snyman, 1993:170; Held, 1980:15). Historical realism holds that reality is shaped over time by socio-economic and political factors to such an extent that reality becomes inappropriately accepted to be "real", thus restricting<sup>49</sup> understanding or allowing a dominant "one-sided"<sup>50</sup> view of society, which is nothing more than an ideology (Denzin *et al.*, 2005:193 and 305; Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:118; Neuman, 1997:75). Habermas (1979) states, therefore, that it is not power, expertise or science and technology that validate arguments, but that people are able to reach consensus in an open dialogue by questioning and reflecting on one another's viewpoints, justifying their own arguments or amending their assumptions.

The critical theorist's view of the objectivity (validity) of knowledge is that it is shared, it is neither a neutral nor a value-free position as is the case with positivism. Habermas (1979:78) proposes in this regard: "If consensus is reached under circumstances such as power, it means that ideologies have been disputed through critical reflection."

Against this backdrop, the ontological stance of knowledge in the present study is that the embedded (underlying) historical, socio-economic and political values attached to the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA should be revealed through a process of dialogue and reflection. Dialogue and reflection are proposed as methods to expose the underlying historical interests and values attached to the experiences (challenges) that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. The above-mentioned description of the ontological (nature of reality) aim of Critical Theory asks the question: "What is the specific nature of the relationship between the knower and the known, in other words, what is the epistemology that Critical Theory espouses?"

### **3.2.2 Epistemology of Critical Theory: background to the design of this study**

<sup>48</sup> Kincheloe and McLaren (2000:282) argue that one should be careful when using the term "emancipation" since: "no-one is ever completely emancipated from the social-political context that has produced him or her" (Kincheloe *et al.*, 2000:282).

<sup>49</sup> Kincheloe *et al.* (2000:283) assert: "All of us are hegemonized as our field of knowledge and understanding is structured by a limited exposure to competing definitions of the socio-political world. Our understanding, which is socially determined, is thus restrictive."

<sup>50</sup> One-sided also refers to one-dimensionality: a world in which the monopoly of the powerful is contained. The holder of power controls everything, from the products that are consumed to the consumer's thoughts (Snyman, 1993:169).

With regard to the epistemological interest of science (also referred to as the interest of truthful knowledge) (Mouton, 2003:138), this study is based on Habermas's notion of knowledge production (Habermas, 1971). Other critical theorists may have many different interpretations, but Habermas's thinking has been selected for this study. Habermas (1971:308 to 310) asserts that the knowledge-constitutive interests<sup>51</sup> of humans are predominantly founded on empirical-analytical science which permits deductive thinking, inferences or law-like hypotheses. Critical theorists are not satisfied with the logical knowledge produced in the empirical-analytical or historical-hermeneutic sciences because facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideology (Blundel, 2006:49; Henning *et al.*, 2004:23; Neuman *et al.*, 2003:89; Carspecken, 1996:3). Critical theorists, therefore, encourage the use of a critical epistemology that is aimed firstly at going beyond the goal of the empirical-analytical and historical-hermeneutic sciences that validate objective truth which is detached from values (implying that this truth is independent of values). Secondly, this critical epistemology seeks to expose the views people take for granted in order to emancipate people's thinking.

The validity of the knowledge-constitutive interests of critical theory is established in the concept of self-reflection (which by implication is value-laden or subjective) and which can, in principle, be emancipatory. Critical theory does not intend simply to construct reality (knowledge), or to: "leave everything as it is ... [its] intention is transcendental" (Snyman, 1993:170). Gaining understanding through reflection emancipates the mind (by gaining consciousness<sup>52</sup>), allowing people's minds to rise above the utterances of normal speech. Against this background, the epistemological stance of knowledge creation which is followed in the present study is that knowledge findings are value-mediated. Thus, by exposing frozen views (value-laden ideologies) it could lead to emancipatory ends. In other words, revealing the underlying rationale for and meaning of staff development in HEIs and the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, could, theoretically, assist in revealing the perceptions of the SDFs with regard to the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

### 3.2.3 Methodology of Critical Theory: background to the design of this study

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<sup>51</sup> Habermas (1979) views the knowledge-constitutive interests of humans as follows: beings who firstly control nature to survive, secondly communicate in an understandable language, and thirdly are self-determining. In other words, people construct knowledge to pursue these three interests.

<sup>52</sup> To be conscious that "facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription" (Henning *et al.*, 2004:23).

As explained in the previous section, scholars working in the critical emancipatory paradigm are concerned with moving beyond the goals of the empirical-analytical sciences to produce nomothetic knowledge (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 65). Critical Theory, therefore, prefers to construct truthful knowledge as a reflective process brought about by means of dialogue, self-reflection<sup>53</sup> and interpretation (Carr *et al.*, 1986: 136), thus reflectiveness serves to bring to the fore the underlying taken-for-granted<sup>54</sup> values that should form part of understanding. The moment this happens, the ideology's "grip on people's thinking is broken" (Snyman, 1993:170). In this study, the question could, for example, have been asked: "How can SDFs better implement the SDA in HEIs' staff development practices?" However, this would not have questioned the origins of the implementation of the SDA and staff development in HEIs. Asking the first kind of question would have perpetuated the status quo as far as the implementation of the SDA is concerned, and similarly that of staff development in HEIs. By contrast, questioning the historical, social and political significance of the SDA and of staff development in HEIs would consciously and unconsciously challenge the status quo of the SDA and that of staff development as a social phenomenon. The challenge in this study was consequently to break the grip that taking things for granted has on people's thinking. The challenge was not only to determine the match or mismatch between the aims of staff development and those of the SDA in the HEIs', but also to reflect (explain) why HEIs encounter challenges with the implementation of the SDA in the context of staff development.

The present study is, therefore, structured in a way that is aimed at questioning the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and that of staff development in HEIs, as well as the match or mismatch between these reasons in order to shed light on the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. Achieving the above-mentioned aims would, however, entail creating, at an epistemological level, a critical distance<sup>55</sup> between the symbiotic interaction between humans and facts (refer the rationale of the second question in the example quoted in the previous paragraph) to construct meaning. For this reason, Critical Theory is the paradigm of choice as it allows a critical distance by means of reflection, critique and dialogue as a means of moving beyond the grip of ideology (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004:31; Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:144; Neuman, 1997:74; Carr *et al.*,

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<sup>53</sup> Habermas (1974:22) views self-reflection as central to becoming aware of ideologies that blind people's views to alternative views. He argues: "Self-reflection brings to consciousness those determinates of a self-formative process of cultivation and self-formation which ideologically determine a contemporary practice and conception of the world."

<sup>54</sup> In this context, the term "taken for granted" refers to people's unquestioned beliefs (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:136).

<sup>55</sup> Critical distance refers to knowledge that is constructed "outside" (external reality) humans without detaching the subject (human being) from the object (the phenomenon) (Snyman, 1993:171).



1986:132). To this end, the methodological framework of Critical Theory is established by the concept of reflection, interaction and dialogue (Neuman *et al.*, 2003:89; Cohen *et al.*, 1996:6). Habermas (1979) argues that truthful knowledge is established when researchers enter into dialogue to reach understanding (*Verständigung*) and consensus (*Einverständnis*). Knowledge is, therefore, not truthful when it is deduced (inferred) from law-like hypotheses based on empirical content (refer §3.2.2). This is perhaps one of the core reasons why critical theorists object to the traditional methodologies for substantiating truthful knowledge (Carr *et al.*, 1986:134; Carr, 1995:49).

As Critical Theory is not intended to eliminate empirical research (Bohman, 1999:59), its task must be to bring together different methods of study. Habermas, for example, turned to psychoanalysis for methodological guidelines on self-reflection (Habermas, 1974). Although Habermas singles out psychoanalysis as one methodology that would support the reflective nature of humans, he argues for a pluralistic theoretical and methodological approach, thus recognising that the various approaches (empirical-analytical and historical-hermeneutic) have relative legitimacy on their own merits (Habermas, 1988:3). Following this reasoning, this study views knowledge construction as a process of reflection, interpretation and dialogue, drawing upon empirical and non-empirical data. Drawing from empirical and non-empirical data could be referred to as pluralism or a mixed-methodology approach (Neuman *et al.*, 2003:82). Against the above-mentioned background of ontology, epistemology and methodology associated with Critical Theory, the next section discusses the design and methodology of the present study.

### 3.3 Research philosophy of this study

This study is set against the paradigmatic backdrop of the intersection between interpretivism and critical theory and concerns a critical interpretation<sup>56</sup> of the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and the rationale for staff development in HEIs in order to understand the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. Because it is essentially a power discourse, consciousness and political emancipation are central to understanding the SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. Political activism is not the aim of this study, nor is it aimed at finding solutions to the mismatch between the aims of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. The

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<sup>56</sup> Interpretation in this context refers to the commutative act of claiming the validity of knowledge (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:110 and 119).

primary aim of this study is, instead, to raise people's consciousness through understanding (which is essentially emancipatory).

Chapter 1 explains that the challenges that HEIs face with the implementation of the SDA indicate that there is a mismatch between the aims of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. My personal view as participant-observer is, therefore, that the reasons for this mismatch cannot be regarded as natural (a phenomenon occurring without a social and historical context), neutral (devoid of certain interests or political views of people) or rational (produced only through deliberate, conscious thought for a specific purpose). My position in this study is that I do not regard social conditions and dominant modes of thought as natural, neutral and/or rational (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:144). This study used a participatory research design in attempting to understand the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. The present study is articulated in terms of an ontology of historical realism, transactional epistemology<sup>57</sup> and a participative research methodology to construct knowledge by means of critical reflection and dialogue<sup>58</sup> (Denzin *et al.*, 2005:187; Kemmis, 1995:3; Carspecken, 1996:9; Carr *et al.*, 1986:149).

Section 3.2.1 argues that traditional research avoids the position of having to research underlying feelings, values, etc. by clinging to objective neutrality<sup>59</sup> in the research process (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005:305; Carr *et al.*, 1986:131). In this sense, objectivity becomes no more than a manifestation of dominant views (Neuman, *et al.*, 2003:89, Kemmis, 1995:2). By contrast, critical theorists seek democratic<sup>60</sup> dialogue and critical reflection as a means of looking behind the facts, to reveal feelings or taken-for-granted views or values so as to achieve knowledge construction (Carr *et al.*, 1986:144). This does not, however, mean that natural science is without value. Different forms of science not only employ different modes of reasoning, but also serve different kinds of interests (Bohman, 1999:59). The justification for my choice of a participative research design is, therefore, that

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<sup>57</sup> Transactional epistemology in this context denotes that knowledge is not a given, but is subject to continuous empirical study (Carspecken, 1996: 10).

<sup>58</sup> Box (2005:11), Kemmis (1995:1) and Neuman *et al.* (2003:84) refer to dialogue as dialogic or dialectic because the intent of dialogue is to bring to the surface any tensions, conflicts or contradictions in social relations towards change.

<sup>59</sup> Objectivity in this context refers to the positivist approach to gaining an objective reality, free of individual bias and subjectivity, by relying on inferential empirical methods (Denzin *et al.*, 2005:12).

<sup>60</sup> Park (2006:83) postulates that Critical Theory is allied to the ideas of democracy, by referring to knowledge constructed "by the people for the people" (Park, 2006:83).

the primary aim of this critical study is to go beyond<sup>61</sup> the visible experiences of the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation the SDA.

This study takes as its subject matter the nature of the meaning attached to the implementation of the SDA and of staff development in HEIs in order to bring to the fore the challenges and vested interests affecting the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. Gaining a common understanding of the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and for staff development in HEIs could reveal that underlying truths might be the outcome of certain antecedent causes (which we may not know of at present) which could be the core reasons why HEIs encounter challenges with the implementation of the SDA. It is my contention that the more we know of the underlying meanings attached to the SDA and those attached to staff development in HEIs, the better our understanding of their reciprocal value, match or mismatch will be. The above-mentioned aims of this study consequently require that understanding should be constructed in a critical reflective<sup>62</sup> manner with the aid of a specifically and conveniently selected (purposive<sup>63</sup>) participant group.

The selected participant group consisted of the SDFs employed in Gauteng HEIs, as discussed in Section 3.3.3. Box (2005:5), Kincheloe *et al.* (2005:325), Henning *et al.* (2004: 16), Alvesson *et al.* (2000:139) and Carr (1995:50) assert that a participatory methodology is the preferred strategy when the researcher's purpose is to promote critical reflection towards achieving self-knowledge, which would not only "enlighten" the participants about their perceptions and misunderstandings but also emancipate them from the irrational perceptions inherited from habits and tradition – which are essentially aspects of an ideology. As Willig (1999:43) advocates, the critical researcher, therefore, works qualitatively, allowing for reflection on the grounding of actions or views to acknowledge the relations between power and knowledge. In this way, information can be collected for use in a discourse analysis. This background indicates that the design of critical research is intended to pursue critical reflection and interpretation, which move beyond the surface meanings of the text or communication between the research participants and the researcher. To this end, this study's research design employs empirical and non-empirical elements to capture as much reality as possible (Denzin *et al.*, 2005:11; Willig, 1999:43).

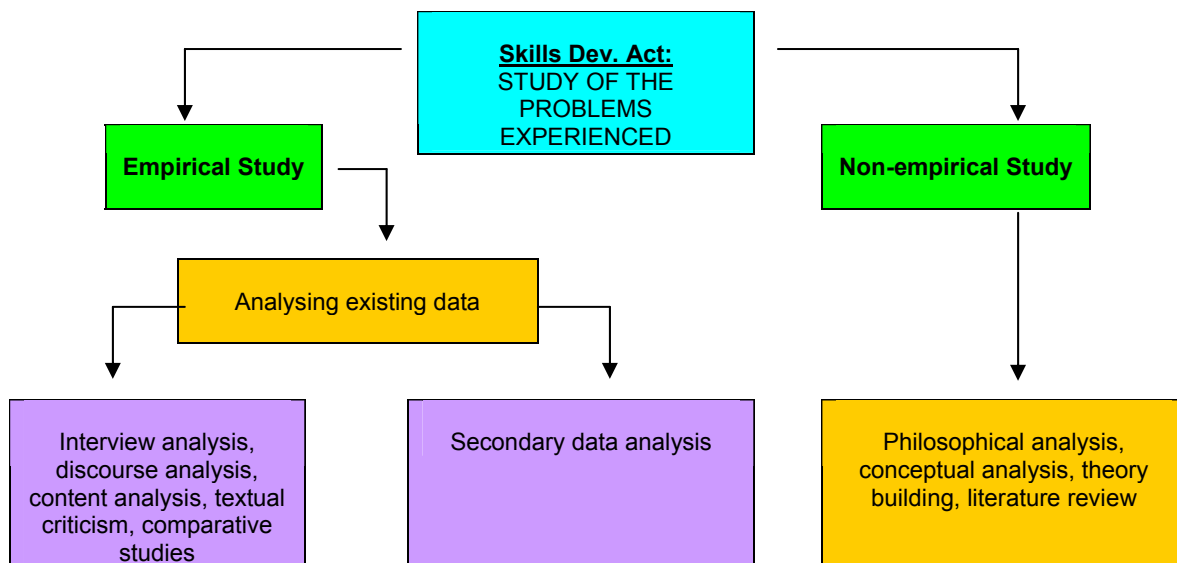
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<sup>61</sup> The term "beyond" refers to my endeavour firstly to gain an understanding of the reasons for the implementation of the SDA as well as those for staff development in HEIs, and therefore to identify or expose the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

<sup>62</sup> Miles (2001:23, 24) and Alvesson *et al.* (2000:144) comment that the critical researcher promotes critical reflection to bring ideological patterns to the fore, not only as regards the aim of study but also as regards the researchers themselves.

<sup>63</sup> Purposive refers to a small group of selected participants who are knowledgeable about the object of study. Researchers handpick the sample of participants on the basis of their judgement of the participants' typicality (Stake, 2005:451, Neuman, *et al.*, 2003:211).

The interplay of the empirical and non-empirical studies that are pivotal to this study is illustrated in Figure 3.1.



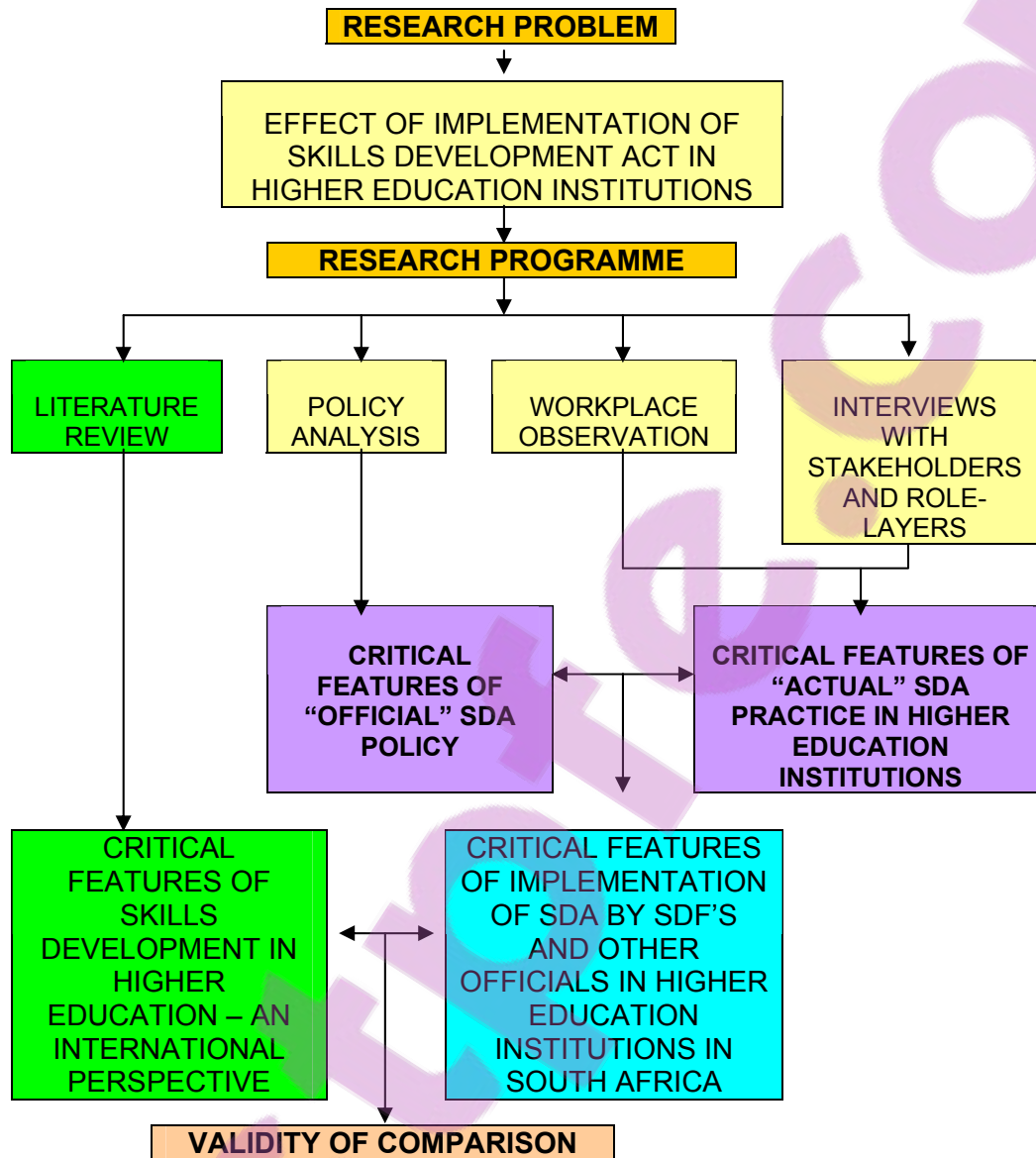
**Figure 3.1 Typology of design to construct an understanding of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.**

Figure 3.1 indicates that the design framework of this study is tailored to explore the mismatch between the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and the rationale for staff development in HEIs, as a means of shedding light on the problems that HEIs experience with the implementation of the SDA. The research design, therefore, employs empirical as well as non-empirical studies. The empirical study consists of an analysis of empirical data (which, at a later stage, is mirrored against the analysis of the non-empirical data<sup>64</sup>) within the broader critical research framework of this study (at macro-research level). On the one hand, data analysis proceeds from formal techniques for data collection, which could include face-to-face and focus-group interviews, content analysis, textual criticism and statistical data analysis. On the other hand, non-empirical data analysis consists of philosophical analysis, conceptual analysis, theory building and a review of the literature, and represents the broader research framework of this study (the epistemological intersection between interpretivism and critical theory).

Although empirical and non-empirical studies are employed in separate units of analysis, both kinds of studies (analyses) form an integrated whole aimed at constructing an understanding of the match or mismatch between the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and the rationale for staff development in HEIs, in order to gain an understanding of

<sup>64</sup> Both at micro-research level.

the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. The empirical and non-empirical studies therefore connect theory with praxis.<sup>65</sup> Figure 3.2 depicts the research design employed to achieve the aim of this study.



**Figure 3.2 Graphic illustration of my research design to gain an understanding of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs**

Figure 3.2 indicates that our understanding of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs will be determined by the validity of the comparison between the critical features of skills development in HEIs and the critical features of the implementation of the SDA by SDFs and other officials in South African HEIs. Our understanding of the critical features of

<sup>65</sup> Praxis in critical research means a cycle of action-reflection-action, the purpose of which is "not to produce an object or artefact but to realize some morally worthwhile good" (Carr *et al.* 1986: 83; Carr,

skills development in HEIs is informed by a literature review of skills development in HEIs (discussed in Chapter 2, §2.1). Our understanding of the critical features of the implementation of the SDA by SDFs and other officials in South African HEIs is based on a comparison between the critical features of the official SDA (informed by the literature review) and the critical features of actual SDA practice in HEIs. The critical features of actual SDA practice in HEIs are derived from policy analysis, workplace observation and interviews with SDFs and other role players. Although critical theory does not favour the prioritisation of empirical material<sup>66</sup> (in this study, the literature review on the critical features of skills development in HEIs and the analysis of the SDA), Alvesson *et al.* (2000:144) nevertheless state that empirical material contributes (*inter alia*) to understanding in a critical research orientation. Their view is that the aim of critical theory research is to move beyond surface meanings. Meaning is, however, sought from empirical and non-empirical material in a *triple hermeneutic*<sup>67</sup> manner.

The following section explains the research programme.

### 3.4 Research programme<sup>68</sup>

Data collection started in 2002, when a myriad of relevant documents, reports and statutory legislation (Acts) on skills development in South Africa were scrutinised. Although the study was informal at that stage, I analysed these scripts according to a critical interpretative approach, paying particular attention to non-neutral phenomena (i.e. whether the rationale for the implementation of the SDA contradicts the rationale for staff development in HEIs, indications of injustice such as domination, control, repression and self-direction). Although it may seem somewhat contradictory, I took a realist stance (i.e. social reality is “out there” to be discovered) during this particular phase of data collection. It was necessary to remind myself constantly that what I was observing was what my senses – continuously shaped by

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1995:68).

<sup>66</sup> Critical theorists do not generally use empirical material (text or similar empirical research material) because empirical material does not reveal its “unambiguously ...deep structures” (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:137).

<sup>67</sup> This means that the researcher not only interprets the phenomena (*simple hermeneutics*), in an attempt to develop knowledge about this reality (*double hermeneutics*) but also to balance what appears self-evident on the one hand, and that which can be taken for granted on the other (*triple hermeneutics*) (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:144). McCarthy (1994:245) asserts that researchers could create a triple hermeneutic orientation by exposing the origins of social beliefs and practices “in contingent historical circumstances to dispel their appearance of self-evident givenness”.

<sup>68</sup> The research programme describes the process followed in the collection and analysis of data, not only to fulfil the requirements for this study but also to ensure the quality of the project, since critical qualitative research practice calls for an audit trail to demonstrate the self-correcting mechanisms that ensure its quality (Mäkelä and Turcan, 2006:131; Morse *et al.*, 2002:3; Kelly, 1999:427).



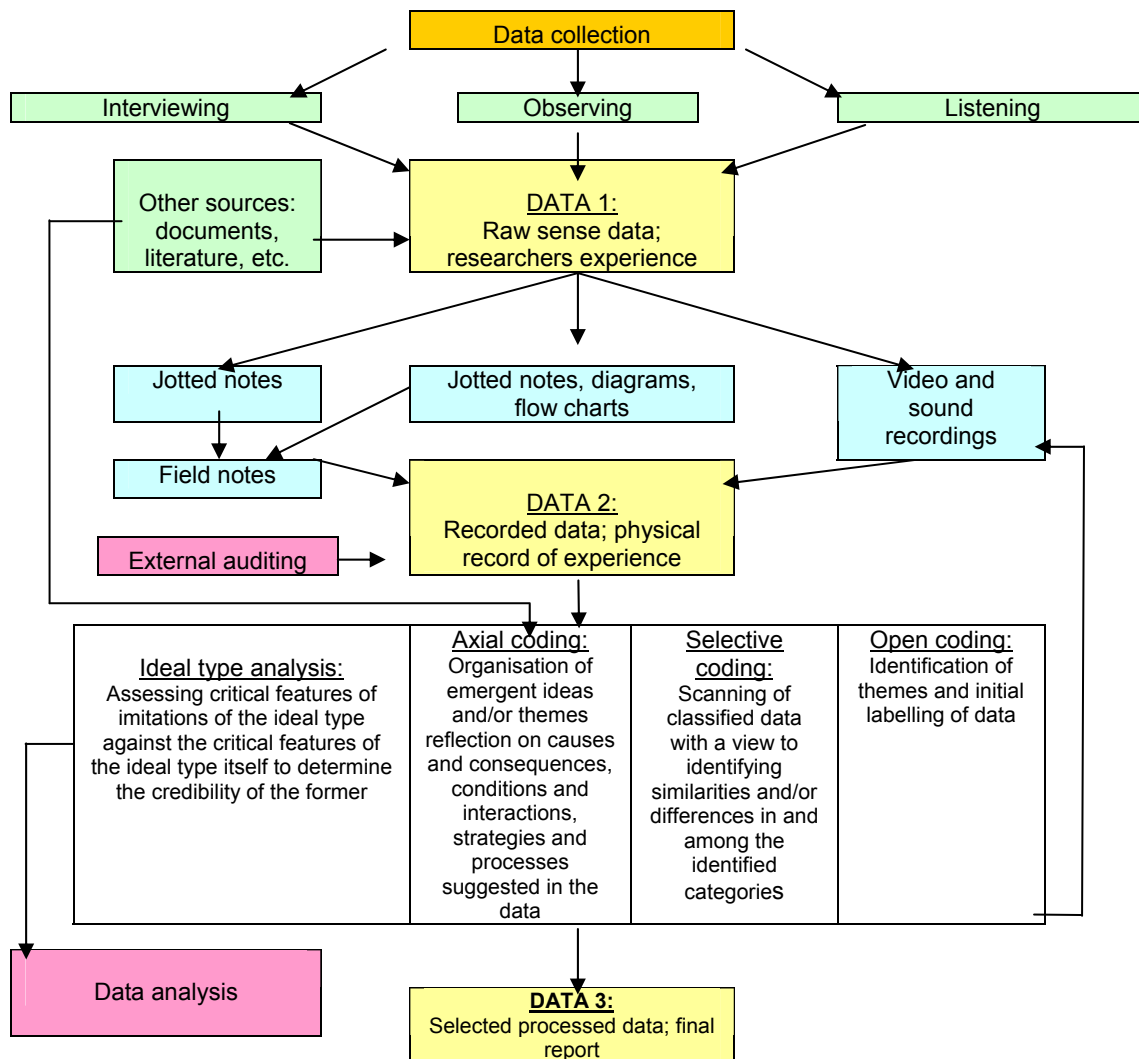
social, political and cultural forces (in other words my epistemological inclination as explained in §3.2.1) – informed me of.

During the informal data-collection period, I found that the available documentation was written either from a calculated political point of view, making broad and sweeping statements about the necessity for skills development in South Africa, or offering statistics on who needs to undergo this kind of training. In addition, although the documentation notes the various challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, very little was attempted to understand the underlying intent of the SDA and therefore to determine whether and why such an intent coincided with or differed from the view of staff development in HEIs. This finding was my reason for undertaking an in-depth literature review of the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and the rationale for staff development in HEIs, and therefore for determining if and why there was a difference in intent (refer Chapter 2).

After 2006, I started compiling a portfolio containing notes of self-conscious critique, as well as interpretations from my field notes, including the literature pertaining to the documents gathered from the ETDP SETA and the training and development policies obtained from the HEI where I am employed. To gain an understanding of the rationale for staff development in HEIs, I furthermore had the opportunity to correspond with Mr David Denton, former Director of Staff Development at Glasgow University (Scotland), who is a distinguished scholar, renowned leader and the author of various articles on staff development in HEIs in Europe and the UK. This fortuitous e-mail correspondence led to a continuous sharing of insights in this particular PhD study. It was, therefore, expedient to formulate and commence implementing a formal strategy for data collection and analysis. It had to be a design strategy that would allow me to move beyond the surface meaning of what the research participants (SDFs) would communicate to me. Accordingly, I developed a data collection and data analysis process that would suffice in this regard.

The data collection and data analysis processes used are demonstrated in Figure 3.3 on the next page.





**Figure 3.3 Graphic illustration of data collection and analysis process**

Figure 3.3 shows that the final report has been drawn from raw sense data (including the researcher's experience), recorded data (physical record of experience) and selected, processed data. Raw sense data consists of empirical data (i.e. interview analysis, content analysis, textual criticism, comparative studies and secondary data analysis) and also non-empirical data (i.e. philosophical analysis, conceptual analysis, theory building, literature review). The raw sense data were based predominantly on self-conscious criticism,<sup>69</sup> which refers to the previously explained methodological choice of Habermasian triple hermeneutics. The recorded data consisted of jotted-down field notes, diagrams and/or flow charts, as well as a video recording of a focus group discussion and sound recordings of interviews and observed workplace experiences. The raw sense data, as well as the

recorded data, were analysed by means of an ideal-type analysis; axial, selective and open coding; for processing by means of computer-aided qualitative data-analysis software (*Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>). The recorded data as well as the results of the analysis were shared with the expert group (refer particulars of expert group: Addendum C). The role and function of the expert group (audit function) are described in Section 3.4.2. The following sections outline the process of data collection and analysis.

### 3.4.1 Formal data collection strategies

The data collection process had been continuing, albeit informally, since the initiation of this study. Informal data collection included the documentation of field notes and personal observations over the period 2002 to 2008 as explained in the previous section. The formal and systematic data collection process began in March 2007. The approach taken to the formal data collection was a mixed-method approach, using non-empirical data (review of the body of scholarship) in conjunction with the empirical data obtained from the SDFs (refer description of participant group in the next section). Section 3.4.6 describes the various techniques (semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews as well as policy and other relevant documentation) used for collecting the empirical data. Using these techniques, the aims of the study was to confirm what is known about the rationale for staff development in HEIs and to gain an understanding of the unique critical features of staff development in South African HEIs. In other words, the aim was to gain an understanding of the meaning of staff development in HEIs, as currently influenced by the implementation of the SDA. A further aim was to determine the underlying reasons for the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

### 3.4.2 Participants

In this section I acknowledge the importance of selecting the participants who assisted in bringing to the surface the underlying unheard voices that reflect the full complexity of the findings of this critical interpretative study. I conducted in-depth interviews with a purposeful sample (Toma, 1999:546) of seven full-time Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs), each responsible for the implementation of the SDA at one of the seven HEIs in the Gauteng Province of South Africa (refer explanation of the role of the SDF in Chapter 1, §1.4.4). I began the process of selecting my sample by contacting the Human Resources Director at each HEI by letter (refer Addendum F) and telephone, explaining my study in some detail. I then asked the Human Resources Director for permission to conduct interviews and

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<sup>69</sup> Kincheloe and McLaren (2005:305) refer to self-conscious criticism in the sense that researchers try to become aware of the ideological imperatives and epistemological presuppositions that inform

relevant documentation with his or her HEIs' SDF. I contacted the SDFs by letter, briefly explaining the study and asking them to participate in it (Toma, 1999:546). It should be noted that these SDFs and I share the same work profile, in that we all work in the niche area of staff training and development in our respective HEIs. Their participation was voluntary and with informed consent (refer Addendum A), not only from the particular SDF with whom I had engaged, but also from his/her senior colleague at the particular HEI. The SDFs' anonymity and the confidentiality of their information were guaranteed, and in addition the participating SDFs were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. None of the participating SDFs withdrew, however. All the participating SDFs consented to having the interviews recorded (refer Addendum B). Moreover, I adhered to the ethical principles as set out by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria.

Two members of staff who were not drawn from the above-mentioned HEIs, but who were thoroughly conversant with the SDA and who had been involved in the implementation of the SDA (one member retired in 2005) in an HEI in South Africa, also willingly committed themselves to this study. Their role as external auditors of my research project merits their title: the expert group. Their role in the research programme (depicted in Figure 3.3) was to act as my reference group, with whom I discussed my data collection strategies and the critical interpretation of data for validation purposes (refer Addendum C). They offered constructive suggestions with regard to my critical interpretation of the data collected and they helped me to identify information which I had not yet obtained. In addition they made proposals about the formulation of the semi-structured questions used during my face-to-face and telephone interviews with the participating SDFs. I had the opportunity to pilot the semi-structured interview questionnaires which I had developed with their assistance before my interviews with the participating SDFs, and I consulted the members of the expert group before and after each round of data interpretation.

There was participative stability among the participants, since no participant resigned as SDF during this study or withdrew from the research. Although one of the participating SDFs was promoted to Registrar at the start of the formal data collection phase, he remained involved throughout the project. Continuity among the target group was a feature that I had identified as central to my research.

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their research as well as their own subjective reference claims.

### 3.4.3 Research sites

In terms of research sites, all the HEIs where the SDFs participating in this study are stationed, are easily accessible by road. The following are the HEIs where dialogue and interaction with the respective SDFs took place:

- University of Pretoria (UP)
- University of South Africa (UNISA)
- University of Limpopo, Medical Campus (UL-MEDUNSA)
- University of Johannesburg (UJ)
- Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)
- Vaal University of Technology (VUT)
- University of the Witwatersrand (WITS).

All the above-mentioned universities are in the Gauteng Province and are within one and a half hour's drive (vehicle) from my workplace (UP). The SDF of the VUT was the furthest away (approximately 150 kilometres from Pretoria) and the nearest was the SDF at the University of Pretoria. The following research activities were carried out on the above-mentioned research sites:

- Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with individual SDFs.
- Discussions on the staff training policies and relevant documentation that are not usually accessible on the HEIs Internet website.
- Observation of staff development activities managed via the office of the participating SDFs.

Besides actually visiting the SDFs at the above venues, I kept in constant contact with them during the formal data-capturing period of this project, either through telephone interviews or via e-mail. In addition, they all verified my interpretation of their views before I wrote the final chapter of this study (Chapter 5).

### 3.4.4 Support systems

In order to execute this study successfully, I relied on several support systems, namely:

- An information specialist from the Department of Academic Information Services at the University of Pretoria (Main, Groenkloof and Mamelodi Campuses) for assistance with inter-library loans, information searches and journal specifications.
- The staff members of the Department of Education Innovation, University of Pretoria, with special reference to the loan service division.

- Ms Patience Teffo and Mrs Pramesh Mooloo, both from the Learning and Development Division at the University of Pretoria, who became my close confidantes in this research. I am especially indebted to their willingness to arrange visits to the SDFs and for allowing me to reflect with them on my interaction with the SDFs.
- Several academically more experienced colleagues, in particular my study supervisor Professor Ferdinand Potgieter, at the North-West University; and Doctors Claire Wagner and Rinelle Evans, both senior academics at the University of Pretoria, who were willing to act as critical discussants of my efforts.
- Professors Elsie (Liz) Greyling and Nico Sauer who not only served as valuable critical discussants but who also took part in the data analysis phase of this study.
- Specialists in staff development in HEIs, outside my office environment, whom I had contacted electronically and who sent supportive responses.

### 3.4.5 Personal role in research process

Since January 2006, I have been able to regard my role of researcher as that of an informed research outsider, with a view to constructing understanding as a critical friend.<sup>70</sup> In this way, I endeavoured to move beyond the surface meaning of what is captured in text, and what I experienced or heard during dialogue with the research participants (SDFs). This implies that I positioned myself in accordance with a critical qualitative research paradigm, interpreting phenomena from the outside<sup>71</sup>. As is characteristic of critical qualitative research, I declare my realisation that, consciously or subconsciously, the visible ways in which I differed from the research participants with whom I interacted may have influenced my judgements and interpretations. My personal value orientation<sup>72</sup> before the commencement of this study appears in Addendum D. As I do not belong to the same ethnic groups of the majority of the SDFs, I acknowledge that I belong to the white ethnic grouping in this country (Wedekind, 1997:346; Mouton and Marais, 1996:83) and that it might have influenced the dialogue I had with the research participants. I chose not to reveal my gender or religion since I believe that neither of these factors would have had a marked influence on my dialogue or the critical interpretation of data. (The fact that I am a

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<sup>70</sup> Carr *et al.* (1986:161) claim that the researcher should be seen as a “critical friend” because the aim of his/her research is to help construct an understanding of the context and situation in which he/she works.

<sup>71</sup> Carspecken (1996:42) comments that the researcher “speaks” alone by taking an outsider's position when interpreting phenomena.

<sup>72</sup> Carspecken (1996:41) proposes that critical researchers should expose their value orientations before entering the field, firstly to check on biases and secondly so that reader may question the researcher's findings and, to a certain extent, “see behind” the values that might have governed the researcher's analysis and report.



male is obvious, in any case.) Although I worked closely with the research participants (described in §3.4.2), my research was primarily done independently, though I consulted my supervisor as the need arose. As a doctoral student, I was responsible for:

- designing the data collection instruments;
- obtaining permission and adhering to ethical research principles;
- conducting the interviews;
- keeping informal field notes;
- transcribing and analysing the audio- or video-recorded data;
- coding the data using *Atlas.ti*™; and
- compiling the data analysis report.

My role also included an extensive review of the current literature about skills development legislation and staff development in HEIs. I also consulted my colleagues and the expert group as and when the need arose (as explained in the previous section). My initial findings were discussed with my supervisor before being documented and finally being submitted in hard copy format and on compact disc.

### **3.4.6 Instrumentation for data generation**

In this study, field notes, a critical interpretation of relevant documents as well as the critical interpretation of my dialogue with the participating SDFs accounted for the informal and formal collection and generation of data. I turn now to an explanation of the various instruments that I employed to gather data. The first instrument was semi-structured face-to-face interviews.

The reason for conducting semi-structured interviews with the participating SDFs was to obtain the rich primary data for determining the critical features of staff development in HEIs, as influenced by the implementation of the SDA. In other words, my intention with personal engagement with the SDFs was not only to elicit more meaningful data than would have been gained with distant engagement, but would also “capture the status and emotions of staff [SDFs] ... after implementation [of the SDA], with the value of distance from the initial process” (Anon., 2008:11). The formulation of the initial interview questions was, therefore, pivotal to determining the critical features of staff development in HEIs before and after the implementation of the SDA. Owing to the critical interpretative nature of this study, the initial questions had to be broad enough to provide sufficient flexibility to explore a phenomenon in detail but could also be narrowed down to the focus of the study. I also considered each question in terms of its relevance to the broader research question.

Consequently, a list of initial<sup>73</sup> broad overarching questions was formulated, based on the results of the literature review (refer Chapter 2) of the rationale for staff development in HEIs and the implementation of the SDA in the SA workplace.

The following broad overarching questions were formulated:

- What are the meaning and reasons for staff development in HEIs?
- What education, training and/or development programmes or other opportunities considered to be staff development are utilised to reach the objectives of staff development and why? and
- What is the meaning of the aims of the SDA perceived from HEIs' point of view and what challenges do HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA and why?

The three questions stated above were central to achieving the aims of this study. A set of semi-structured interview questions, relating to each of the three broad overarching questions, had to be formulated. The benefit of formulating the set of semi-structured questions was that it would elicit debate in cases where the participating SDFs did not voluntarily supply sufficient information. It should, however, be noted that the purpose of compiling the set of semi-structured interview questions was not primarily to make statistical comparisons among the participant group. The aim was rather to identify emerging ideas and understanding from the participants' responses. For this reason, a statistician was not consulted for assistance with the drafting of the semi-structured questions.

The semi-structured interview questions were finalised after consultation with the expert group (refer §3.4.2) and with my supervisor. In other words, the semi-structured interview questions were reviewed with the expert group and with my supervisor to determine whether these questions would elicit the data that I needed (Anon., 2008:15). The questions were formulated in English only, as this was mutually agreed to be the common language of communication between the particular SDF and myself. During the development phase of the semi-structured questionnaires, changes were made to the set of questions. These changes included eliminating various unnecessary questions and finalising the order of the questions. Since the aim of my interviews (face-to-face or telephone) with the selected SDFs was not intended to influence the SDFs subjectively, the order of the questions was of particular importance. The semi-structured interview questions were prioritised firstly to

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<sup>73</sup> Pidgeon and Henwood (2004:630) point out that in exploratory research, the researcher often sharpens and refines questions as the process of data analysis proceeds. In other words, the

establish rapport with the SDF, and secondly to determine the tradition and context of staff development at their particular HEIs. Thereafter, questions were asked to reveal the problems that HEI encounter with the implementation of the SDA. It was consequently envisaged that information, critique and debate would occur spontaneously during the latter phase of the interview.

The relationship between the final interview schedule and the aim of the study is shown in Table 3.1. The rationale for each question is apparent from this description. The final interview schedule consists of nine items. Probing questions depended entirely on the nature of the discussions between the SDF and me, and are not documented here.

**Table 3.1. The study objectives in relation to the semi-structured interview questions**

<b>Objective 1: To determine the biographical profile of participant group</b>	<b>Semi -structured interview questions developed</b>
To determine whether the participant is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the mandated SDF of the particular HEI;</li> <li>➤ traditionally in the position or was he/she only in the position after the implementation of the SDA;</li> <li>➤ nominated to manage or co-ordinate the education, training and development on an institutional level or only for a certain category or portion of staff members;</li> </ul>	Are you the appointed SDF of your institution? Since when? What are your responsibilities? Name of the department(s) or division(s) that manage and/or co-ordinate (general term SDF mentioned) in your institution? What are your relationship and responsibilities with regard to these department(s) or divisions(s)?
<b>Objective 2: To determine the critical features of skills development in HEIs. The critical features that emerged from the literature review indicate that staff development is:</b>	<b>Semi-structured interview questions were developed to determine the underlying reasons for and goals of staff development in HEIs:</b>
a historical (widely published) function in HEIs;	What general term is used in your institution that refers to the education, training and development of staff members? Why is it called (general term SDF mentioned) and since when? Is there a (general term SDF mentioned) policy in this regard? When was this policy developed and implemented?
includes formal (programmes leading to a qualification), non-formal (structured programmes that could be registered and quality assured by the CHE) or informal programmes (such as unrecorded subject-matter debates, reflection sessions or participation in conferences, workshops and seminars). However, informal development is the least recorded form of development, although it is viewed as the most applicable method of learning in HEIs.	What are the different strategies that your institution considers as (general term SDF mentioned)? Since when? Is (name each strategy) accredited on the NQF? Why? Name the strategies that your institution would not include in your annual skills plan or report. Why can these strategies not be included in your annual skills plan or report? Is any form of recognition issued to the participant by your institution after the completion of a programme? Is there an overall budgetary provision for the different strategies? Since when and why? From where does this budget allocation stem?
concerns the furthering of a university staff member's knowledge, skills and potential in harmony with the requirements of the HEI;	What is the purpose of each of these strategies? Why? By what means are the (general term SDF mentioned) needs of

researcher could pose additional questions or change the initially formulated questions as a result of the iterative process between data analysis and conceptualisation.

	individuals determined? Since when and why?
reaches beyond the mere improvement of skills and is an all-encompassing term, referring to the programmes, structures, policies and processes for staff development; and	What in the policy or practice do you regard serve the interests of all staff members in this institution? Why and since when? Could you provide any documentation to this effect? What is provided for in the policy to manage and support the (general term SDF mentioned) of employees at your institution? Is these strategies bound to the current job of the individual? Why? Which of these strategies are considered skills programmes?
viewed inclusively. In other words, opportunities are available and/or provided to all categories of staff members on an equal basis.	What is provided for in the policy to manage and support the (general term SDF mentioned) with specific reference to designated employees (as referred to in the SDA) at your institution? (general term SDF mentioned) of all staff and designated staff members? Are any of these strategies available exclusively to certain categories of staff in your institution? Why?
<b>Objective 3.</b> To determine the critical features of the implementation of the SDA by SDFs in HEIs in SA. The critical features emerging from the literature review indicate that the critical features of the “official” SDA are:	Semi-structured interview questions developed to determine the critical features of “actual” SDA practice in HEIs:
a fairly new piece of legislation in SA.	Is there a committee in your institution to deliberate on (general term SDF mentioned) matters in the institution? Since when? What are the name and function of this committee in your institution?
based on the rationale that investment in education and training would lead to SA's socio-economic development.	What does your committee state as the aim or motivation for the implementation of the SDA? Why?
seen to benefit all (inclusive policy) but the measures taken to prioritise development of designated groups typify the SDA as exclusive.	What is your belief regarding the aim or motivation for the implementation of the SDA? Why?
that HEIs are co-responsible for funding the education and training of not only their employees but also the unemployed population of the country; and secondly the SETA structure that serves as external monitoring system.	What challenges need to be addressed regarding the planning or reporting of (general term SDF mentioned) in relation to the ETDP SETA requirements. Why? What opportunities are available to share information about (general term SDF mentioned) between your institution and the ETDP SETA? What are the challenges you face when sharing or trying to share information with the ETDP SETA?
gives prominence to credentialled training, namely NQF-accredited education and training programmes. This implies that HEIs' education and training programmes for staff members should be developed on the basis of unit standards, be accredited on the NQF and be registered with the ETDP SETA.	What challenges need to be addressed regarding the planning or reporting of (general term SDF mentioned) in relation to the ETDP SETA requirements. Why? Which of the training strategies that you have implemented are considered skills programmes that are credentialled and accredited on the NQF?

It should be noted that another question: "Explain your role and responsibilities with regard to staff development in your particular HEI and why", was also included in the broad overarching question objectives. This question was added for the following reason: during

consultation<sup>74</sup> with the expert group, one of the members noted that the role and function of the SDF *per se* as well as his/her visibility or stance in the particular HEI should be determined in order to establish whether the researcher was entering into a dialogue with the “correct” person. In other words, the information should be sought from the person who by the nature of his/her job was knowledgeable about staff development matters in the particular HEI, and who was also responsible for managing the implementation of the SDA.

The study was planned to start with questions about the practice of staff development in the particular HEIs selected for this study. The rationale was to ensure firstly that conflict would not arise between the aims of staff development and the aims of the SDA, and secondly I did not want to be perceived as confrontational. I knew that one of the challenges I would face was that the implementation of the SDA had already influenced the context of staff development in that particular HEI. The initial phase of the interview was, therefore, planned to establish rapport. Anon. (2008:13) refers to the steps that the researcher plans to follow in his/her interview as the interview protocol. I therefore opened the interview with a word of thanks for the opportunity to interview. I then explained the goal of the interview as well as the ethical considerations (Addendum E). Thereafter, to ensure that a clear (subjective) distinction was drawn between staff development and the SDA, I asked the SDF after each answer, whether his/her view or experience had been the tradition in that particular HEI, whether it had been a response to the implementation of the SDA or whether it had evolved since the implementation of the SDA.

It should be noted (as explained previously) that before the interviews commenced, I obtained permission from the particular participating SDF and his/her senior colleague to conduct the interview. A sample letter requesting such permission appears in Addendum F. I considered collecting the data during the universities' academic recess, but as I found that the functions of the SDFs were not bound to these timetables, the meetings were scheduled to take place when it was convenient for the particular SDF.

In the majority of cases the interviews were scheduled to take place early in the mornings<sup>75</sup> to counteract any disturbance from daily activities. I felt welcome in the presence of the participating SDFs and I believe I was not perceived as someone affiliated to a completely unknown organisation or staff development (Mouton and Marais, 1996:81). The face-to-face interviews ranged from two to three hours in duration. During my first face-to-face interview

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<sup>74</sup> During the first consultation with the expert group, I discussed the aim of the study and explained the rationale of the broad questions I had formulated in consultation with my study supervisor.

<sup>75</sup> In working hours, because I did not wish to intrude on the private lives of the participating SDFs.



with the SDFs, I explained that our discussions and their identity would remain confidential. I also briefed the participating SDFs about the intention of the study, explained how I would report their contribution and said that I had drafted a set of predetermined semi-structured interview questions to stimulate dialogue. I also stressed that the questions had not been sent to them in advance as the idea was that their answers should be spontaneous, not prepared beforehand.

During the face-to-face interviews the participating SDFs spoke freely and I rarely needed to probe points to capture more in-depth data. Eventually, I succeeded in conducting one face-to-face interview with all seven participating SDFs. In cases where I had more than one face-to-face interview, the other interview was merely a follow-up interview intended to extend and corroborate the data obtained from the first interview.

I recorded all interviews using two cassette players (one as a backup). My experience of using a compact, digital electronic audio recorder (Sony Digital Voice Recorder ICD-MX20) had been satisfactory. The sound quality was clear and its small size did not seem to attract attention. Owing to unforeseen power outages, I had to rely, however, on my backup battery-powered cassette recorder more than once. Unfortunately, the disturbance involved in setting up the backup recorder was noticeable. Immediately after the interviews I sent a follow-up letter to the participating SDFs, thanking them for their co-operation. The data analysis processes are described in Section 3.5, whereas the collection of the face-to-face interview data is described in Chapter 4.

My second strategy was semi-structured telephone interviews. The telephone interviews were used only after conducting the face-to-face interviews. The telephone interviews were aimed at reflecting on our face-to-face interviews and at extending and corroborating the data capturing. The telephone interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participating SDFs and lasted from 40 minutes to an hour. One telephone interview was held with each of the seven SDFs individually. My primary reason for using telephone interviews was to allow me to read my notes relating to the transcriptions, without showing the highlighted parts of the SDFs' interview transcriptions, as they might have perceived this as investigative. Secondly, conducting the telephone interviews from my office allowed me to arrange the pages of the particular SDF's transcribed interview next to one another to give me an overview of the transcription. The telephone interviews were conducted (at my expense) from the privacy of my office (a "Do not disturb" sign was placed on my office door). I also closed the blinds of my office to avoid being distracted by the outside world. The speakerphone was switched on during the telephone interviews (with consent),



allowing me to record the conversations with the same tape recorders used in the face-to-face interviews. The SDFs interviewed over the telephone seemed to focus on answering questions. The data analysis process is outlined in Section 3.5., and reported in Chapter 4.

My third strategy was the critical interpretation of the policy documents I had received from the SDFs. In my first face-to-face interview with each participating SDF, I had asked them to send me an electronic copy of their institution's staff development policy or any document(s) explaining the staff development portfolio of the particular HEI and secondly, any letters or memoranda from their department/division to a head of department or staff member at their institution. I had informed them of the rationale behind my request to them to send these documents to my office electronically, namely to save the cost of re-typing them for data analysis purposes. There were two important reasons for asking them for this information. The first was to determine whether the requested policy or portfolio documentation was consistent with what the SDF had explained or talked about during our face-to-face interviews. The second was that the internal letters or memoranda would indicate whether their title as SDF was visible in the particular HEI. Five of the participating SDFs sent me a total of 13 documents. The data analysis is outlined in Section 3.5, and the collecting of the above documentation is reported in Chapter 4.

My fourth strategy was a focus group discussion with the SDFs. The use of focus groups as a research technique is described as a semi-structured group discussion which is facilitated by a discussion leader, held in an informal setting, with the purpose of obtaining information by means of group interaction on a certain topic (McClafferty, 2004:187). This discussion was scheduled for late October/early November 2007. Due to official work constraints, the focus group discussion could only take place on 3 June 2008 at Birchwood Lodge in Johannesburg. Six of the seven SDFs (Gauteng HEIs region) participated in the focus group discussion. The aim of the focus group discussion was not only to reflect on the data obtained but also to gain a greater understanding from our interaction so far. Since the data had been obtained on an individual basis, the aim of this round of reflection was to obtain further information from the participating SDFs about the challenges that HEIs encountered with the implementation of the SDA. In addition, by its nature, a focus group discussion creates synergy among the group members, building on individual contributions (Parker and Tritter, 2006:26; Niewenhuis, 2007:90). The group discussion required me to play a new role as facilitator among the participants. Instead of a one-on-one discussion between the individual and me, I now had to focus on capturing the perceptions expressed by the participants, and also to record on a digital video camera the interaction among the participants.

The approach during the focus group discussion was at first a welcoming address followed by an overview and explanation of the research topic and aims. Questions were thereafter asked for group discussion purposes. The perceptions of the SDFs were written on a flip chart and then summarised. Care was taken to balance the role of researcher with the role of moderator in accordance with the dynamics of the focus group discussion, to ensure an interactive and participative discussion atmosphere in which all participants had an opportunity to share their views (Denzin *et al.*, 2005:704; Breen, 2006:464; Mertler, 2006:97,98).

The basic questions for group discussion were as follows:

- What is your understanding of skills development in Higher Education? Why do you call it Skills Development?
- What are the principles for the management of skills development in Higher Education?
- Do you emphasise return on investment?
- Why are we talking about formal, non-formal or informal development, while the SETA terminology refers to education and training?
- Why do you think is it important to have informal development as part of staff development?
- In terms of percentages would informal development be equal to formal development or non-formal development?
- Can support staff easily attend formal education in your institution, similarly also informal or non-formal development opportunities?
- Why do you think is the Skills Development Act called the Skills Development Act and not something else?
- Before the Skills Development Act came into being, did your institution budget for staff development?
- If HEIs are not legislatively compelled to pay the 1% of their payroll, would they still budget for staff development?
- Do the national skills development targets match your institution's employee development targets?

The questions were limited because of time limitations dictated by the personal work schedule of each participant (an average of four hours) and to account for the complexity and dynamics of interaction within a group discussion. Comments from participants led to responses from other participants in the focus group discussion. Though the focus group

discussion was recorded on video, the camera was set-up in a way that would conceal the faces of the SDFs, and ensure their anonymity.

The spoken and visual information from the group discussion was subsequently used for the purpose of critical data analysis. The data analysis is outlined in Section 3.5. and Chapter 4 contains a report on the data collection and data analysis from the focus group discussion with the SDFs, indicating the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. It should be noted that the interpretation of the data was submitted to the expert group (as explained previously) for assessing the procedures I had followed and to verify my interpretation of the data.

### 3.5 Data analysis

This section outlines the process of data analysis that I followed in this study. I drew on Miles's and Huberman's (1994) notion that qualitative data analysis is an interactive process of data reduction, displaying data as well as drawing and verifying the conclusions. This involves the deconstruction of the textual data into manageable categories, patterns and relationships (Neuman, 1997:418; Mouton, 2003:108). Partington (2003:113) states that there is little standardisation with no absolutes where a specific type of qualitative data relates to a specific process of analysis. Each qualitative data analysis is regarded to some extent as a uniquely designed event. With the preceding in mind, the data analysis of all data captured was done according to a *content analysis process* as recommended by Gall *et al.* (1996: 322), Henning *et al.* (2004: 104-109), De Vos *et al.* (2005:334) and Roberts *et al.* (2006: 43). The following procedures were followed for the data analysis:

- Recording of data by means of note taking and audio recording of responses.
- Responses were transcribed verbatim.
- The entire transcribed text and notes were read at first to obtain an overall impression of the content and context.
- Codes were identified and assigned. *Codes* are the names or labels assigned to identified units or segments of related meaning in the notes and transcripts (Henning *et al.*, 2004:104; Neuman, 1997:422; Weisman *et al.*, 1995:219). The coding process furthermore consisted of three steps as described by Neuman (1997:422-424) and Angot and Milano (2007:139), namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding (refer to Figure 3.3).

The data analysis process served as a framework which enabled a systematic, organised and logical step-by-step approach to the data analysis and allowed the researcher to move beyond mere descriptive, comparative and explanatory ends to discover the rationale behind and motivation for responses (Thiétart, 2007:361). The various steps of analysis were also regarded as procedural guidelines and not as rigid steps like those of a recipe (De Vos *et al.*, 2005:334). Firstly, an explanation is given of the manner in which the text was prepared for analysis purposes. Secondly, the approach required to ensure a critical interpretation of data is explained. Lastly, the computer-aided data analysis process and interpretation are discussed. The findings of this study, as an integrated set of data with reported evidence, are discussed in Chapter 4.

### **3.5.1 Preparing the text for analysis**

The data-capturing methods described in Section 3.4.6 (instrumentation towards data generation), were used for data analysis purposes. There were a total of 177 pages of empirical text. I refer to this text as empirical text, since I also captured the non-empirical data (my literature review), representing approximately 18 hours of audio-taped interviews from the seven participating SDFs – six women and one man. The 177 pages of empirical text consisted of the transcribed responses to each question posed during the face-to-face and telephone interviews, as well as the documentation sent to me by the SDFs.

Once the interviews had taken place, each interview was transcribed verbatim.<sup>76</sup> I hastened to transcribe each interview while it was still fresh in my mind. Although the transcription of the interviews was time-consuming, it enabled me to recognise and recall views which had not been very prominent during the interviews with the participating SDFs. For clarity purposes, I highlighted my speech in bold type, keeping the SDFs speech unmarked. Once I had completed the transcriptions (including checking for typing errors), I printed them and stacked them next to one another on a table. Then the documentation received from the SDFs was also printed and placed below the transcriptions of each participating SDF, grouping together all the information collected from a particular SDF. I kept the transcriptions of the focus group discussion as a separate unit of analysis.

The next step was to attach alpha-numeric keys to the document groupings, marking the face-to-face interviews with an F, telephone interviews with a T, policy documentation or any other document received from the SDFs with a D and the transcription of the focus group discussion with a G. After that, another alphabet letter indicating the particular HEI

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<sup>76</sup> I hereby claim an accurate and valid presentation of what the SDF said.

from which the data had been collected, was entered before the F,T, D or G letter on the texts. Since the anonymity of HEIs had to be ensured, I used seven letters of the alphabet, which identified each of the seven HEIs. Lastly, since I had conducted more than one face-to-face interview with some SDFs and received more than one document from the SDFs, I added a numeral to the alphabetic letter (e.g. D1) as an indicator of what round, interview or document I was working with. After attaching the above-mentioned alphanumeric labels to the text, information could be retrieved for verification purposes. Finally, the texts were ready to be uploaded (entered) in a computer-aided data analysis program (discussed in §3.5.3) for data analysis purposes. Subsequently, the analysis of text became a source of interaction between my conscious and unconscious mind in and outside<sup>77</sup> the context of the text. In preparation for data analysis, the next section explains how I ensured a critical interpretative perspective in identifying and labelling the units of meaning (themes) in the text.

### 3.5.2 Ensuring a critical interpretative perspective

The approach I followed when reading through the text entered on the computer-aided data analysis program was figuratively to “squeeze” meaning from the textual documents (data). Accordingly, I positioned myself to determine the following:

- What concepts emanated from the data. In other words, what concepts pertaining to staff development in HEIs were noticeable and why? How do they relate to my literature review?
- What values and assumptions underlie the concepts or structures and practices of the account as explained to me by the SDFs and what alternative viewpoints (values and assumptions) could there be?
- Had the emerging account of staff development in HEIs as explained to me by the SDFs become rigid, so that it was no longer open to change, or was it open to reinterpretation?
- Were terms used in a general or technical way? and
- What did the text reveal or conceal, and why?

In other words, I made a concerted effort to take a historical and critical realist approach towards revealing the meaning in the texts, which was congruent with but not restricted to my literature review (Chapter 2). I consequently also had to ensure that I questioned my own and

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<sup>77</sup> Alvesson *et al.* (2000:136) state that it is important for critical researchers to maintain a distance from what is visible in the text, in order to highlight the underlying social and historical values that could dominate the context of that reading.

the participating SDFs' beliefs about certain phenomena. In addition, I had to refrain from making value judgements about the SDFs, and instead sought to establish whether or not the participating SDFs' beliefs were dominated by one-sided arguments or traditions in that particular HEI or as an SDF group as a whole. In an attempt to remain true to a historical and critical realist approach, I described alternative<sup>78</sup> viewpoints concerning what the SDF(s) had said in an attempt to clarify the phenomena or determine how their views had formed over time. I did not, however, attempt to look for answers. Instead, I attempted to interpret the phenomena critically. This entailed that my method of gaining an understanding was to grasp the social meaning constituting the social reality of the SDFs (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:144; Carr *et al.*, 1986: 135) from a true Habermasian triple hermeneutic<sup>79</sup> approach. In this way, I not only interpreted the apparently visible data but also searched for underlying meaning (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:144) and variations in meaning (Mäkelä and Turcan, 2006:124). It should be noted that during this phase of analysis (what I prefer to call my first-glance analysis) I studied the transcriptions obtained from each SDF as separate entities. Not only did I aim to search for “evidence” to justify the questionnaire objectives (refer Table 3.1) but also to extract meaning from the transcribed verbal communication from each HEI's SDF as a separate entity. I attempted to integrate the meaning that I sought from a SDF, by comparing it with the meaning that I extracted from another. This, however, proved cumbersome. In addition, the amount of text that I had to analyse was enormous. At this point I switched to using *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> - a computer-based system for analysing qualitative research data.

### 3.5.3 Computer-aided data analysis

After preparing the texts for data analysis (refer §3.5.1) the data analysis process ensued. I chose the *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> computer-aided data analysis programme since it: “provides an unusually wide range of powerful tools for theory building, such as network editor that allows you to graphically create, manipulate, and examine the logical relations among your codes” (Weisman and Miles, 1995: 204 and 217), and I also judged that this route would confirm the findings of my study. In §3.3, I argue that the empirical as well as non-empirical data are employed to form an integrated whole aimed at constructing an understanding of the match or mismatch between the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and that for

<sup>78</sup> Alvesson *et al.* (2000:136) caution researchers that an alternative view might lead to dominance over the established order. For this reason, I did not pose counter-views as utopian views but instead attempted to clarify the phenomena.

<sup>79</sup> The researcher goes beyond the individual's interpretation of phenomena to critique what appears self-evident on the one hand, and that which may be taken for granted on the other (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000:144).



staff development in HEIs. I therefore applied the same process as described for the empirical text (refer §3.5.1) to the non-empirical data.

The first step of the computer-aided data analysis process consisted of loading (entering) relevant sections of the aforementioned 177 pages of empirical text as well as 40 pages of non-empirical text I had prepared (refer §3.5.1) in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>. The unstructured relevant textual data pages (empirical data) that were entered as primary raw data files on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> for data analysis and interpretation purposes are presented in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3. I present Table 3.2 as a summary of the document identity codes and the number of converted empirical textual pages that were captured per instrument. In Table 3.3 I present the number of interaction opportunities with the SDFs, categorised per instrument applied.

**Table 3.2 Summary of raw data files with identity codes entered on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> for data analysis according to instrument applied**

Instrument	Primary documents in <i>Atlas.ti</i> <sup>TM</sup>	Number of transcribed pages of textual data
Face-to-face interviews	RF1, RF2, UF1, UF2, VF1, VF2, WF1, XF1, XF2, YF1, YF2, ZF1	65
Telephone interviews	RT1, VT1, XT1	12
Documentation received from HEIs	RD1, RD2, RD3, RD4, UD1, UD2, VD1, WD1, XD1, XD2, XD3, XD4, YD1, YD2	65
Focus group discussion	GD1	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>177</b>

**Table 3.3 Summary of the raw data files (according to instrumentation applied to data generation) entered on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> for data analysis from each HEI**

HEI	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview	Telephone interview	Documents received				Focus group	Textual pages
<b>R</b>	RF1	RF2	RT1	RD1	RD2	RD3	RD4	G1	
Pages	6	5	4	8	5	2	3	10	43
<b>U</b>	UF1	UF2		UD1	UD2				
Pages	7	4		9	11				31
<b>V</b>	VF1	VF2	VT1	VD1					
Pages	6	2	5	9					22
<b>W</b>	WF1			WD1					
Pages	7			11					18
<b>X</b>	XF1	XF2	XT1	XD1	XD2	XD3	XD4		
Pages	6	4	3	4	5	2	8		32
<b>Y</b>	YF1	YF2		YD1	YD2				
Pages	1	11		9	4				25
<b>Z</b>	ZF1								
Pages	6								6
<b>Total</b>									<b>177</b>

The term Hermeneutic Unit in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> refers to a computer file into which all associated material pertinent to a particular project is placed (Weisman *et al.*, 1995:217). All the captured textual data relevant to my entire thesis (177 pages of empirical text as well as 40 pages of non-empirical text) was located in two separate Hermeneutic Units of *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>. The empirical textual data was labelled PhD SDF voice, and the non-empirical textual data was labelled PhD public literature voice.

The next step of the analysis involved firstly the selection of units of meaning from the 40 pages of non-empirical textual pages, and secondly the 177 pages of empirical data, which I considered important. This arbitrary selection of segments of text, ranging from word(s), sentence(s) or paragraph(s) in the *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> program is called a quotation (Weisman *et al.*, 1995:219). Once a text segment (quotation) has been selected, a code is assigned to the text segment while an alpha-numeric identifier is automatically assigned in the *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> program to the quotation, e.g. P1:1 12 – 24. This assigned identifier allows for easy cross-referencing to textual data from the empirical or non-empirical data. The first number indicates from which primary document the quote was derived, the second represents the number of the code that has been linked to it and the last set of numbers refers to the start and end line of the quotation.

As the process of code creation progressed and similar meanings of quotations occurred, the codes previously attached to quotations were selected. I specifically mention this method of code creation to indicate that I did not attach codes to quotations from a set of predetermined codes. Doing that would have biased the research analysis towards a positivistic approach where meaning is deduced from causal laws over which humans have little control. An inductive coding approach was, therefore, followed by making inferences (finding meanings) from the data. This indicates that when coding the quotations, I used a system of open<sup>80</sup> coding which entailed finding and naming units of meaning. In addition, I endeavoured to choose appropriate keywords in the quotations to capture the meaning of a quotation. The process of assigning codes generated 1 028 quotations and 385 codes relating to the empirical data (PhD SDF voice) and 556 quotations and 79 codes relating to the non-empirical data. Furthermore I distinguished between the codes on the basis of the explanations for the "what" or "why" questions, by attaching notes (called memoranda in the *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> program) to certain quotations.

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<sup>80</sup> Mäkelä *et al.* (2006:13) and Neuman (1997:422) view open coding as the researcher's first attempt to condense the mass of data into categories (also referred to as themes). However, marking the text and then giving it a name or theme is merely a low level of abstraction arising from the researcher's initial research question (Neuman, 1997:422).

When reading all the codes I had assigned to the text, I realised that some of the codes related to one another, and could therefore be grouped into families. Accordingly, the next step was to categorise<sup>81</sup> the assigned codes with their attached identifiers into families as a means of filtering the information or showing comparisons or relations between data sets (Weisman *et al.*, 1995:220 – 220). The assignment of codes to families with different connections or crosscuts is known as axial<sup>82</sup> coding (Neuman, 1997:423). It is, however, important to note that during the assigning of codes phase, I realised that in addition to assigning certain units of meaning to the text, I had to distinguish between the data captured from the SDFs. In other words, I realised that I could not generalise on the basis of one SDF's opinion. I therefore decided to attach units of meaning per SDF. It should be noted that identifying certain terminology or propositions relating to staff development in HEIs in general and marking them as units of meaning per SDF was not difficult, since my semi-structured interview questions were formulated to capture the data in this way. However, although I did ask "why" questions, the interviewees did not explain their reasons for saying or thinking something<sup>83</sup>. For this reason it was difficult to identify verbal quotes and describe the underlying meaning attached to the above-mentioned terms or explanations (in other words the explanation of "why" questions).

I followed a critical interpretative approach as outlined in §3.5.2, as a means of assigning codes to the families. This resulted in various codes being grouped into families and then I attached the memoranda of my thoughts and reasoning to these families. In other words, my memoranda connected the visible data with the theoretical background of this study (Human Capital and Social Capital Theory). The categorisation was done manually by marking codes that fitted into a certain family. Marking codes in pencil (erasing marks and re-assigning them) permitted reshuffling the codes into families (refer, for example, to Addendum G). As explained above, grouping several codes into a family led to a continuous cycle of analysis, resulting the merging (grouping) of various codes into families. Then I

<sup>81</sup> Carspecken (1996) asserts that the coding structure the researcher generates during his/her first stages of coding (open coding) is still "raw, because no organisation of the codes has taken place. Redundancies and intersection between codes exist and researchers need to pull these codes together" (Carspecken, 1996:14).

<sup>82</sup> Neuman (1997:423) explains that during the process of axial coding, the researcher moves towards identifying the axis of key concepts in analysis, which means that a researcher operates at a conceptual level here.

<sup>83</sup> The difficulty I experienced could be attributed firstly, to such an intense focus at times on the discussion between the SDF and me on certain discussion topics that the expression of underlying meaning was neglected. Secondly, it might have been merely difficult for me to explain the "why" questions in words. However, I knew that the critical interpretative approach to our conversation could be taken later and if necessary, I could return to the SDF to gain clarity in my understanding.

renamed the families, assigning to them either a personal or documented view heading relating to the non-empirical data.

The criteria I used to label a family were derived from the codes that had been merged, in order to remain as close to the data as possible. When labelling families I attempted to move beyond the description of subjective experiences of the SDFs to reflect<sup>84</sup> critically on the coded units of meaning based upon the interviews with the participants. As regards the empirical data, however, the headings for families were those assigned to the non-empirical data (excluding “personal view” or “documented view” headings). Some overlap between responses (quotations) in families did occur where a response referred to two or more families, and therefore had to be placed in two or more families. Not all the families were therefore mutually exclusive. Finally, I assigned several family codes to a network to identify meaningful relationships among the data sets. From this point onwards, I report on and discuss the data analysis of each of the two hermeneutic units (PhD SDF voice and PhD public literature voice) first separately and then as a single data set.

Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the data captured in relation to the main research question. My interpretation endeavours to describe the research findings in a logical sequence which is integrated with the relevant literature, in order to substantiate the findings. I spent a great deal of time considering the possible conclusions and consciously monitored my personal bias continuously. Reflecting on the relevant evidence from the research, I have made certain recommendations for further investigation in Chapter 5. Overall, I have reported my analyses and interpretations as precisely and as without prejudice as possible. The issues related to the validity and reliability of my study is discussed in more detail in the following section.

### **3.6 The reliability and validity of this study**

This section is less about explaining the concepts of reliability and validity, and more about indicating how the verification strategies integral to the study and the self-correcting mechanisms in conducting the study itself, determine the reliability and validity of the study.

As this study did not entail statistical sampling (described in §3.3), traditional reliability indices within a rationalistic paradigm were not deemed appropriate. Instead, I followed the

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<sup>84</sup> Critical theory also demands that researchers engage in self-reflection and thinking about the process of research itself to avoid reproducing taken-for-granted constructs (Alvesson *et al.*, 2000).

verification strategies of Morse *et al.* (2002) and Anon. (2008:15) to ensure the reliability and validity of my research. This entailed the following:

- The extended period over which I had worked on this study validated my personal observations based on the interviews with the SDFs.
- My critical interpretation of data is tendered only when it can be supported by the information captured from the participating SDFs. My values concerning this research were candidly explained prior to the elicitation of qualitative data (refer Addendum D).
- I ensured congruency between my research questions and the methods (techniques) that I followed to capture data.
- I ensured that I put the same questions to each SDF.
- I ensured that my sample was appropriate, in other words, I ensured that this study was conducted with the participants (SDFs) who best represented or had sound knowledge of the research topic. Furthermore, it was not at all difficult to establish rapport and trust with the SDFs during data capturing, as they already knew me personally. The authenticity of my face-to-face interaction with the SDFs produced rich descriptions of the participating SDFs' experiences, which enhanced the findings.
- I ensured that I collected and analysed the data concurrently. In addition, triangulation by means of multiple data collection instruments and the consultation of all role players strengthened the internal validity and reliability of my research. This included a peer review by my expert group of the draft sections of this study and their comments on my theorising. I acknowledge that my data analysis was given to two different analysts to verify that they concurred with my own data interpretation (Anon., 2008:15).
- I ensured that I summarised key individual respondent claims in the form of key propositions related to the aim of the study and main research questions (Anon., 2008:18). In addition, the ideas emerging from data were confirmed from the supporting evidence drawn from the quotations<sup>85</sup> (Anon., 2008:18). Not only did *Atlas.ti*™ facilitate my task but it also enhanced my analysis and made data segments easily accessible and available for scrutiny by the research community.

My trail of evidence is therefore tangible and as trustworthy as I could possibly get it to be, showing a transparent and reliable methodology and making this study easy to replicate. The utilisation of *Atlas.ti*™ also enhanced the precision with which I conducted the

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<sup>85</sup> When using *Atlas.ti*™ the term quotation refer to a selection of segments of text ranging from word(s), sentence(s) or paragraph(s) that provides a unit of meaning (refer §3.5.3).

research process and this potentially helps to authenticate this study. Finally, the systematic collection and detailed reporting of my procedures and the decisions I took as well as a careful explanation of my understandings, strengthen the reliability and validity of this study.

The collection of the interview data is reported in Chapter 4, with the purpose of indicating the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

### **3.7 Methodological constraints**

This study was conducted from a critical interpretative epistemological base, implying that I have excluded positivist tenets. Frequencies<sup>86</sup> among answers were, however, used as a basis for critical interpretation. Moreover, I acknowledge that my observations may be fallible<sup>87</sup>. This section is a personal reflection on the research process and indicates any adjustments that may have been necessary so that the reader can appreciate the context in which my research claims are made in Chapter 5, as well as the possible constraints of this study. It should be read in conjunction with the anticipated limitations of the study, as described in Chapter 1.

Mouton (2003:110) comments that the main sources of error that may occur in analysis are potential researcher bias and lack of rigour. My data were carefully collected and my evidence was thoroughly documented in an attempt to counteract any personal prejudice. Any possible personal bias was limited by triangulating the data obtained from several instruments. Moreover, the reputable data analysis software package used in processing my findings should assist in refuting any accusations of flawed or substandard research. It should be noted, however, that this study does have certain limitations which might have influenced the findings. The first limitation is that only the data relating to the research topic were selected, although rich and extensive data were obtained by using several instruments. The remaining data will, however, be used later when preparing articles for publication and papers for conferences. The second limitation was that only SDF staff members in HEIs were interviewed. In retrospect, representatives of the ETDP SETA might also have been interviewed to determine their views on the underlying reasons for the SDA. At the time of the interviews, however, they were not deemed important to the research study. Finally, in view of my role as a white male researcher during the interviewing and data analysis process, my ethnic status and gender might have affected the reactions of some of the SDFs during interviewing.

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<sup>86</sup> Frequencies refer to how many times it occurred.

<sup>87</sup> In qualitative research the danger always exists that the researcher has not exhausted all possible interpretations of the data.



As stated in §3.3.6, *Personal role in research process*, I do not, however, believe that my ethnicity had any adverse effect on the data or the research process, although there is no firm evidence to prove or disprove this contention. If anything, my presence seemed enough to produce a positive reaction. Another limitation is that the participants' opinions may have been attenuated and altered by my interpretation, even though I attempted to portray the participating SDFs' experiences and views as accurately as I could. My attempt to make sense of others' experiences and views obviously means that my text is selective and partial. Nor can I claim a complete lack of bias, since in terms of critical theory, no interpretation can be completely objective when choosing a participative research design counteracted by individual bias, since understanding is reached by the participant group and not one-sidedly by the researcher such as in positivistic and interpretivist research.

Chapter 4 contains an integrated analysis of the findings obtained from the methods and materials used in this study.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I describe the research design used in this study and justify the choices made for sampling, the methods of data collection and data analysis. Also highlighted is that this study is of a critical interpretative nature, therefore an analysis of the empirical and non-empirical data in the broader framework of critical research is relevant to this study (refer Figure 3.1: Typology of design to construct an understanding of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs). Accordingly, the empirical and non-empirical data form an integrated whole, aimed at constructing an understanding of the match or mismatch between the rationale for the implementation of the SDA and that for staff development in HEIs. The data analysis design was planned to indicate *inter alia* the similarities, understanding, differences and contradictions between the data captured from the participant group (empirical data) and the non-empirical captured data (a theory building, philosophical or conceptual analysis of the literature).

In this chapter I offer a critical interpretative account of the data leading to my understanding of the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development in HE institutions that emerged from my literature review and my interaction with the participants in the sample studied. This critical interpretative account of data is presented according to the themes of greatest importance to the aims of the study. A thematic analysis with a coding structure managed by means of a computer data-analysis software package called *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> was applied to the data. This thematic analysis was grounded in the hermeneutic circle of interpretation, which enabled me not only to seek understanding and meaning from the textual data but also to give the research participants a voice for their own, personal understanding of and meaning of their statements.

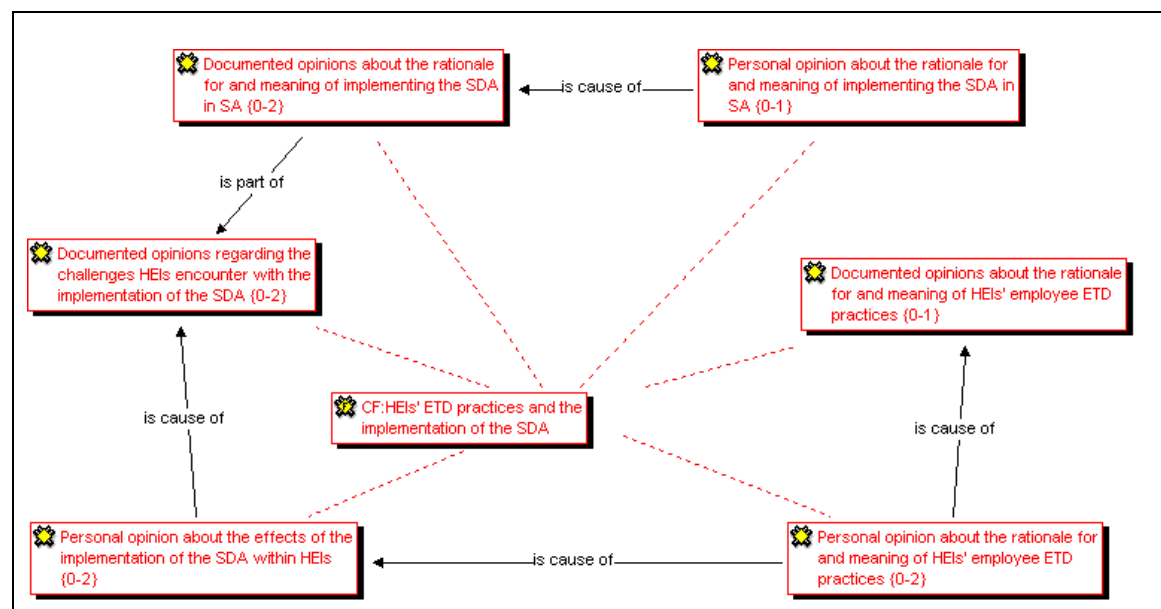
Firstly, an account of the non-empirical data is presented. I acknowledge the critical interpretative nature of this study, presenting the meaning of data as it emerged from a triple hermeneutic level (refer §3.5.2, *Ensuring a critical interpretative level of interpretation*). Next I present the empirical data, consisting of the data derived from the individual participants in face-to-face and telephone interviews and the

documented data collected from the participants, followed by the meaning of the data that emerged from the focus group interaction. I then discuss the empirical and non-empirical data analysis, integrating the non-empirical data with the empirical data to substantiate the similarities and differences between the reasons for the implementation of the SDA and those for staff development in HEIs. Furthermore, I acknowledge the emancipatory intent of critical social research by indicating how understanding emerged at an intra-personal and inter-personal level and the understanding obtained in a group discussion.

In the following section I present the findings of the non-empirical data analysis relevant to the aim of this study.

#### 4.2 An exposition of my meaning attached to the literature (non-empirical data)

The findings of the non-empirical data are presented in this section of Chapter 4. I firstly present a network display generated by *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> (Figure 4.1) that gives a snapshot of the aim of my literature review. This presentation should be viewed as introductory to the thematic critical interpretative account of the data that follows.



**Figure 4.1: Network display depicting the aim of the literature review**

Figure 4.1 gives a bird's eye view of the aim of my literature review. The wording in the textbox in the centre of the network view: *CF: HEIs' ETD practices and the*

*implementation of the SDA*, represents an abridged description of the research aim, namely the match or mismatch between the rationale for and meaning of the implementation of the SDA and HEIs' staff development practices (abbreviated as education, training and development (ETD) practices in the centre block). A limited number of letters could be included in the textbox, otherwise I would have included the full title of the research aim in the textbox. However, the abridged description of my research aim (centre textbox) tells a tale. After assigning (i.e. the *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> term describing the linking of text on the software system), Chapters 1 and 2 to *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> the aim of my non-empirical data analysis came to the fore. The aim was not to set off the implementation of the SDA against HEIs' ETD practices, but rather to provide my critical interpretative understanding of the match or mismatch between these two factors. The abridged wording in the textbox was consequently chosen at this stage to indicate that the focus is on the meaning of the implementation of the SDA and that of HEIs' ETD practices. For this reason, during my initial data analysis stage I did not attempt to label the ETD practices of HEIs as staff development (the term I prefer as a umbrella term for HEIs' ETD practices) since I endeavoured to search for the meaning that is out there (social reality is "out there" to be discovered) and not only as a re-interpretation of other authors' interpretations. This imply that I endeavoured firstly to give an account of the documented opinions about the implementation of the SDA and HEIs' ETD practices and then to give an account of my own critical interpretation of both. Figure 4.1 illustrates that the focus of my literature research (which consequently elicited meaning for certain themes) originated from the following:

- The documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA.
- The documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices.
- The documented opinions about the challenges facing HEIs with the implementation of the SDA.

These above-mentioned documented opinions, seen against the background of Critical Theory, led in turn to the following:

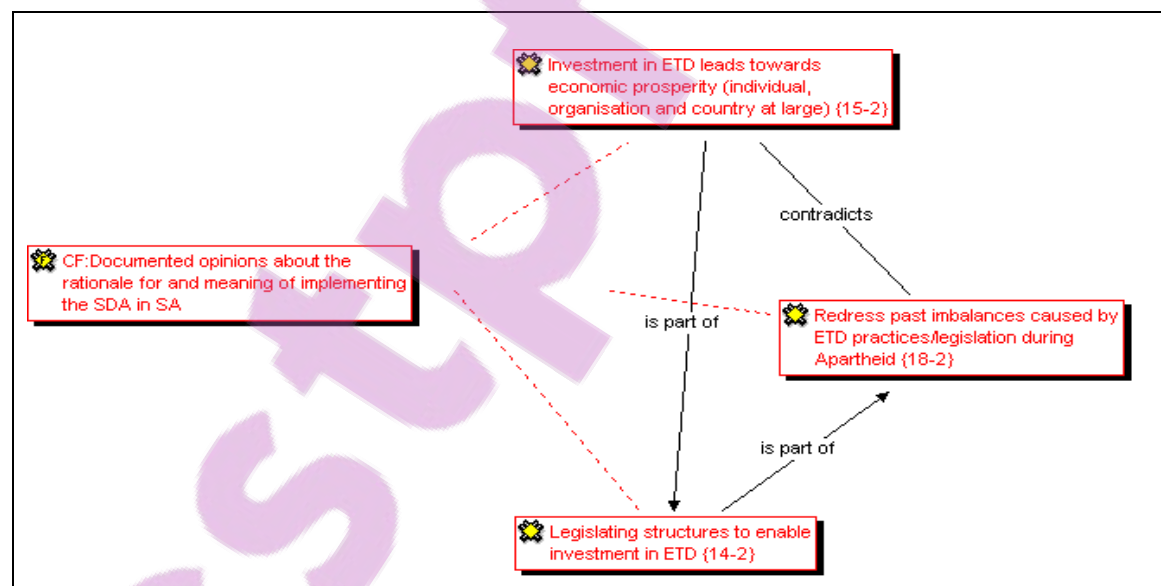
- Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA.

- Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices.
- Personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

Figure 4.1 therefore illustrates that the above-mentioned three documented and three personal (6 in total) opinions are interrelated. The arrows linking one textbox with another illustrate the relationship (cause of or is a part of) between them. For example, the documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA form part of the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

I now present a network display of the findings with regards to each of the aforementioned documented and personal opinions about the rationale for and meaning of the implementation of the SDA in SA (6 in total) with an account of the findings.

#### 4.2.1 Documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA



**Figure 4.2 Documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA**

The network display shown in Figure 4.2 illustrates the findings of the documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA. The documented opinions were grouped into three interrelated themes which are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Documented opinions*

about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA. The number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected to substantiate a theme as well as the number of assigned documents from which quotations were selected, are shown in the brackets (e.g. 15-2) of each textbox. The number of quotations assigned to the three themes on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> (45 in total) can be viewed on the compact disk (Public Voice: Outputs). For example, three of the 15 quotations to substantiate the finding that investment in ETD leads towards economic prosperity (individual, organisation and country at large), are as follows:

"There is compelling evidence that points to the strong relationship between investments in human capital (education, training, health, nutrition) and economic growth and development" (Pandor, 2006:1) (P1:31 173-175). The Policy Framework for Education and Training (1996) states: "Unless the types of knowledge and skills available to society are transformed, the apartheid labour market will continue to exist ... and economic development will remain stagnant." (P1:35 186-189). The Green Paper on Skills Development (1997), another draft policy document emanating from the RDP under the auspices of National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), refers to "skills" as the "project of employee development ... for economic purpose" (Department of Labour, 1997: Preface) (P1:315 192-195). The SDA states *inter alia* that [its] purposes are: "to develop the skills of the South African workforce – to improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers; ... [and] to increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4) (P1:860 141-145). "The single greatest impediment to economic growth in South Africa is the shortage of skills" (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006:7) (P1:863 165-166).

Three of the 18 quotations assigned to substantiate the inference that the SDA were implemented to redress past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during Apartheid, are as follows:

"Policy Framework for Education and Training (1996), states: 'Unless the types of knowledge and skills available to society are transformed, the apartheid labour market will continue to exist'" (P1:35 186:189). "To improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility; ... to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:5) (P1:50 294-298). "past skills development practices have not provided the range, diversity.....skills needed (Department of Labour, 2002a:7) (P2:25 191-194).

Three of the 14 quotations assigned to substantiate the inference that Government implemented structures to enable investment in ETD in SA are as follows:

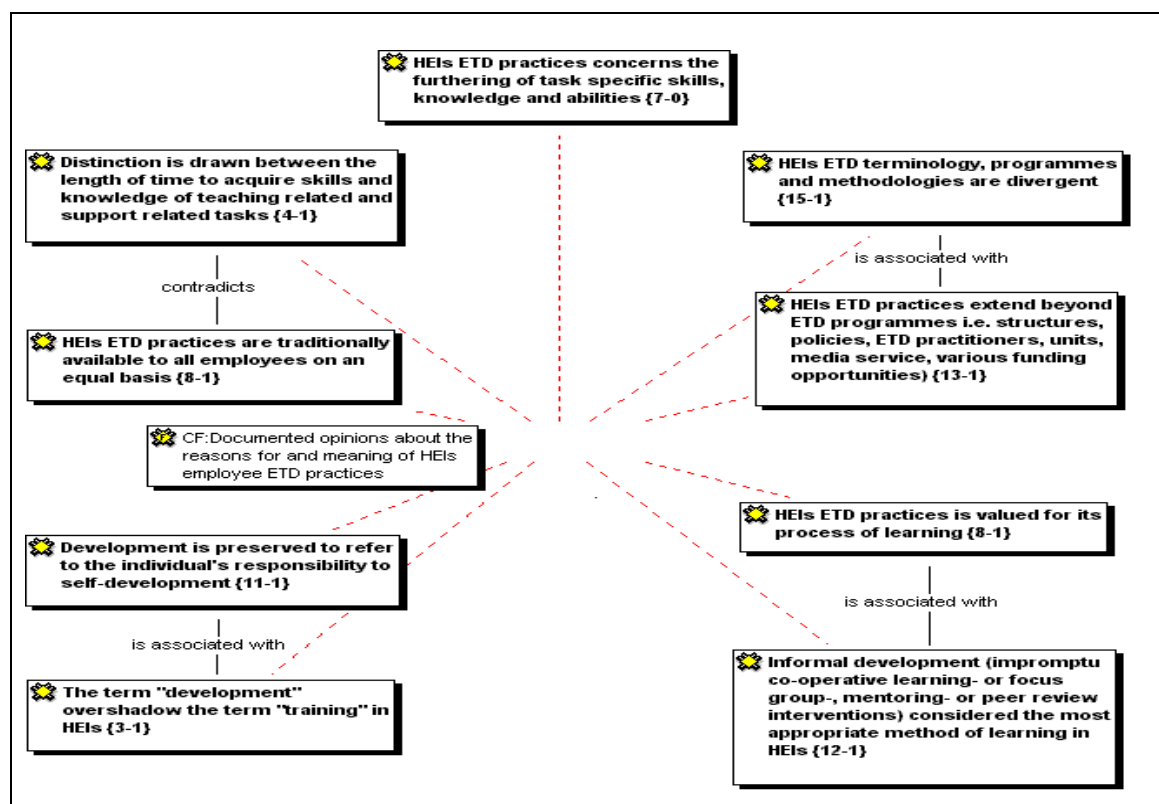
The SDA states *inter alia* that the purposes of the SDA are to be achieved by: "establishing an institutional and financial framework composing – the National Skills Authority (NSA), ... sector education and training authorities (SETAs); ... a skills development levy-financing scheme as contemplated in the Skills Development Levies Act; ... [and] the South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA]" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:5) (P1:337 398-403). The SDA outlines the functions and responsibilities of SETAs (ETDP SETA specific to HEIs) to "develop a sector skills plan in the framework of the national skills development strategy ... allocating grants in the prescribed manner and in accordance with any prescribed standards and criteria to employers, education



and training providers ... [and] to monitor education and training in the sector" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:6-10) (P1:345 437-442). With regard to institutional structures, the SDA requires *inter alia* the "appointment by employers of workplace skills development facilitators" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) and that employers should consult with employee representatives on matters dealt with in the SDA (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) (P1:878 403-407).

I now present the second of the six network displays to illustrate the documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of the implementation of the SDA in SA.

#### 4.2.2 Documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices



**Figure 4.3 Documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices**

The network display shown in Figure 4.3 illustrates the findings of the documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. The documented opinions are grouped in nine interrelated themes which are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Documented opinions about the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices*. The number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected to substantiate a theme as well as the number of assigned documents from which quotations were

selected, is shown in the brackets (e.g. 4-1) of each textbox. The number of quotations assigned to the nine themes on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> (77 in total) can be viewed on the compact disk (Public Voice: Outputs). For example, two of the 15 quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities are as follows:

"A systematic attempt to harmonise individuals' interests and wishes, and their carefully assessed requirements for furthering their careers with the forthcoming requirement of the organisation in which they are expected to work" (Piper and Glatter, 1977:14 cited in Teather, 1979:14) (P1:631 722-725). Wexley (2002:2) and Reid *et al.* (2004:3) refer to training and development as the planned effort by an organisation to facilitate the learning of job-related behaviour (behaviour includes skills and knowledge) on the part of its employees (P2:77 293-296).

Four of the 15 quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs terminology, programmes and methodologies are divergent, are as follows:

Shore (cited in Teather 1979:77) also notes that most Canadian HEIs have opted for consultations, discussions and guidance from more experienced staff members as the means for staff development. In other words, staff development not only consists of formal, non-formal or associated structures but also includes informal activities (consultations, discussions and guidance) (P1:547 838-846). Nisbit and McAleese (cited in Teather, 1979:38-56) summarise the 1979 position of staff development in British universities as follows: "Initial training: generally available, short (one-week) courses, usually specific to the university, including an induction element. Formal provision for experienced staff to develop their teaching: beginning to grow, still mainly in the form of short conferences for discussion, often in a single discipline, regional or national. Informal provision in universities (often in departments: well established for research, quite extensive for teaching, but not organised, and wide variations). Other aspects (training and supervision for research students, courses in administration): beginning of awareness of a need" (Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:46) (P1:905 799-811). Some authors refer to staff development as an umbrella term, synonymous with terms such as in-service education, staff training or continuous professional development (Gall and O'Brien Vojtek, 1994:1; Greyling, 2001:38; Biggs, 1999:42) (P2:42 264-268). It is of interest to note that Nisbit *et al.* (1979) use the term formal when referring to programmes being structured whereas in the previously mentioned report of Foster *et al.* (1979), the term formal refers to a programme leading to a qualification (P1:906 816-821).

Two of the 13 quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes, i.e. structures, policies, ETD practitioners, units, media service, various funding opportunities, are as follows:

The definitions offered in Teather (1979) suggest that staff development includes the processes, structures and programmes that harmonise individual and institutional interests towards mutual growth (P1: 541 718-720). Kapp (1995: 11) broadens the definition by adding "... all activities, actions, processes and procedures that an institution has developed or uses to enhance the performance and the potential of its human resources". For the purposes of the present study, the latter definition is preferred for staff development in HEIs. (P2:83 364-368).

Three of the 15 quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs' ETD practices are valued for their process of learning, are as follows:

A recent report by Allen, Blackwell and Gibbs (2003: 66 to 78) notes the trend towards the value of the learning process in staff development (P1:555 1122-1123). Ljubljana (1995:68) specifically reports on the staff development practices connected to learning, where learning is acquired from group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery and learning from one another (P1:616 1079-1082). Social activities (i.e. group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery, learning from one another or methods of learning previously referred to as co-operative or active learning) are considered key to the process of learning in HEIs. (P1:617 1088-1093).

Three of the 15 quotations to substantiate the conclusion that informal development (impromptu co-operative learning interventions, focus group, mentoring or peer review interventions) are considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs, are as follows:

Staff development activities include short informal courses. These take a variety of forms, ranging from scheduled programmes to impromptu events arranged to suit the needs of a particular group or department (p. 25) (P1:545 780-783). Informal development included discussion forums with the aim of deliberating on a certain subject matter. Participation in the discussion forums was not restricted to subject-matter experts (educators), but included members of staff from various stakeholder groups (such as student representatives) (p. 67) (P1:619 1141-1145). Shahnaz *et al.* (2005) report on a case study at the Bowling Green State University (Ohio) on the development needs of 92 departmental chairs. The response rate of 60% to a questionnaire survey revealed that the departmental chairs believed that the most successful training interventions were round-table discussions or off-campus speakers from other higher education institutions (Shahnaz *et al.*, 2005:588) (P1: 623 1217-1222).

Two of the three quotations to substantiate the inference that the term "development" overshadows the term "training" in HEIs, are as follows:

Nisbit and McAleese (1979:48) argue that although the notion of imparting a set of skills to a novice is commonly understood as training or development in industry, this does not hold true for HEIs which regard staff training as a wider approach (P1:897 885-888). Nisbit and McAleese (1979:50) argue that the extensive use of the term "training" is an "unfortunate choice" for describing the professional requirements of teachers in British universities (P1:896 870-880).

Two of the 11 quotations to substantiate the finding that the term development in HEIs is assumed to refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development, are as follows:

Development "shifts" the onus from the trainer to the staff member himself [sic]: "it is his task to develop his own competence and understanding, and it has the connotation of personal growth and maturity" (Nisbit and McAleese, 1979:50) (P1:658 916-919). Staff development activities are provided in-house or external to the institution on a classroom or self-instruction basis (P1:662 789-790).

Two of the eight quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs' ETD practices are traditionally available to all employees on an equal basis, are as follows:

"Staff development should promote understanding between various kinds of staff and different levels of administration" (Jalling, 1979:209) (P 1: 729 736:739). Bitzer *et al.*

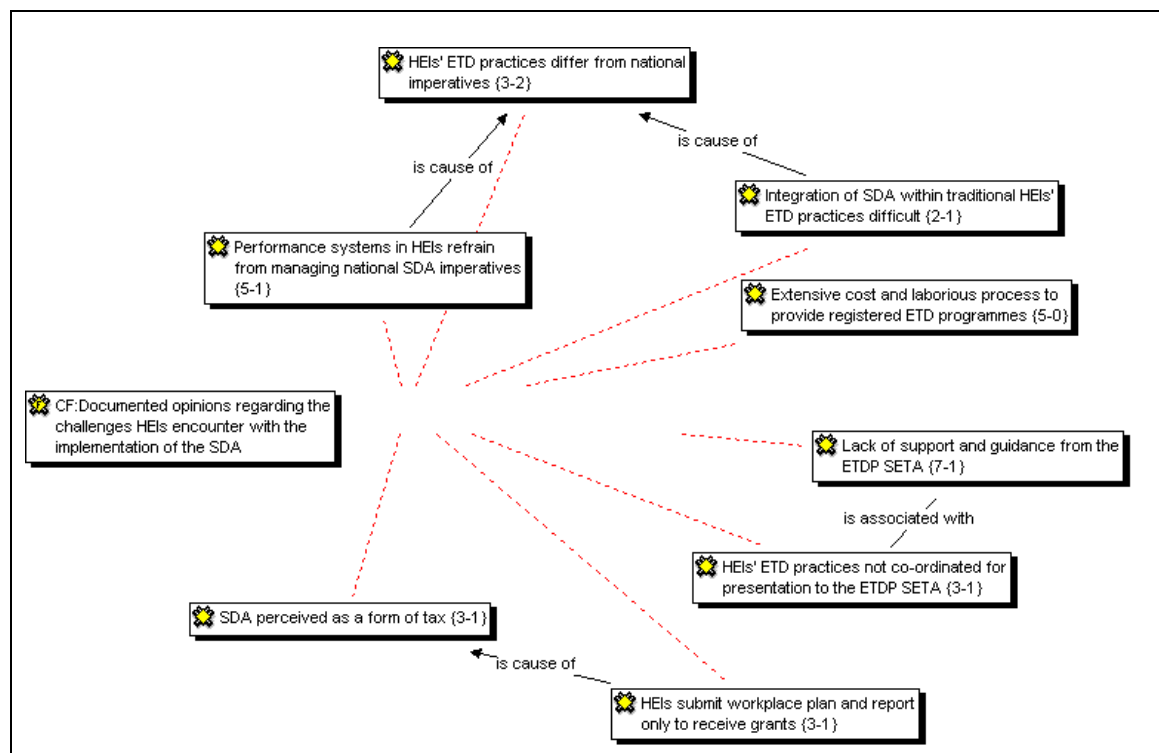
(1998:11) note that staff development units in most SA historically privileged HEIs were established during the late 1970s, but that there was an upheaval in staff development in SA HEIs during the 1990s (P1:544 748-751).

Two of the four quotations to substantiate the conclusion that a distinction is drawn between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks, are as follows:

Greenaway and Mortimer (1979:71) argue that although the basic approach of academic development is no different from the development of other categories of staff in HEIs, the time scale for achieving this development differs. For convenience, the present study refers from this point on to the other categories of staff members as support staff members (P1:528 951-955). The development needs of the educator profession are rather differently perceived from those of support staff members. Not only do educators have to take cognisance of the continuing expansion of knowledge and theories in their own disciplines (Nisbit and McAleese, 1979:54) but they are also bound to the lengthy time-span involved in the process of programme and curriculum design, implementation and evaluation (P1:551 986-991).

I now present the third network display of my findings to illustrate the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

#### 4.2.3 Documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA



**Figure 4.4 Documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA**

The network display shown in Figure 4.4 illustrates the findings of the documented opinions regarding the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. The documented opinions were grouped into eight interrelated themes that are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA*. The number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected to substantiate a theme as well as the number of assigned documents from which quotations were selected, is shown in the brackets (e.g. 5-1) of each textbox. The number of quotations assigned to the eight themes on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> (31 in total) can be viewed on the compact disk (Public Voice: Outputs). For example, one of the five quotations to substantiate the finding that performance systems in HEIs refrain from managing national SDA imperatives is as follows:

Mapesela and Strydom (2004:3), Kapp (1995:9); Bitzer and Kapp, (1998:14), Mofokeng (2002:9), Gilbert and Gibbs (1998:14-19), Gibbs (1998:11-41), Clark and Clegg (2000:38) state that the majority of HEIs implemented a performance management system to manage the requirements for institutional staff development, but refrained from including the broader aims of the SDA as a staff development imperative (P2:94 155-164).

Two of the 15 quotations to substantiate the conclusion that HEIs' ETD practices differ from national imperatives, are as follows:

Greyling (2001:3) highlights that "[most] institutions of higher education will battle with reforming and transforming staff development towards national imperatives since conflicts of interest are imminent between the focus of staff development in HEIs and that of national imperatives" (P2:13 137-141). Barry (2000:9) contends that SA organisations are reluctant to integrate their developmental initiatives with the broader aims of the SDA (P2:74 142-144).

One quotation to substantiate the inference that the integration of SDA in traditional HEIs' ETD practices is difficult is as follows:

Reiner *et al.* (2000:2), Greyling (2001:3), Botha (2003:1) and Van der Westhuizen and Maharasoa (2004:39) note the challenges pertaining to the integration of HEI staff development practices with the requirements of the SDA (P2:1 4-7).

One of the five quotations to substantiate the finding that the extensive cost and laborious process of providing registered ETD programmes in HEIs, is as follows:

Fourie (2003:1), Botha (2002:3); Van Niekerk (2004:110) and Layton-Matthews (2004:1) are concerned about the extensive costs and the laborious process involved in registering the workplace learning programmes on the National Qualifications Framework, and also in the accreditation of workplace learning providers (P2:3 13-17).

Two of the seven quotations to substantiate the finding that the lack of support and guidance from the ETDP SETA, are as follows:

The comments of Strydom (2004:292), Van Niekerk (2004:111) and Govender (2003:8) that staff development in HEIs is being hampered by the lack of support and guidance from government through the ETDP SETA, are grounds for believing that there is a break in social capital between the HEIs and the ETDP SETA (P1:857 1892-1896). The government's media briefing on Accelerated and Shared Growth – South Africa (ASGISA) refers to public enterprises being consulted in training and development matters, but it is not clear whether HEIs were included (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006:1) (P1:317 217-220).

One of the three quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs' ETD practices are not co-ordinated for presentation to the ETDP SETA, is as follows:

The ETDP SETA skills adviser structure does not provide for a co-ordinating function so that the HEI-specific needs from the nine provinces can be consolidated for presentation to the ETDP SETA chamber. This implies that as the skills development matters submitted by HEIs are not co-ordinated, they cannot be presented as HEIs' collective needs to the ETDP SETA levy chamber (P1:914 472-490).

For example, one of the three quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs submit their Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report solely to receive grants, is as follows:

Le Grange (SAUVCA Report, March 2004) argues that the general trend among HEIs is to recover as rebates the skills development levies they have paid, not to further the aims of the SDA (P2:16 152-155).

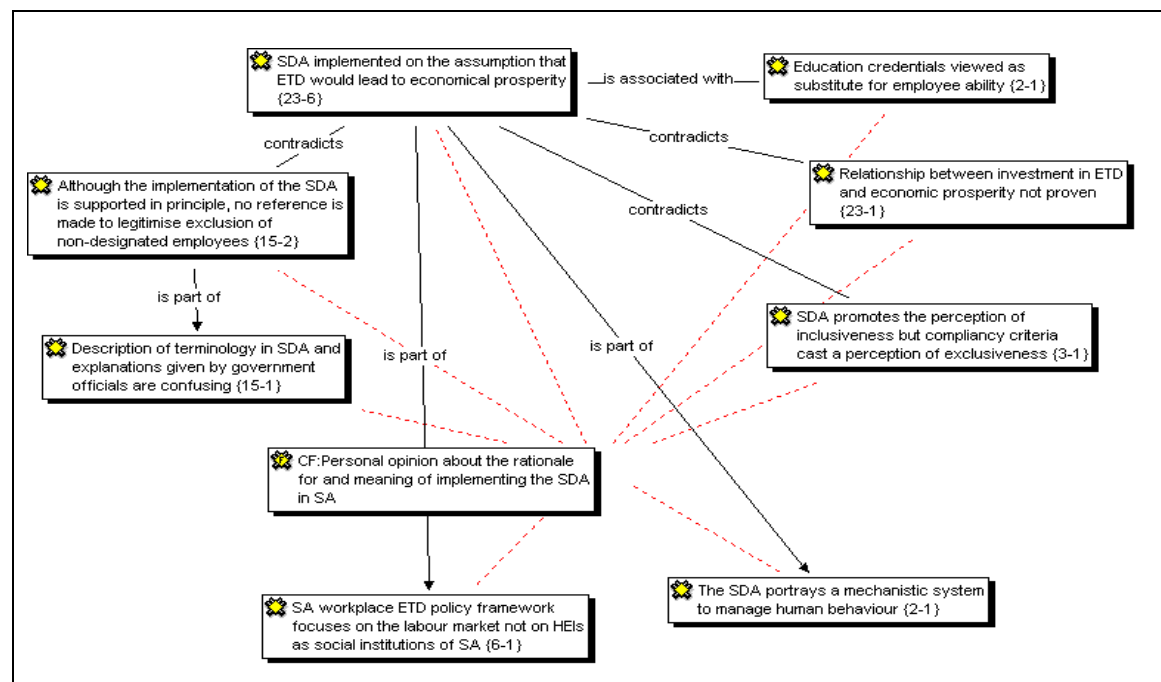
Two of the three quotations to substantiate the conclusion that the SDA is perceived as a form of tax, are as follows:

Lee (2002:4), Zideman, (1996:313), as well as Whalley and Zideman (1990: 377) cautions that industry might view the levy-financing scheme as an additional tax (P1:88 423-424). Cloete (2001:8) argues that private and public organisations are considering the SDA as another tax (P2:8 145-147).

I now present the fourth network display of my findings to illustrate my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA.



#### 4.2.4 Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA



**Figure 4.5 Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA**

The network display shown in Figure 4.5 illustrates the findings of my personal opinions about the reasons for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA. My personal opinions were grouped into eight interrelated themes which are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Personal opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA*. The number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected to substantiate a theme as well as the number of assigned documents from which quotations were selected, is shown in the brackets (e.g. 23-1) of each textbox.

The number of quotations assigned to the three themes on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> (97 in total) can be viewed on the compact disk (Public Voice: Outputs). For example, three of the five quotations to substantiate the finding that the SDA is implemented on the assumption that ETD would lead to economic prosperity, are as follows:

"There is compelling evidence that points to the strong relationship between investments in human capital (education, training, health, nutrition) and economic growth and development" (Pandor, 2006:1) (P1:31 173-175). The Policy Framework for Education and Training (1996) states: "Unless the types of knowledge and skills available to society are transformed, the apartheid labour market will continue to exist and economic development will remain stagnant" (P1: 35 186-189). The Memorandum

of the SDA notes that South Africa's poor economic performance can be attributed to the poor quality and relevance of skills in the workplace as well as the low levels of investment in education and training (P1:312 145-148).

One of the two quotations to substantiate the inference that education credentials are viewed the substitute of employee ability is as follows:

The SDA specifies that providers of workplace learning must be accredited and the programme outcomes achieved should provide workers with qualifications that are recognised nationally in the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Republic of South Africa, 1998b) (P2:36 233-237). The organisation that employs highly qualified people will outwit and outperform another company (P1:399 1661-1662).

Four of the 23 quotations to substantiate the finding that the relationship between investment in ETD and economic prosperity are not proven, are as follows:

Schultz (1961:1), one of the leading proponents of Human Capital Theory, writes: "Although it is obvious that people acquire useful skills and knowledge, it is not obvious that these skills and knowledge are a form of capital, [or] that this capital is a substantial part of a product of deliberate investment." (P1:784 1569-1573). Lin (1999:29) postulates that the proponents of Human Capital Theory portray the value of investment in education as an ideology for influencing the masses to internalise the values of this theory (P1:611 1546-1548). Livingstone (1997:9) argues: "Human Capital equates workers' knowledge levels with their levels of formal schooling... [to] estimate individual economic returns on learning" (P1:610 15440-1546). It is not clear whether educated people are necessarily more productive or wealthier than uneducated people (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4; Livingstone, 2002:1; Baptise, 2001:195; Quiggin, 2000:130; Livingstone, 1997:9) (P1:818 1643-1646).

Two of the three quotations to substantiate the inference that the SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness, are as follows:

Although the template provided by the ETDP SETAs does not restrict HEIs from planning and reporting on their education and training initiatives for staff members in designated groups only, the criteria used for evaluating the industry plans and reports are based solely on the previously described NSDS targets (percentages) (P1:346 452-456). I informed the Skills Development Committee (SDC) that compliance with the SDA would mean that the University's WSP would also have to demonstrate that a concerted effort was being made towards the workplace learning of designated staff members. Since the majority of the University's planned staff development activities did not meet these criteria, the University's first WSP was a sketchy reflection of its total staff development plan. The members of the SDC responded negatively, arguing that the result of a sketchy WSP would be that the University would receive a WSP grant that would be less than the amount to which the University was entitled. Furthermore, the SDC members stated that it seemed unjust that the "SDA should focus on accredited workplace learning while ignoring the HEI's workplace learning initiatives that had not been accredited" and asked: "Why should the University highlight workplace learning for designated staff members in particular when achieving the institutional goals depended on enhancing all staff members' competencies?" (P2:93 58-76).

One of the two quotations to substantiate the finding that the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour, is as follows:

I believe that the SDA's focus on preferential treatment for certain staff categories in HEIs is another example of the way in which Human Capital Theory is embedded in the fabric of the SDA, because prioritisation implies that organisations have to implement decision-making systems which by implication manage humans in a way similar to managing the machines in a production chain (Baptiste, 2001:185) (P1:506 551:556). Staff members of the particular HEI are therefore torn away from self-preservation and self-improvement, only to be viewed mechanistically as units in the chain of production (Baptiste, 2001:184; Ritzer and Smart, 2003:180) (P2:9 86-90).

Two of the six quotations to substantiate the inference that the SA workplace ETD policy framework focuses on the labour market and not on HEIs as social institutions of SA, are as follows:

The SA economy is seen as a dualistic economy – a First-World economy based on a skilled labour force and a Third-World economy based on marginalised or unskilled workers regarded as unemployable" (P1:301 167:169). "[T]o increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4) (P1:890 143-145).

Three of the six quotations to substantiate the finding that the descriptions of terminology in the SDA and explanations given by government officials are confusing, are as follows:

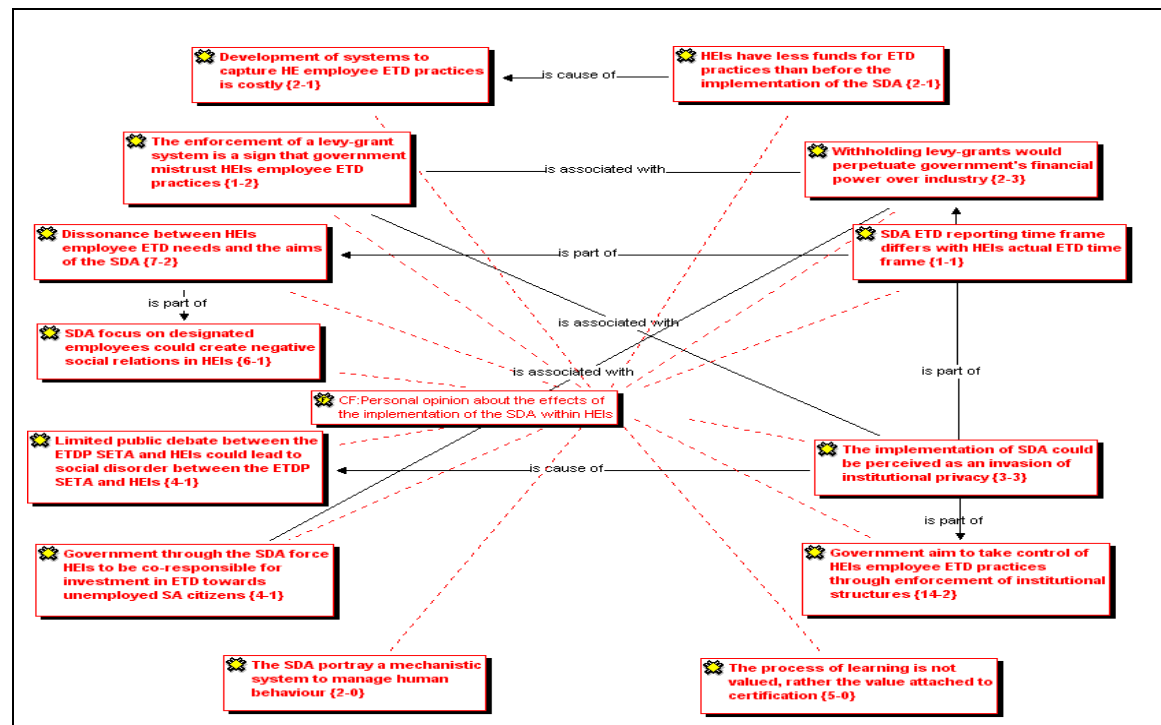
"The organisations that stand to gain the most are those that equip their employees with knowledge, talent, skills and opportunities to deliver and create value. It is such organisations that will establish a culture of lifelong learning and that will ensure sustainable growth in our economy" (Mdladlana, 2003a:1) (P1:302 176-180). The SDA refers to skills as: "to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4). (P1:316 209-210). Neither the EEA nor the SDA nor the documentation of the ETDP SETA describes how the previously mentioned percentages should be interpreted. Does it mean that when HEIs prioritise their education and training needs, 85% should be prioritised for black people, and 54% of the 85% should be females and include 4% people with disabilities? Or does it mean that 4% of an institution's education and training needs should be prioritised for people with disabilities (irrespective of race and gender) and 85% for black people, leaving 11% for white people? (P1:539 352-359).

Four of the 15 quotations to substantiate the finding that although the implementation of the SDA is supported in principle by HEIs, no reference is made to legitimise the exclusion of non-designated employees, are as follows:

Authors do not express the belief that education and training should be legislated to ensure the education and training of employees from certain groups, nor that the education and training of employees should be governed by bodies external to an organisation (in this case the HEIs). (P1:523 584-588). The Memorandum of the SDA notes that South Africa's poor economic performance can be attributed to the poor quality and relevance of skills in the workplace as well as the low levels of investment in education and training in the workplace (Memorandum of the Skills Development Act, 1998:46). (P1:861 145-148).

I now present the fifth network display of my findings to illustrate my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs.

#### 4.2.5 Personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs



**Figure 4.6** Personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs

The network display shown in Figure 4.6 illustrates the findings of my personal opinions about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs. My personal opinions were grouped into 13 interrelated themes which are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Personal opinions about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs*. The number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected to substantiate a theme as well as the number of assigned documents from which quotations were selected, is shown in the brackets (e.g. 6-1) of each textbox. The number of quotations assigned to the three themes on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> (52 in total) can be viewed on the compact disk (Public Voice: Outputs). For example, three of the six quotations to substantiate that: the SDA's focus on designated employees could create negative social relations in HEIs, are as follows:

HEIs are compelled to invest in the education and training of their staff members, giving priority to people disadvantaged by apartheid (P 1:503 544-546). Consequently, if HEIs can afford to pay only for the development of designated staff members, the development of non-designated staff members would be neglected (P1:504 546-548). It

is questionable whether the government, in its quest for economic prosperity, recognises the value of staff members who did benefit from education and training under apartheid (P1:508 561-563).

Two of the 15 quotations to substantiate the finding that there is dissonance between HEIs' employee ETD needs and the aims of the SDA, are as follows:

The SDA states: " ... To encourage employers to use the workplace as an active learning environment" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4) and that workers (employees) should be encouraged to "partake in learnerships and other training programmes" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4 and 16 to 18). Does this mean that government does not recognise development which takes place outside the workplace? This may well be the case, since learnerships and other training programmes are described in the SDA as learning directed towards workplace needs (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4) (P1:917 227-234). HEIs' workplace education and training programmes for staff members should be developed on the basis of unit standards, be accredited on the NQF and be registered with the ETDP SETA. Yet the quality of the education programmes provided by HEIs is assured by the Committee for Higher Education, based on the principle of self-accreditation (Naidoo, 2004:3) (P1:922 615-620).

To substantiate the finding that the enforcement of a levy grant system is a sign that government mistrusts HEIs' employee ETD practices, I quote:

The levy grant system indicates that government seems to mistrust the ability of HEIs to budget and use education and training funds freely (P1:525 601-603).

One of the two quotations to substantiate the finding that the development of systems to capture HEIs' employee ETD practices is costly, is as follows:

The structures established in terms of the SDA indicate that the government realised that achieving the aims of the SDA would not only cost money but would also require structural support (P1:852 592-594).

One of the two quotations to substantiate the conclusion that HEIs have less funds for ETD practices than before the implementation of the SDA, is as follows:

HEIs are compelled to pay a levy of 1% of their payroll. On the basis of compliance (with various criteria as previously described), HEIs would earn a rebate from the ETDP SETA. The levy grant system indicates that government seems to mistrust the ability of HEIs to budget and use education and training funds freely. Therefore, it can be questioned whether the education and training budget of HEIs has not decreased after the implementation of the SDA, because the mandatory grant only equates to 50% of the HEIs' levy amount (Republic of South Africa, 2004:15) (P1:773 599-606).

One of the two quotations to substantiate the finding that withholding levy grants would perpetuate government's financial power over industry, is as follows:

In this way it seeks to monitor the planning and quality of staff development in HEIs on the one hand, and consequently, based on HEIs progress with the latter, to pay a rebate to HEIs on the other hand. (P1:778 444-447).



To substantiate that SDA ETD reporting time-frame differs from HEIs' actual ETD time-frame, I quote:

By implication the HEIs are compelled firstly to plan and report on a prescribed ETDP SETA template their staff development initiatives in a time-frame from 1 April to 28 March annually. (P 1:779 447-449).

Two of the three quotations to substantiate the finding that the implementation of SDA could be perceived as an invasion of institutional privacy, are as follows:

HEIs might view the implementation of the aforementioned structures as an invasion of institutional privacy (P1:761 422-423). Does this mean that HEI management is not, in the eyes of government, fit to manage the education and training of staff members? Or is it merely a matter of government's attempt to govern HEIs' staff development traditions? (P1:762 431-434).

Three of the 14 quotations to substantiate the inference that government aims at taking control of HEIs' employee ETD practices through the enforcement of institutional structures, are as follows:

Employers should consult with employee representatives on matters dealt with in the SDA (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) (P1:84 406-407). For example, the SDA requires the establishment of an institutional Skills Development Committee to serve as a consultative forum regarding the implementing and reporting on workplace skills plans (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) (P1:91 426-429). SDA requires *inter alia* the: "appointment by employers of workplace skills development facilitators" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) and that employers should consult with employee representatives on matters dealt with in the SDA(P1: 338 404-407).

One of the two quotations to substantiate the finding that the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour, is as follows:

I believe that the SDA's focus on preferential treatment for certain staff categories in HEIs is another example of the way in which Human Capital Theory is embedded in the fabric of the SDA, because prioritisation implies that organisations have to implement decision-making systems which by implication manage humans in a way similar to managing the machines in a production chain (Baptiste, 2001:185) (P1:506 551-556). Staff members of the particular HEI are therefore torn away from self-preservation and self-improvement, only to be viewed mechanistically as units in the chain of production (Baptiste, 2001:184; Ritzer and Smart, 2003:180) (P2:9 86-90).

Two of the four quotations to substantiate the inference that the government through the SDA compels HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD for unemployed SA citizens, are as follows:

The employer (in this case HEIs) is held responsible and accountable for planning, funding and reporting on the development of staff members (prioritised for designated staff members) as well as for contributing to the skills development of unemployed SA citizens (P1:851 72-75). Imposing a levy grant system and establishing the ETDP SETA and the NQF structure, government intends to make HEIs co-responsible for funding the education and training of not only its employees but also the unemployed population of the country (P1:858 594-597).

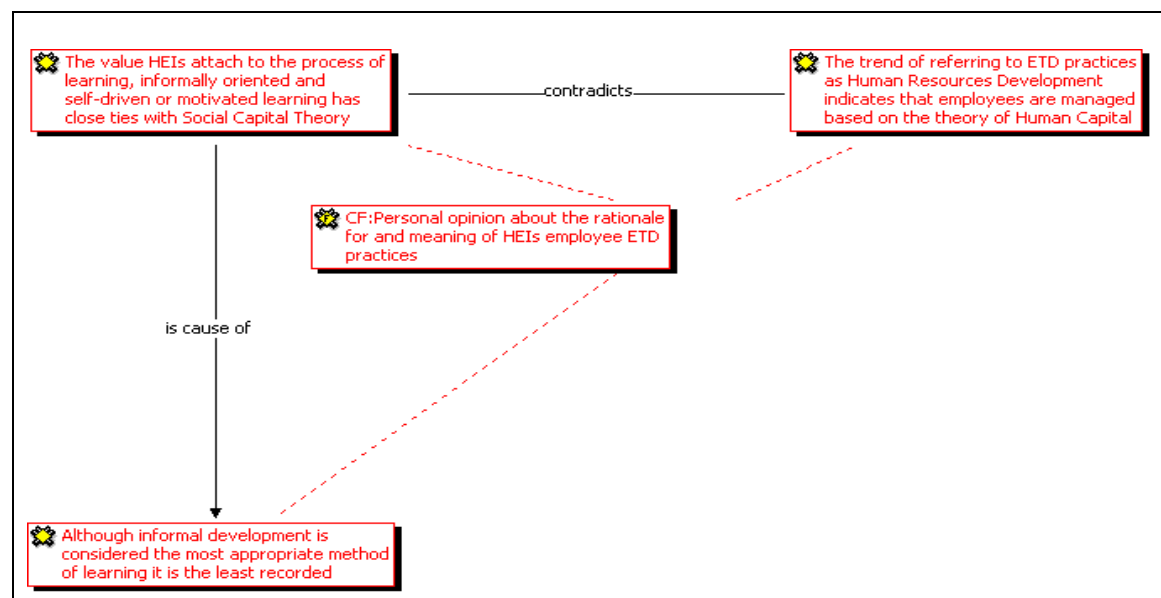


Two of the four quotations to substantiate the inference that limited public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to social disorder between the ETDP SETA and HEIs, are as follows:

Parker (2003:1) comments that the ETDP SETA has not established a strong presence or identity in higher education. (P1:854 1861-1862). The workshop held by the ETDP SETA on 19 and 20 June 2003 with all the HEIs is the only instance found in the literature of a national attempt made by the SETA to engage in some kind of dialogue to create an in-depth understanding of the HE sector (ETDP SETA, 2003:12) (P1:855 1862-1866).

I now present the final network display of my findings to illustrate my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA.

#### 4.2.6 Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices



**Figure 4.7 Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices**

The network display shown in Figure 4.7 illustrates the findings of my personal opinions about the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. My personal opinions were grouped into three interrelated themes which are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Personal opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices*. The value that HEIs attach to the process of learning, informally oriented and self-driven or motivated learning, seems to have close ties with Social Capital Theory, as can be seen in the following quotation:

Social Capital is regarded as the spin-off, by-product or surplus value of human interaction (Crossley, 2006:286; Svendsen, 2004:11,12 and 18) (P1:843 1749-1750).

Social Capital is 'social' because [it] involves people behaving sociably" and "[it] could be described as a form of 'capital' because [it] refers to a resource that produces action" (Svendson *et al.*, 2004:18; Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2003:2; Gabby and Leenders, 2001:6) (P1: 847 1752-1755). Social Capital Theory refers to an intangible resource which spontaneously accrues during social interaction and serves as the impetus, trigger or motivation to act (Collier, 2003:22) (P1:850 1767-1770).

Three of the seven quotations to substantiate the finding that the trend of referencing ETD practices as Human Resources Development indicates that employees are managed on the basis of the theory of Human Capital, are as follows:

Proponents usually give a one-sided view of Human Capital, based upon the perceived economic benefit as the prime value of this theory, while downplaying human behaviour and the interests of those who participate in education (Baptiste, 2001:198; Quiggin, 2000: 136). (P1:932 1540-1544). Livingstone (1997:9) argues: "Human Capital equates workers' knowledge levels with their levels of formal schooling... [to] estimate individual economic returns on learning." Lin (1999:29) postulates that the proponents of Human Capital Theory portray the value of investment in education as an ideology for influencing the masses to internalise the values of this theory (P1: 933 1544-1548). Lin (1999:29) argues that Human Capital Theory is a capitalist scheme embedded in society, where the dominant class calls for investment to be made in human beings to capture the surplus value generated. Lin (1999:29) comments that the term "capital" in Human Capital Theory is highlighted to refer to certain elements. The first element is the surplus value generated and pocketed by the capitalists, and the second element is the investment by the capitalist, with expected returns in a marketplace (Lin, 1999:29). Therefore, Lin (1999:29) asserts that Human Capital Theory is based on the "exploitative social relations between two classes" (P1:934 1549-1557).

Three of the four quotations to substantiate the inference that although informal development is considered the most appropriate method of learning, it is the least recorded, are as follows:

The learning gained through informal social practices has become pivotal to the learning process in HEIs. However, it is important to note that the case study reports of Allen *et al.* (2003) and Blackwell *et al.* (2003) make no reference to the recording of informal development activities (P1:639 1169-1173). I believe that the absence of recorded informal development opportunities is an indication that the accumulation of learning records is not considered a means towards achieving credentialled qualifications for the purpose of earning external rewards. Otherwise, in my opinion, records of informal development opportunities would have been widely published (P1: 924 1182:1187). Shahnaz *et al.* (2005) report on a case study at the Bowling Green State University (Ohio) on the development needs of 92 departmental chairs. The response rate of 60% to a questionnaire survey revealed that the departmental chairs believed that the most successful training interventions were round-table discussions or off-campus speakers from other higher education institutions (Shahnaz *et al.*, 2005:588). This case study again illustrates that informal development is recognised as a learning strategy, but does not give a clear record of when such events took place or their duration. Similarly, Blackmore *et al.* (2006:373-387) report on an interview survey completed by 18 leaders in academic staff development at universities in the English Midlands, which found that these academic leaders: "learn informally and 'socially', seek and use feedback, usually of an informal kind" (Blackmore *et al.*, 2006: 377). This is yet another example that informal development is recognised as a strategy of development in HEIs. However, no mention is made of recording such interventions nor that such informal learning opportunities were used as a means towards obtaining a qualification (P1: 926 1217-1232).

In this section, I documented the findings of my literature survey (non-empirical data analysis). In the next section I discuss the findings of the empirical data analysis.

### **4.3 An exposition of meaning emanating from the analysis of empirical data**

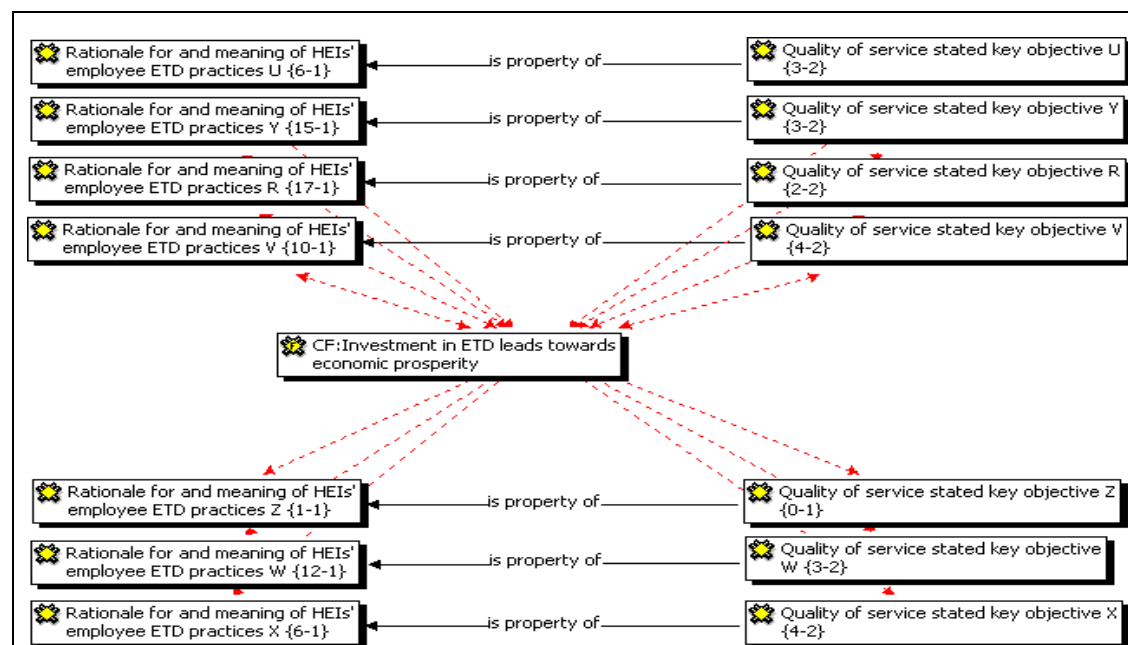
The findings of the non-empirical data are presented in the previous section of Chapter 4. The contention was furthermore (see §4.1) that the findings of the non-empirical data analysis would be compared to the account of the empirical data analysis. In this section, I therefore offer an account of the empirical data analysis. This account of the empirical data comprises the findings of the data analysis of the individual interactions I had with the research participants and the analysis of the data obtained from the focus group interaction (where applicable). As previously described in Chapter 3 (§3.4 *Research programme*), the data collected from the individual interaction were obtained from interviews (either face-to-face or telephonic) or from documentation received from the research participants (Skills Development Facilitators). I conclude every section with a critical interpretative justification for the match or mismatch between the non-empirical and empirical data analyses.

The data analysis of the section that follows is presented in accordance with the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. The findings of the non-empirical data analysis have been presented as themes (critical interpretative) which emerged from my literature review, in attempt to understand the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development in HEIs. I therefore present each theme relevant to the non-empirical data analysis, followed by a network display and account (quotations) of the meaning of the data obtained from my empirical study (interaction with the research participants). The quotations form part of my subjective and selective account (verbatim or an excerpt of the information given to me by the research participants) of the research participants' perceptions of how they manage staff development. My personal narrative has been italicised and reported verbatim in each quotation. I now present the data analysis regarding HEIs' understanding of the reasons for and meaning of the implementation of the SDA in SA.

### 4.3.1 Documented opinions about the reasons for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA

The following three themes are presented as relevant to the documented opinions about the reasons for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA (refer §4.2, Figure 4.2): investment in ETD leads to economic prosperity (individual, organisational and country at large); redresses the past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during apartheid; and legislates structures to enable investment in ETD. I now present the empirical data analysis of each of these three themes. The empirical data analysis is presented by means of a network display generated by *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> followed by a discussion of the network display and the account of the findings (quotations) relevant to understanding it. The aim of the presentations is firstly to provide the SDFs' understanding of the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA, and secondly to demonstrate whether these three themes have become ingrained in HEIs' employee ETD practices and/or their effects. I now present the first of the three network displays relevant to the rationale for and meaning of the implementation of the SDA in SA.

#### 4.3.1.1 Investment in ETD leads to economic prosperity (individual, organisation and country at large)



**Figure 4.8 Investment in ETD leads to economic prosperity (individual, organisation and country at large)**

The network display shown in Figure 4.8 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* the quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected and shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate whether the rationale for and meaning of employee Education, Training and Development (ETD) practices in HEIs match or mismatch the rationale for and meaning of the implementation of the SDA (i.e. investment in ETD leads to economic gains for the individual or the country as a whole). The network display illustrates that there are various opinions about the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. In addition, service quality is illustrated as a core property of the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. It should be emphasised that the number of findings (quotations) selected from each research participant (in the above network display as well as in those that follow) does not represent differences in opinions but only the quotations that contribute to an understanding of the findings. The text assigned to each quotation on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> (in the above network display and those that follow) can be viewed on the compact disk (Public Voice: Outputs). The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant to the understanding of the rationale for and meaning of employee ETD in HEIs:

Human resources development opportunities should be geared towards the strategic goal of retaining, developing and utilising skills at the University (P 1: RD1.6, 60-62). [It] fosters the vision, mission, values and commitments of the University (P 1: RD1.14, 43-44). [It] enhances staff members' employability (P 1: RD1:15, 47-47). It aims to enhance a culture of learning in which continuous learning is nurtured and encouraged in the workplace (P 2: RD2:7, 25-26).

The University regards as essential the provision of opportunities for all staff in respect of their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve the quality of workplace productivity and staff satisfaction. Staff development (defined as those processes through which the organisation and individuals engage in ongoing learning to meet new challenges and conditions of work) is an integral part of the working life of each member of staff at the University. It is associated with the development needs of the individual, of groups of staff and the achievement of the University's overall strategy. Neither the maintenance of current performance nor the achievement of significant change will be possible without staff who are committed to the University's objectives and who also have the necessary skills to achieve them. To ensure this, the University will continue to support staff development which involves all staff equally as partners in achieving the aims of the University (P 7: UD1:3, 8-21). This entails: helping individual staff members to acquire knowledge and skills which will allow them to carry out their current duties with maximum effectiveness, and thereby contribute to the achievement of agreed objectives; helping individuals or groups of staff to be innovative and creative and to deal positively and productively with the demands placed on them by transformation, organisational change and development; helping individuals develop skills and/or gain qualifications, which will contribute to the development of their work and equip them for their future career; helping individuals to develop skills and expertise, in order to contribute to the development of the University as well as their



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own professional and career development; and assisting individuals to gain appropriate nationally and internationally recognised qualifications (P 7: UD1:4, 31-46).

The University regards as essential the provision of opportunities for all employees to improve their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve their ability and the quality of service to clients both in and outside the University (P22: VD1:1, 7-10). It is critical that the University's staff development policy, procedures and practices should play significant roles in attracting, developing and retaining employees of high quality (P22: VD1:3, 10-12). The central aim of staff development is twofold. Firstly, it is to develop and enhance the knowledge and skills of individual staff members related to their specific work environment; and secondly, to improve the functioning of the institution as a whole (P22: VD1:6, 29-32). Ultimately this is always continuous professional development on the one hand, and on the other hand the idea is ultimately to improve workplace performance, since high-quality workplace performance is what we look for in our individual employees (P23: VT1:4, 40-43).

The policy serves as a mechanism for the integration of training and development interventions into broader performance improvement initiatives and alignment of training with the 2015 Strategic Plan (An Agenda for Transformation) and other human resource policies (P 9: WD1:3, 17-20). To achieve a systematic, outcomes and competency based approach to education, training and development initiatives, directly linked to the requirements and needs of the University as outlined in the Training Strategy, Work Place Skills, the University's Strategic Plan and other related policy documents (P 9: WD1:4, 60-64). The University needs to adapt continuously to the changing environment and client needs to achieve service excellence. This is vital for continuous growth in organisational intelligence and skills levels (P 9: WD1:10, 127-129). Staff Development at the University focuses on three areas: Technical skills needed to do the job better or latest trends in technology which will assist in improved quality service and efficiency or the overall performance of the individual and in turn the unit. Specialised Skills needed for professionals in all fields. Formal development – which is assistance towards studying for a formal qualification (P10: WD2:1, 10-18).

Refers to all training practices that lead to the development of the maximum potential of all staff members and enhances better quality, productivity and more job satisfaction (P12: XD1:3, 68-70). The objectives of this policy are to promote staff excellence, to develop a culture for high quality lifelong learning; to foster skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth, to foster leadership and innovation, to promote opportunities for skills acquisition in development initiatives, to maximise staff's potential and to provide equal training opportunities for the holistic development of all employees (P12: XD1:4, 22-30).

Enhance efficient and effective teaching and learning, research and community service at the University. Provide opportunities to improve skills and acquire new skills to enhance competency levels of all employees in the framework of lifelong learning and continuous organisational improvement (P16: YD1:3, 17-21). Imbue University employees with a sense of a positive career attitude, a professional development ethos and culture of work coupled with accountability and commitment to the vision and objectives of the University (P16: YD1:6, 27-30). The training that we engage in, is aligned and supports the bigger mission of the University being quality- research, community engagement and teaching. Without planning, people take ad hoc, you know, courses, that do not actually contribute towards the business of the institution (P18: YF1:7, 31-35). Our ETD planning is just to make sure, that we're answering the needs that exist. And also then there would be the other leg of it, which is to contribute to the national and the sector needs (P19: YF2:1, 8-11).

It starts from skills programme identification: which skills programmes are needed and then again that also build up to career paths that will also lead ultimately to a qualification (P20: ZF1:17, 118-120).



The above-mentioned quotations (representing the whole group of participants) substantiate the finding that the rationale for and aim of staff development in HEIs are to further the individual's knowledge and skills so as to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of higher education. From none of the above quotations could the conclusion be drawn that the aim of staff development in HEIs is to promote economic prosperity, but instead they substantiate that there is a focus on employee effectiveness and efficiency towards providing a quality service. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant to the understanding that quality service is key to the rationale for and meaning of employee ETD practices in HEIs:

[T]he main focus [of ETD] would be ... to enhance the core functions of the University which is learning generation via teaching and research and community services. In other words, our internal training would focus on enhancing the quality of our service. *Why quality?* To enhance how we generate knowledge. *And the focus of SDA...* they would look at delivering skilled builders (P 6: RT1:29, 26-31). Definitely, it is for the quality service of the University. Which is one element that makes a difference between the skills development and the staff development in the University (P 6: RT1:32, 46-48).

Essentially, enhancing service quality and achieving economic gain are actually interlinked goals, and cannot be separated. *Why?* If you improve quality, this will result in knowledge gain. In our HE context, it is quality of our academic service that is the overriding motive for staff development (P 8: UT1.10, 23-26). The University has a culture of quality assurance (P27: UF1:43, 276-279).

The University regard as essential the provision of opportunities for all employees to improve their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve their ability and the quality of service to clients both in and outside the University (P22: VD1:1, 7-10). On the one hand, it is to provide quality relevant interventions, but on the other hand to enhance performance. More so, our quality motive (P24: VF1:40, 140-149).

In terms of the reason for staff development, we at the University feel strongly that the promotion of staff development is to enhance the quality of service delivery and service excellence, allowing for improved performance (P10: WD2:6, 25-29).

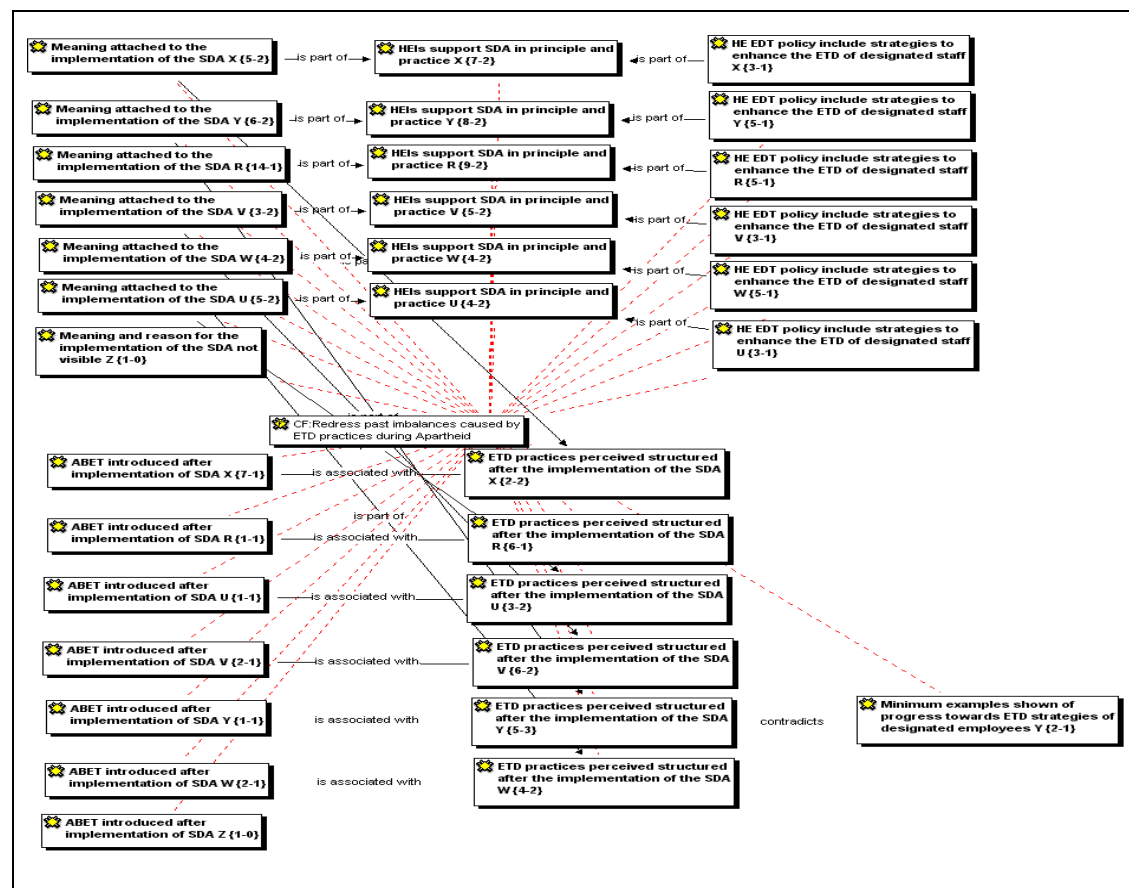
To all training practices that lead to the development of the maximum potential of all staff members. *Why?* It enhances better quality, productivity and job satisfaction (P12: XD1:19, 67-70). I think there are a few reasons why I think we're doing that. One, is to make certain that the training and development that we engage in, is aligned to and supports the bigger mission of the University, namely quality research, community engagement and teaching (P18: YF1:8, 30-33).

Considering that the documentation received from the SDFs matched (triangulated) the SDFs interpretation of the rationale and aim of staff development, I decided not to debate this theme further during the focus group discussion. In this section I present the findings related to the rationale of and reasons for HEIs' employee ETD practices. The findings substantiate that the reasons for and aim of staff development in HEIs are to further the individual's knowledge and skills so as to improve the

effectiveness and efficiency of higher education in providing a quality service. This finding resonates with the findings of the non-empirical data analysis in terms of HEIs' ETD practices concerning the systematic attempt to facilitate individuals' learning interests towards institutional requirements (see Wexley (2002) and Reid *et al.* (2004:3) (P2:77, 293-296). Considering that the rationale for and aim of staff development in HEIs are not viewed as economic gains but rather as quality of service, this clearly differs from the rationale for and aim of the implementation of the SDA towards economic gains for the individual, organisation and country at large.

I now present the second of the three network displays, in an attempt to illustrate that HEIs' understanding of the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA is to redress the past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during apartheid.

#### 4.3.1.2 Redressing the past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during apartheid



**Figure 4.9 HEIs' staff development practices include strategies to redress the past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during apartheid**

The network display shown in Figure 4.9 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets, e.g. (6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the perceptions of the SDFs about the rationale for implementing the SDA in SA. The network display also illustrates that redressing past imbalances is included in the employee education, training and development (ETD) practices of HEIs, and furthermore that HEIs support the implementation of the SDA in practice and principle. In addition, the network display illustrates that HEIs' policy framework includes strategies to enhance ETD for employees from designated groupings, as well as that Adult Basic Education and Training is one the ETD strategies implemented in this regard. Moreover, the above network illustrates that in the midst of implementing strategies towards redress, the ambit of employee ETD practices became more structured after the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant to our understanding that HEIs view the implementation of the SDA as including ETD strategies to redress the past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during apartheid and that the ETD ambit of HEIs became more structured after the implementation of the SDA:

The SDA is located in a history which involves a transition from a society based on division, injustice and exclusion as such (P 5: RF2:1, 26-27). The Affirmative Action clause is clearly to ensure that there is some kind of affirmative action possible. It is broadly based but at least it sets the tone (P 5: RF2:2, 52-67). To improve the prospects and opportunities for persons who find it difficult to be employed (P 5: RF2:4, 95-98). If we look at the Act in a broader context, that is the context that says yes, we come out of a very unfair discriminatory dispensation, there is a lot of inequality we need to redress (P 5: RF2:8, 209-212). I know our employment equity hasn't achieved the required objective (P 6: RT1:22, 178-179). *However, what is the meaning of redress in HE, should it be on a programme or personal level?* It seems on a personal level since the only thing that the WSP wants, what it requires, is that there should be a focus on a designated group and it should be distinct in that regard in the WSP (P21: RF1:26, 230-233). Therefore, the SDA's purpose is to redress the imbalances of the past; the target being meaningful and accredited training that would also include formal qualifications for 85% Blacks, 54% Women, 4% Disabled and Youth. *Does this mean that white males are excluded?* I think on these targets White males are excluded simply because they are perceived as previously advantaged. That is why they are excluded. *But if you look at these targets it does not add up to a 100% and it does not say that white males are excluded.* Yes I do not know how they [DoL] came up with these percentages. It seems as if the percentages given for women and the disabled are included in the 85% for Blacks. Thus in principle it is mainly about prioritisation towards designated groups. Otherwise the SDA would be perceived as discriminating towards white males. But then again why did they [DoL] decide on these percentages, why did they not put a small percentage like for disabled for white males? So it means that they did it deliberately. This is why we started to implement development projects specifically for designated employees at XXX (P32: RT2:18, 116-128).

The national approach to a skills development strategy as reflected in the consultation document can be summarised as follows: Promotion of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), and development of skills in the SME sector (P26: UD2:1, 25-32). *Do you think it's fair to exclude non-designated employees?* Hmmpf...I think it's realistic to foresee that the SETAs will be emphasising things such as equity to a far greater extent. They will only start to look at how many people from designated groups did we train. Now if you simply do not have the equity representation in your institution that is required [sigh] it means that some of our black staff and other disadvantaged groups will have to be professional students here at our learning centre in order to provide the kind of numbers uhmpf. If these requirements are applied inflexibly and our funding is made conditional upon meeting those targets I foresee a stand-off, I'm not, I don't want to get unnecessarily anxious or angry about it, but there will be a conflict. I don't feel I'm a loner because I think higher education in general will have a problem (P28: UF2:8, 123-134). *Why do you think the Skills Act came into being?* The Skills Development Act essentially promotes the notion of skills development in South Africa from a philosophical point of view – however, on its own it is not powerful enough or practical enough in delineating the mechanisms of skills development. It is vital that the SDA be understood in conjunction with the Skills Development Levy Act (SDLA) for a more comprehensive understanding of the way in which skills development will practically operate in SA. From my own personal perspective, the SDA must also be understood in relation to the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) for the full detailed picture to emerge. In my profession and past experience, the SDA and SDLA are often referred to as the "carrot and stick" combination. Together, they serve as both a mobiliser and incentiviser, but on the flip side, also as a punitive measure if not correctly implemented and supported (P37: UT2:1, 4-14). Flowing out of the research work constantly conducted by the Skills Development Unit contained in the Department of Labour, and based on progress made with the National Skills Development Strategy as it cascades into Sector Skills Plans and Workplace Skills Plans, the country should have a clear idea of national progress with regard to employment equity statistics. As such, I would assume that these specific percentages have been stipulated in order to ensure the necessary progress in relation to national objectives. These percentages are in place to narrow the divide between those who were historically advantaged in comparison to those who were historically disadvantaged. These percentages, if implemented and realised in X, should level the "playing field" as seen in our X as far as opportunity and progression are concerned (P37: UT2:2, 16-27).

In terms of employment equity and a few other things, the SETA is trying to bring alignment in a way so your skills match the transformation initiatives. *Why so?* I'm not so sure because if you look at the way that our template has been drafted, the past two years it's left out employment equity completely (P25: VF2:4, 64:68). The SDA legislates workplace education, training and development and it allows employees to gain credits towards a qualification. However, it does not clearly state the responsibilities of SAQA, SETAs, Employers and Learners. Hence the targets set for Blacks, Women, Disabled and Youth are to redress past discrepancies. Previously probably 5% of women were identified for training and that is what we need to lift because women always came second. Hence, we emphasise the development of designated employees in X. (P34: VT2:1, 4-9).

The SDA is about development of skills to ensure that South Africa does not run short in any event (P35: WT1:13, 74-75). *And your institution's view on this?* Our management's view about the SDA is about training the people so that they are able to deliver or reach certain institutional objectives, one being the development of designated employees, but is part of the development strategy towards every employee (P35: WT1:14, 81-82).

*What is the aim and rationale for staff development in your institution?* The main reason is for the institution to reach strategic goals. I mean, they determine where they want to be, and one of the main, well the biggest resource that they have, is the human



resource, or resources, and um, to invest in your people to make sure that they're skilled, so that they can, um, do what they need to do so that you can reach your goals, (P29: XF1:9, 88-93). *And what is the aim and reason for implementing the SDA?* Our staff development is counter to the spirit of the SDA because the rationale of the Skills Development Act, is the upliftment of the people, and mainly focused on the previously disadvantaged in the lower levels. We all know that, if you look at the priorities at the SETA and the NSDS targets, it's not for people to get Master's and Doctorates. If, if we, if we pump the funds in the Master's and the Doctorates again, the people on the lower levels will not have the opportunities (P29: XF1:26, 265-270).

*What is the aim and rationale for implementing the SDA?* The SDA is about embracing the national imperatives of unemployment and to uplift the literacy level of staff so that they can apply for jobs that would put them in a better financial position than currently. *OK, the aim and reason for staff development in your institution?* The academics are already literate, but there are people in the support staff who are not formally accredited, they need to get certified or get their papers. So the institution as part of the country should make time available so that people attend skills programmes and Learnerships (P36: XT2:14, 81-86).

*Does your institution include strategies to enhance the development of designated employees?* The expenditure of our institution is lopsided in favour of the, the previously disadvantaged, but the thing is, from my perspective, we're already doing that. It's just a different commitment that we have got, uh, now, and the reporting and all that. But, we are doing what we have been doing all along (P19: YF2:22, 178-183). Skills development must be focused on developing, you know, designated groupings. *Why?* For a reason ... to contribute to the institution. Contributing to the institution is also contributing to a larger community (P19: YF2:67, 56-60).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that the SDFs view the implementation of the SDA as the government's strategy to redress past inequalities. The following quotations selected, illustrate that the intention of the SDA is included in the philosophy of ETD in HEIs:

The X comply with government regulatory requirements for a National Qualifications Framework, a strategy for skills development and employment equity (P 1: RD1:1, 34-37). Redress the imbalances resulting from the past (P 1: RD1:2, 48-49). Human resources development should be accessible on an equitable basis, should promote the principles of equity, and should reinforce the aims and objectives of the University (P 1: RD1:3, 63-65). **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE:** ... Ensuring human resources development compliance with government regulatory requirements for a National Qualifications Framework, and a strategy for skills development and employment equity (P 2: RD2:1, 23-31). The University will institute special programmes for the upliftment and development of black, female and disabled persons through affirmative action, in order to enable them to compete on an equal footing for promotion. This is important for skills development. These programmes could include the following: elimination of any discriminatory or potentially discriminatory policy, procedures, rules, regulations, customs and practices with regard to career development. Identification of black, female and disabled staff members who are under-utilised in terms of their qualifications and experience, and correctly placing such persons (P 5: RF2:6, 145-152).

In accordance with the University's equity policy there is a commitment to combating all unfair discrimination by ensuring that relevant development opportunities are made available for staff regardless of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth, creed,



employment category, handedness, or state of health (P 7: UD1:6, 23-29).

The staff development policy shall take cognisance of the following sections in that document: Promotion criteria, alternative progression and succession planning Employment Equity Policy (P22: VD1:19, 103:115). This policy also complies with and is aligned to the following significant and relevant South African legislation: South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1995, Skills Development Act of 1998, Skills Development Levies Act of 1999, and the Employment Equity Act (P22: VD1:20, 117-126).

Well, first of all it is to comply with the skills legislation in terms of submission of WSP and ATR, to recover the skills levies, but also to try and see what training and development interventions our employees and managers require and to provide some kind of initiatives towards designated employees (P24: VF1:2, 9-14).

Training initiatives at the University must be aligned to the broader plans and programmes aimed at promoting quality service, equity and empowerment of the designated groups. It is important that the University's Training and Development Policy be aligned to the Equity Plan, Recruitment and Selection Policies to support transformation (P 9: WD1:1, 131-137). The Work Skills Plan must serve in the Training and Development Committee and subsequently be submitted to the ETDP SETA in the format prescribed by the SETA (P 9: WD1:21, 496-502).

Preamble to staff development policy: the Skills Development Act, No. 55 of 1998, was promulgated to improve and develop the skills of South Africa's mainly unskilled labour force and to develop and promote the quality and advancement of education and training in South Africa. The Skills Development Levies Act, No. 9 of 1999, provides for the imposition of a skills development levy at a rate of 1% of the salary bill of an organisation. It is the responsibility of the Staff Development Unit to administer this process (P12: XD1:5, 32-41). To fulfil the compliance requirements of the Skills Development Act and Employment Equity Act; align it to the training needs identified in the Sector Skills Plan of the ETDP SETA (P12: XD1:7, 85-88).

The passing of the Skills Development Act (97 of 1998, as amended), as well as the Skills Development Levies Act (9 of 1999) has introduced an unprecedented opportunity for the increase in skill and productivity levels of the South African workforce (P16: YD1:1, 3-13). To this effect, the University's Skills Development Policy (SDP) must support all relevant employee efforts to further their education, training and development through a Skills Development scheme (P16: YD1:2, 14-16). Support skills that address sector-wide development areas as identified by the ETDP SETA (P16: YD1:8, 38-39).

The above-mentioned quotations show that HEIs not only view the implementation of the SDA as redressing past inequalities but also support the SDA in principle and practice. The following quotations have been selected to indicate that HEIs have implemented strategies to enhance the development of designated employees:

This University gives the highest weight to employment equity candidate[s] (P 5: RF2:15, 231-235). Some of the courses here are available for designated specific people, and others are available to all (P 6: RT1:37, 77-78). *Why are there programmes specific to designated employees?* Some of them [designated employees] would have been appointed on the basis of their potential and as a result we develop them to realise those potentials that we appointed in that particular job (P21: RF1:19, 145-147).

*Are there any programmes developed or strategies in place for the development of designated employees?* There's another strategy that I haven't mentioned, and that is



special programmes for designated employees. We have over the past five, six or seven years introduced a number of special programmes that were specifically for development purposes for people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. For example called the GOOT Growing Our Own Timber programme where we focus specifically on black and female academics. We also established here, with grant funding that we got from various donors, a unit that we called the Equity Development Unit, specifically aimed at academics in particular but also at support staff from previously disadvantaged backgrounds (P27: UF1:26, 285-294).

Staff transformation: the redress, equity and contemporary interventions in this institution to transform and improve employee performance, promote individual career paths and achieve the organisational vision and mission (P22: VD1:12, 231-233). We promote career development and employee retention, particularly in respect of designated employees (P22: VD1:13, 255-256). Redress and equity issues will receive adequate attention in the development of employees in order to promote the merits of a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-skilled employees who are productively engaged in the merged multi-campus University environment. This policy will incorporate the principles, procedures and practices of redress and equity as per the Employment Equity Act requirements. Selected staff categories, such as: black people, women and persons-with-disability, will be given due consideration for continuous development, mentoring, coaching and management (P22: VD1:15, 346-352).

To provide opportunities and monitor progress on special projects for previously disadvantaged individuals (P 9: WD1:11, 183-184). Facilitate the identification of recommended accelerated development programmes for employees in accordance with the University's Equity Plan (P 9: WD1:14, 216-218).

*I note on this document that your institution provides programmes for designated employees; can you tell my why?* If they've put that person [designated employee] on a progression plan, that person might be fast-tracked to do other courses, because they are earmarking the person to move into a certain area. It's not open for any person, it is for designated groups (P31: XT1:7, 74-84). *If it is a white male?* I'm not sure [giggle]. Because you will find that somewhere somehow it does happen though we may say you know it's only people from the designated groups that are being fast-tracked, but you do find in some areas it is very crucial that they really have to move with the people that they have at that point in time who may not fall in the designated group (P31: XT1:8, 86-91).

Employees with disabilities may apply for assistive devices recommended by the specific institution where they are registered for effective completion of the course of study and which will continue to enhance service delivery. A motivation from the institution where they are registered as well as a medical report must be submitted with the application. The amount will be determined annually (P16: YD1:14, 95-100).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that HEIs support the SDA in practice and principle. The following quotations have been selected to offer an example of the programmes implemented in HEIs to enhance the development of designated employees, e.g. ABET:

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is one of the University's skills development priorities. This programme is managed by the Skills Development Facilitator of the University (P 2: RD2:14, 123-125).

We do have an ABET programme, but I must say to you that we have a very small contingent of permanent staff who need ABET. Our ABET programme has up to about 50 or 60 learners, but 80% of those are not our own staff, so we provide the ABET

programme for the service providers, such as the cleaning contractors, the gardening contractors ... It's the social responsibility of this institution. And we provide that at our cost, they don't contribute (P27: UF1:20 217-223).

We deal with those projects like for example ABET (P23: VT1:3, 31-32), to the point where they can read your circulars and they can actually assist if the need arises to inform the public about what this institution does and where to go to find whatever (P24: VF1:27, 332-337).

It is the policy of University to introduce and use adult basic education and training (ABET) as a training input at XXX that forms part of an integrated career management process, with a view to empowering and developing individuals and ensuring a better qualified, more productive and developed workforce (P15: XD4:2, 11-16).

We support ABET, but not currently provided in our institution (P33: YT1:1, 3-3).

ABET, Oh yes, yes we have an ABET programme (P20: ZF1:25, 163-164).

Against this background it is clear that HEIs do support the SDA. I now present the quotations to substantiate the finding that HEIs' ETD environment has become more structured since the implementation of the SDA. The following quotations selected are relevant to this understanding:

I would say that firstly I'll start with the staff at the lower levels because when the whole thing kicked off it was discovered from the first plan that development was not taking place at the lower levels and now it's beginning to take place. It's slow and gradual but it's getting there and more structured (P 6: RT1:24, 191-194). *Do you think that is due to the implementation of the Act?* Partially, yes (P21: RF1:8, 62-65). Even if it might have been practised it wasn't formally written but it might have been practised in a way to accommodate the previously disadvantaged people but for now to be formalised like this and for us to have the guidelines, is due to the skills development requirements (P21: RF1:14, 87-91). Now we even have a Skills Development Committee that remains the mechanism for gaining legitimacy for, and assuring the quality of, learning and development at institutional level (P 1: RD1:21, 254-256).

*Did the context of staff development change since the implementation of the SDA, if so, tell me about it?* I do think it has changed. Um, I would say staff development enjoys a slightly higher priority than what it used to be. I do think the requirements of having a training committee, the requirements of submitting an annual report has created a need for more structures and more consultation and more regular consultation. It's not as though staff development wasn't discussed previously, it's just slightly more formalised and the structures are more formalised because of the legislation (P27: UF1:6, 110-120).

*Any changes that you could tell me about that occurred since the implementation of the SDA?* In any given instance it was never a case of put you on a skills programme. Now it's managed properly (P24: VF1:26, 327-331). Now, we capture the data. Our data management programme or system is part of the structuring of development at XX. The personal development plan, informing people of the legislation and exactly what type of interventions they should record, and then what training have you completed, what training have you intended to complete, this being the platform for a manager to actually look at and say ok where are my skills gaps (P24: VF1:33, 432-440). Training interventions were happening before the implementation of the SDA (P34: VT2:25, 206-215), but are now structured. I have two committees. The one is called the skills development committee, which is more of a management monitoring committee, very few members, there are very strategically chosen members, who help me to make



decisions and to ratify what it is that I am doing as an SDF. The other one is a more representative committee called the skills development and training committee. Each member there is specifically tasked to represent their section in terms of skills needs and taking back information in terms of these are the type of interventions that are available at the University (P24: VF1:35, 506-515).

*What is the benefit of the SDA?* Well, the new policy is very in detail, the new policy is trying to put everything together ... the new policy is rounding everything off a bit (P11: WF1:5, 36-38). Historically, but since 2004, 2005, it's been here now more formally set (P11: WF1:17, 163-163). The benefit of the implementation of the SDA is that there is a drive on development of employees and to operate or enhance us as a learning organisation (P35: WT1:15, 86-88). Yes there are changes regarding the structuring of development in our institution (P35: WT1:16, 92-93).

*Tell me about the changes that occurred with regard to your ETD practices since the implementation of the SDA?* Well, let me tell you, um, the fact that we get the skills levies now, and that we have the money available, we didn't have that in the past. It's very interesting, while I was cleaning my office now, I found a report in 1995, to say that, for the bulk of 1995 we trained 158 people. Last year [2007] more than 3 000. So, um, since we got the money, and the Skills Development Act made it much easier, because the emphasis is now on skills development. Um, I'm very, very happy to say, it, it really, um, progressed and it really contributed to better opportunities that the Skills Development Act initiated, specifically the levies, the money that is available so that we can use it. It's far more structured, it's, it's, it's highlighted, because it's expected from management to support it (P29: XF1:7, 63-74).

*Tell me about the changes that occurred with regard to your ETD practices since the implementation of the SDA?* Before the dispensation of skills development, was that, there was training and development, which was, you know, it was not focused on what we needed as an institution, in other words, it was not a driver for development. It was ad hoc, it was people saying, "I would like to do this". But if you look at the impact of that, in the operations, sometimes they would take an MBA, for example, do an MBA, finish, to get another job elsewhere (P19: YF2:6, 32-39). So, you know, with the skills dispensation, one thing that helped us to do, is to start to say, why are we training? You know, and once you're asking that question, you realise, there must be a reason why we're spending so much money on developing people. Why are we developing them? What is the focus? Is it even relevant what we're developing them in? What do we want to achieve out of that? And you know, since 2001 then, that's the thinking that we started to infuse in our institution (P19: YF2:9, 47-53). I think what has changed is, um, the reorganisation or refocus, of existing structures. Because, um, I will tell you now, like I'm saying, spending more than we are claiming, because we have always trained. But we're doing it in a particular way, which was maybe not as organised as we got to be organised when skills development came into, um. Yes, yes, it's more structured (P19: YF2:21, 173-178).

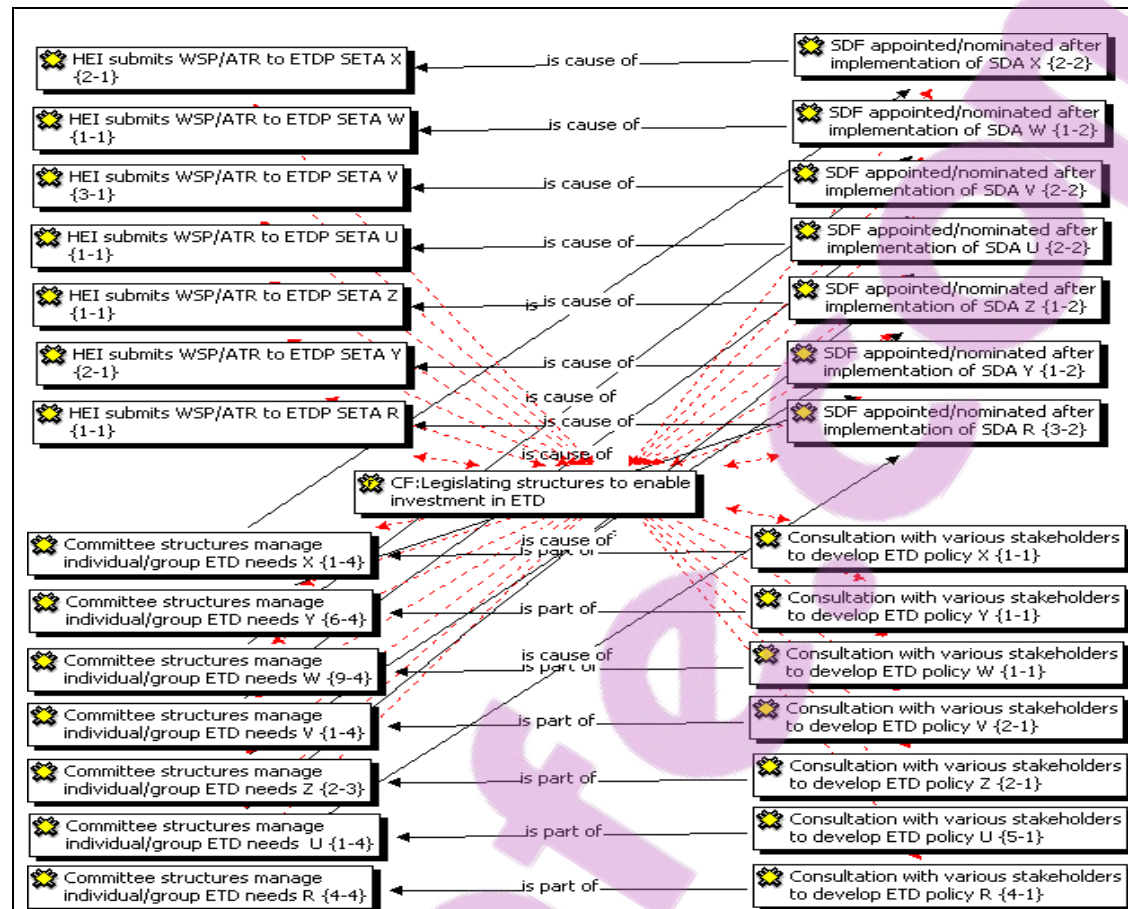
*Any changes that you could tell me about that occurred since the implementation of the SDA?* Staff development was not something that was taken seriously, as it is now (P20: ZF1:4, 78-79).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the conclusion that HEIs do support the implementation of the SDA. Not only have policies been implemented to enhance the development of designated employees, but the examples given also indicate that there has been progress towards the development of designated employees in HEIs and that employee ETD practices in HEIs have become more structured since the implementation of the SDA.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) that HEIs include employee education, training and development (ETD) strategies to redress the past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during apartheid. In addition, the findings indicate that HEIs' employee ETD practices became more structured after the implementation of the SDA. Considering that the documentation received from the SDFs matched (triangulated) the SDFs' experience that HEIs include employee ETD strategies to redress past imbalances and that HEIs' employee ETD practices became more structured after the implementation of the SDA, I decided not to debate this theme during the focus group discussion. This finding illustrates the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. Firstly, that government managed through the SDA to change HEIs' staff development context to include strategies for redress. The findings of the non-empirical data analysis substantiate that after the first democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, it became a priority for the new government to transform and reform the education system of South Africa (P2:25 191-194). Programmes should, therefore, be implemented to "improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:5) (P1:50 294-298). This illustrates that there is a match between the non-empirical and the empirical data analysis, namely that the implementation of the SDA has already impacted on HEIs' staff development practices to include strategies for redress as envisaged by the government. What should, however, also be noted is that the empirical findings substantiate that HEIs' employee ETD practices became more structured after the implementation of the SDA.

I now present the last of the three network displays in an attempt to illustrate HEIs' understanding that the SDA provides for the implementation of structures to enable employee education, training and development practices.

#### 4.3.1.3 Legislating structures so as to enable investment in ETD



**Figure 4.10 Structures are implemented in HEIs to enable employee education, training and development practices**

The network display shown in Figure 4.3.1.3 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that the SDA has been implemented to legislate structures that will enable investment in ETD. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (Public Voice: Outputs). The aim of my empirical research was to ascertain whether HEIs follow the requirements of the SDA with regard to the nomination or appointment of SDFs, the submission of WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA and whether committee structures were implemented to manage employee ETD practices in HEIs. The network display illustrates that in all seven HEIs (the group from which the research participants were drawn) an SDF was either appointed or nominated after the implementation of the SDA and that these HEIs submit their WSPs or ATRs



to the ETDP SETA (shown as: associated with the appointment of an SDF). In addition, committee structures were introduced after the implementation of the SDA and part of these structures has been the introduction of consultation mechanisms regarding ETD practices in HEIs. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants indicate that HEIs submit their WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA:

*Do you submit your WSP and ATR to the ETDP SETA?* This would include the submission of our WSP and ATR to the SETA (P 1: RD1:1, 34-37).

*Tell me about your responsibilities?* My responsibilities are surrounding the entire skills development process at the University, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting on all staff development matters in the institution to the ETDP SETA (P27: UF1:34, 11-14).

*Tell me about your responsibilities?* My task is to ensure compliance with the skills legislation in terms of submission of WSP and ATR, to recover the skills levies [from the ETDP SETA] (P24: VF1:39, 9-10). In terms of the ETDP SETA we have not just tried to recover mandatory grounds, we have also tried to claim from discretionary grants and we have tapped into what are the SETA targets (P25: VF2:6, 14-17). Our discretionary funds pay for specific development interventions as per ETDP SETA allocations, for example ABET, learnerships or internships [predominantly support or admin employees] (P34: VT2:26, 43-46).

*Tell me about your responsibilities?* The Work Skills Plan must serve in the Training and Development Committee and subsequently be submitted to the ETDP SETA in the format prescribed by the SETA (P 9: WD1:30, 496-498).

*Tell me about your responsibilities?* Workplace Skills Plan that needs to be submitted to the ETDPSETA on an annual base (P12: XD1:16, 73-74). My responsibilities are as the SETA requires that I do the skills development and ensure that the implementations do take place and to submit the reports to the SETA. And also facilitate the needs that they identify to ensure that they do take place (P30: XF2:16, 9-12).

*Tell me about your responsibilities?* Support skills that address sector-wide development areas as identified by the ETDP SETA (P16: YD1:8, 38-39). In terms of the formal side of skills development, it is to prepare the Workplace Skills Plan, and also to report on training that takes place (P18: YF1:6, 11-13).

*Tell me about your responsibilities?* When the money comes from the ETDP SETA here it used to go to finance and when I wanted to train people, sometimes I would find there's no money. I know, I would know that money came from, because I submitted the WSP, I submitted the ATR (P20: ZF1:31, 301-305).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that HEIs submit their WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA. The following selection of quotations demonstrates that HEIs appointed or nominated an SDF (requirement of the SDA) to serve as the link between the HEI and the ETDP SETA:

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of XXX?* I'm the Skills Development Facilitator of the university and my major responsibility is to look at the staff





development the ... staff development, human resource development of the staff members and skills development initiative, from the SETA side (P 6: RT1:1, 4-8). *Since when?* Since 2003 (P21: RF1:1, 5-5).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of XXX? And since when?* I have been in this position [Skills Development Facilitator] for five years now. Just short of five years (P27: UF1:1, 4-4). Um, my, the full title of my post is Senior Training Manager and Skills Development Facilitator. So my responsibilities are surrounding the entire skills development process at the University, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting on all staff development matters in the institution. So, it's provision as well as all the administrative processes surrounding it (P27: UF1:2, 10-15).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of XXX?* I am. *Since when?* Since I began at the University, which was in 2005 (P24: VF1:1, 4-5). All right. At the moment, Louw, I'm between portfolios so at this point in time actually that question is not totally relevant just to me but what I will do is explain to you how as team leader in HR of training and development what that role entails (P23: VT1:1, 4-7).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X?* Ai yes. *Since when?* Since 2003 I am the SDF (P11: WF1:1, 7-7). First in the acting position '98 to 2003, then permanent since 2003 up till now (P29: XF1:1, 11-12).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X?* Yes since 2001, since it started, actually long (P18: YF1:1, 7-7).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X?* I qualified as the Skills Development Facilitator last year that is 2006. But I've been doing the job without the qualification for just for the experience. *Since when?* This is now my third year (P20: ZF1:1, 7-9).

The above-mentioned quotations show that HEIs do follow the prescriptions of the SDA with regard to the appointment or nomination of an SDF. All seven SDFs were appointed/nominated after the implementation of the SDA. In addition I now illustrate that committee structures were also established in HEIs (after the implementation of the SDA) to manage employee ETD practices:

The Skills Development Committee (SDC) remains the mechanism for gaining legitimacy for, and assuring the quality of learning and development at institutional level (P 1: RD1:21, 254-256). Each and every department, support department and a faculty has got the Human Resources Development Committee with representation from management and unions. Those committees identify collective and fund individual training needs in their faculties or departments (P21: RF1:23, 196-200).

We have a Council Committee established to implement appropriate structures, systems and processes for implementation of our ETD policy (P 9: WD1:26, 168-178). We have portfolio managers accountable for training and development of employees in the faculties (P 9: WD1:27, 187-190), a Directorate for Education Training and Development that conducts needs analysis and that plays an advisory role on redressing of under-performance identified during the performance progress reviews (P 9: WD1:28, 256-263). Our so-called training committee which is required by the legislation and regulations is not called a training committee, it's called the staff development consultative forum and so, you know, it's just a different approach (P27: UF1:4, 28-41). Our Training and Development Committee assists with the development of the Workplace Skills Plan, that informs all employees on the development of the Workplace Skills Plan, implementation and progress on the Workplace Skills Plan and Report (P 9: WD1:29, 343-352).



At this University our Policy on Staff Training and Development determines that we have to appoint a Training Committee according to the Skills Development Act, to develop a Workplace Skills Plan in support of the University's strategic initiatives and objectives that would provide a blueprint from which co-ordinated and coherent staff development activities in all sectors of the University could proceed (P12: XD1:13, 78-84). In addition, line managers must budget annually for all training opportunities in their division and the Staff Development Unit manages the grants obtained from the skills levy according to set criteria (P12: XD1:12, 134-137).

Our Skills Development Training Committee (SDTC) will, on an annual basis, review the targets, costs and any other elements of the Skills Development Policy that need to be updated or aligned with the needs of the University or requirements of legislation (P16: YD1:9, 42-45). In addition, the Skills Development Training Committee of the University will determine the training needs of the University and record these in the yearly WSP, which will also set annual targets for priority training needs of the University (P16: YD1:11, 54-57).

People in HR responsible for training and development and with union representatives as other stakeholders, I must say all, let me say from the two campuses, are responsible for sort of drawing up and discussing the policies. I remember there was also some independent body, I just forgot the name, that was hired by the University who convened all those workshops that we had (P20: ZF1:21, 36-41).

The above-mentioned quotations clearly demonstrate that committee structures were introduced after the implementation of the SDA. Furthermore, there is also evidence of consultation with various stakeholders as a means to enhance transparency (as regards ETD practices) in HEIs:

*Why is there a skills committee?* Our Skills Development Committee remains the mechanism for gaining legitimacy for, and assuring the quality of, learning and development at institutional level (P 1: RD1:30, 254-256).

*What is the function of the forum?* The Staff Development Consultative Forum promotes development opportunities for all staff through the establishment of strategic directions and the development and review of relevant ETD policy. It is advised by relevant university committees, particularly with respect to legal requirements and organisational changes and developments (P 7: UD1:26, 197-202). Our institution is extremely consultative. It's consultative to the point of pain. What I mean by that is, before a policy is introduced, a new policy or an existing policy is revised, it goes through levels of consultation that include a large number of structures at the University before policies are finally approved by the Council of the University. If it relates more to academic matters it would be a Senate decision, but staff development policies go to the Council. So, in that process, the consultation is very wide using intranet, using unions, using staff associations, using structures, I mean we've got structures like the Human Resources Directorate, that's just the people who work in HR, the senior people in HR. Then we've got an HR committee, which represents all facets of University life — academics, management, staff associations, support staff, academic staff, very well represented, and they kind of oversee all HR policies, so it has to go to them then it gets put out to the whole University community then it goes up the ladder, probably a policy would go up to Council eventually through that process. The strategic priorities for this year, they are consulted with the forum, the consultative forum and with the Board (P27: UF1:5, 88-105). Even our two major "unions" are not called unions, but staff associations (P27: UF1:36, 41-51). *Are they registered unions?* Well, first of all the unions as such, staff associations report back to their membership, so that's one

channel of communication, and then on our website (P27: UF1:37, 80-85).

*Is there any consultation regarding staff development as required in the SDA?* I must admit, probably because of the roadshows we have been doing over the last couple of years. So when we go on a roadshow we talk personal development, skills development (P24: VF1:36, 26-30). I have two committees. *Why?* The one is called the skills development committee, which is more of a management monitoring committee, very few members, there are very strategically chosen members, who help me to make decisions and to ratify what it is that I am doing as an SDF. The other one is a more representative committee; it is called the skills development and training committee, SDC versus SDTC, and that is a larger committee. Each member there is specifically tasked to represent their section in terms of skills needs and taking back information in terms of these are the type of interventions that are available at the University (P24: VF1:37, 506-515).

*Is there any consultation regarding staff development as required in the SDA?* Our policies [ETD] it has gone through council level but it has to be negotiated with the unions (P11: WF1:46, 30-31).

*Is there any consultation regarding staff development as required in the SDA?* I in person wrote the basic staff development policy. Then it was circulated (intervenes), ja let's say so. Actually we started with a strategy, the staff development strategy. From there on we, we drafted the policy. And then it was tabled at the academic committee where all our deans and DVCs sit, as well as the academic support environment, the student development support services, the Academic Development Department, the library, etc. They then took it back to faculties for their inputs, back to their stakeholders for inputs and then after the process everything was approved. It also went to the administration support committee for their inputs, and at the very end it [intervenes] it went to, um, EMC, um, to Senate and to Council. And then, now the implementation, ja, it's communicated, um, via the intranet, quality promotion unit (P29: XF1:29, 119-131).

*Is there any consultation regarding staff development as required in the SDA?* Yes, the Training Committee, because it's prescribed in their skills development regulations, that's number one. But number two, the value of that committee, is, is, is, very important, because in that committee, what we have done with the approach to forming the committees is that, we have a representative for each one of the occupational levels. So, you have in the one committee a DVC sitting, with a labourer. One for professionals, *one*, yes. Structured in that way, then we have, then we have two unions. Also represented there, just to mitigate, because you have two extremes, you have a labourer who cannot even speak English very well, with a DVC, who is a professor, in the same committee, but, the, the dynamics are such that, the labourer can say what the workers need, without being confrontational, because they're not saying it from a labour point of view, but they're saying from the development point of view. Yes, we, we have made it clear from the beginning, that the committee is not a political committee. It is a developmental committee. So, you know, we discuss needs of people's development against what the institution wants to achieve. And it's structured in that way (P19: YF2:65, 466-482).

*Is there any consultation regarding staff development as required in the SDA?* When I came here there was nothing. I invited, I remember when this person was here, he tried to form a committee, it couldn't. It was me, this person and a drop in the unions in there and the top management. It's been a struggle. It's been a struggle. It's not well established (P20: ZF1:26, 272-275).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that consultation with various stakeholders does take place in HEIs as a means of enhancing transparency regarding ETD practices.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) that HEIs follow the requirements of the SDA regarding the nomination or appointment of SDFs, the submission of WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA and the establishment of committee structures to manage employee Education Training and Development (ETD) practices in HEIs. Considering that all the HEIs had appointed or nominated an SDF, submitted their WSP and ATR to the ETDP SETA and established committee structures to manage employee ETD practices, I decided not to debate this theme during the focus group discussion. This finding illustrates the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs, namely that the government managed through the SDA to change HEIs' staff development context, not only to include strategies for redress as explained in the previous section, but also to accomplish the appointment/nomination of SDFs and the establishment of committee structures to manage HEIs' employee ETD practices and the submission of WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA. This finding clearly matches the non-empirical data analysis presented to substantiate that the government implemented structures to enable investment in ETD in SA (see Figure 4.2 and the quotations presented: P1:337, 398-403; P1:345, 437-442 and P1:878, 403-407).

In this section I present the findings of the empirical data analysis to substantiate whether HEIs perceive the implementation of the SDA as follows: that HEIs should invest in ETD towards the economic prosperity of the individual, organisation and country at large; that HEIs should implement ETD strategies to redress past imbalances caused by apartheid; and lastly, that HEIs should implement various structures not only to enable investment in ETD practices but also for redress. The data analysis presented not only substantiates that the SDFs perceptions are in accordance with the aforementioned reasons and aims of the SDA but also that HEIs support the SDA in principle and practice. This means that HEIs have appointed SDFs, that HEIs WSPs and ATRs are submitted to the ETDP SETA, that committee structures are put in place according to the prescriptions of the SDA and that various programmes have been implemented to enhance the development of designated employees in HEIs. Furthermore, the effect of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs is that ETD practices have become more structured. However, the mismatch that should be noted between the aims of the SDA and the aims of staff development in HEIs is that the documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA differ from the aim and rationale for staff development in HEIs.

The aim of the SDA is to invest in ETD as a means towards prosperity (individual/country as a whole) whereas the aim and reason for staff development in HEIs are to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the context of quality service. Furthermore, the SDA prioritises the development of designated employees under the banner of redress, whereas HEIs prioritise the development of all employees under the banner of institutional efficiency and effectiveness with regard to providing a quality service.

To further substantiate the match or mismatch between the rationale and aims of the SDA and that of HEIs I now present the data analysis of the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices in the next section.

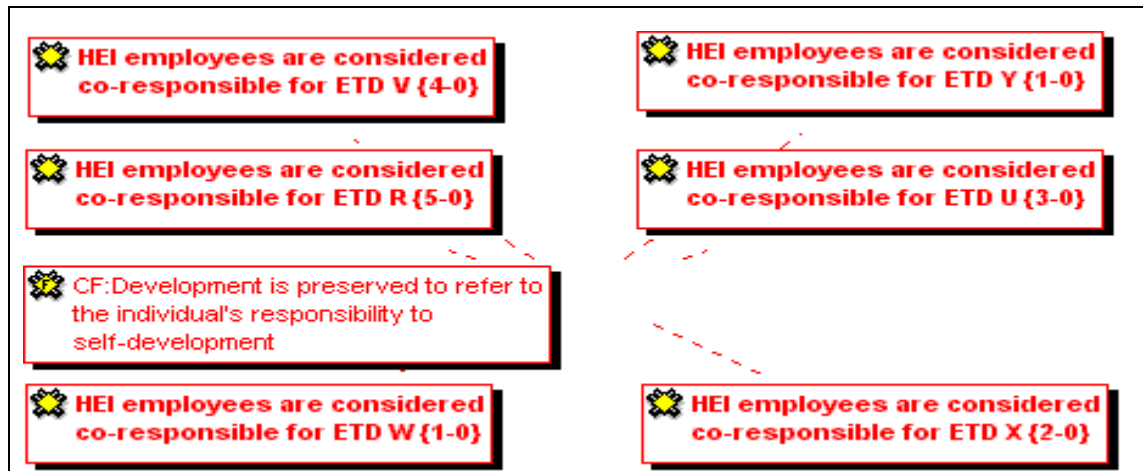
#### **4.3.2 Documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices**

Nine interrelated themes emerged from the non-empirical data analysis with regard to the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. The nine themes are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled *CF: Documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices*. The nine themes displayed are: development is assumed to refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development; a distinction is drawn between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks; HEIs' ETD practices are traditionally available to all employees on an equal basis; HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities; HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes (i.e. structures, policies, ETD practitioners, units, media service, various funding opportunities); HEIs' ETD practices are valued for their process of learning; HEIs' ETD terminology, programmes and methodologies are divergent; informal development (impromptu co-operative learning, focus group, mentoring or peer review interventions) is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs; and the term "development" overshadows the term "training" in HEIs.

I now present the findings of the empirical data analysis relevant to each of the above-mentioned nine themes. The first of the nine network displays that I now present illustrate that development in HEIs refers to the individual's responsibility for self-development.



#### 4.3.2.1 Development is assumed to refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development



**Figure 4.11 Development in HEIs refers to the individual's responsibility for self-development**

The network display shown in Figure 4.3.2.1 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six out of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X or Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that development in HEIs refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs).

The following quotations selected from each of the six research participants are relevant to the understanding that development in HEIs is assumed to refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development:

[S]taff members are encouraged to seek opportunities to upgrade their skills and the competencies that are relevant to their current occupations, as well as their career plans (P 1: RD1:8, 203:217). Determining training needs depends on a positive work relationship between line managers and staff. This relationship is enhanced by the spontaneous communication between the staff member and the line manager (P 2: RD2:3, 208-222).

Each member of staff has a responsibility for reflecting on the evolving character of their work and future career aspirations and identifying their own development needs (P 7: UD1:14, 105-107). Discussing with their Head of School/Department/Office/Unit, Manager, Supervisor or Appraiser the development needs arising from their own reflection, relating them to the needs of the School/Unit/University and establishing priorities; seeking out and participating actively in forms of staff development and training which will help them meet agreed needs (P 7: UD1:24, 105-113). Employees are responsible for driving their own ongoing development – either in the form of





enrolling for qualifications, and/or registering for short courses and skills programmes. As such, both the employee and manager are responsible for the development process (P37: UT2:16, 140-148).

At University, the philosophy, approach and principles underpinning the implementation of staff development are those of reflective practice on the part of individual staff members. Encouraging critical, reflective practice in every individual at University is crucial. This means that staff members reflect on their own needs (personal and professional) and are directly involved in the identification of their individual developmental needs. Furthermore, staff are encouraged and supported to take ownership of their continuous personal and professional development (P22: VD1:11, 133-143). This policy promotes self-development in the following ways: engage in scholarly and personal research into new strategies to improve their own practice. Attend relevant formal and non-formal courses or developmental opportunities for enrichment purposes or to address any shortcomings and gaps in their own practice. Receive development after evaluation of their individual practices P22: VD1:25, 305-312).

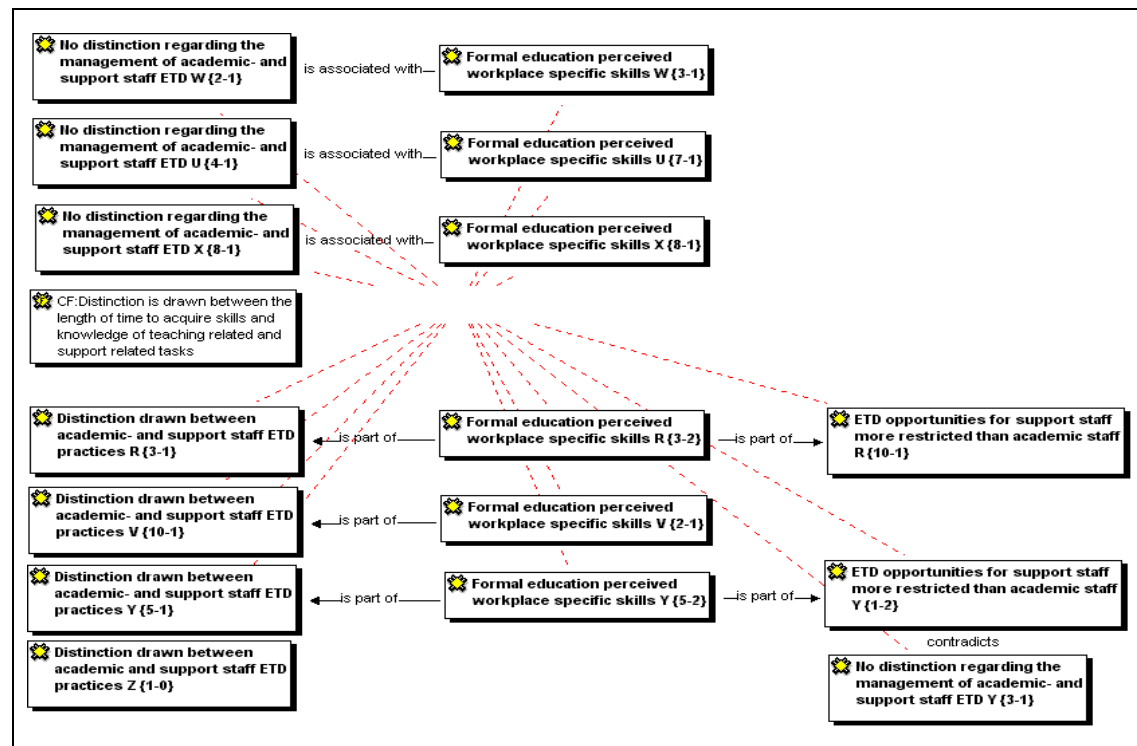
All employees are expected to take responsibility and initiative for their training and development (P 9: WD1:17, 318-320). University expects members of its staff to take responsibility for their individual effectiveness, personal and career development (P12: XD1:10, 115-116). There are ample opportunities ... it's more the responsibility of the individual (P29: XF1:35, 328-330).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that development in HEIs refers to the individual's responsibility for self-development. Considering that the documentation received from the SDFs matched (triangulated) the SDFs' opinion that HEIs refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development, I decided not to debate this theme during the focus group discussion.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the understanding of the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' ETD practices that development in HEIs refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Nisbit and McAleese (1979) argue that development "shifts" the onus of learning to the staff member (P1:658, 916-919; P1:662, 789-790).

I now present the second of the nine network displays relevant to the reason for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. This network display illustrates that HEIs draw no distinction between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks

#### 4.3.2.2 A distinction is not drawn between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks



**Figure 4.12 HEIs draw no distinction between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks**

The network display shown in Figure 4. 12 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that three of the seven HEIs drew no distinction between academic- and support staff ETD practices. However, not one of the SDFs drew attention to a distinction between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks. The four HEIs who did draw a distinction between academic and support staff practices, imputed it to opportunities for support staff being more restricted than those for academic staff. This is part of the understanding that formal education is perceived as a workplace-specific skill for academics, so it is managed in such a way that academics have support for the furthering of their academic qualifications, which is not given in the case of support staff. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). For example, the

following quotations selected from each of the research participants substantiate the finding that there is no difference in the management of academic and support staff programmes:

*Is there any difference between academic and support staff ETD practices that you experience?* No, Funding for conference attendance for support services staff will be considered, subject to "The Guidelines for Funding for Training for University Departments and for Individual Staff Members to Attend Externally Provided Short Courses" and the following criteria: the beneficiaries are staff in grades 1 to 17 who have no other possible source of funding; the conference is directly related to the work the staff member is employed to do in the University's and/or to the individual's development plan (P 7: UD1:18, 355-386). *It is interesting to note that there are no differences mentioned between academic and support staff regarding ETD practices. How so?* For our support staff, similarly we encourage them to attain qualifications that are job-related and most of them study off campus, because they can't attend classes and we're a classroom-based University, not a distance education institution. So, support and academic staff attainment of qualifications, that's our first strategy (P27: UF1:11, 159-163).

*Is there any difference between academic and support staff ETD practices that you experience?* No, Louw, we prefer that people [academic and support staff] take formal qualifications internally but we don't hold them to it. They apply to us but there might be a range of things; there might not be a suitable supervisor that we would allow them to go externally but it must be specifically linked to their job (P11: WF1:20, 169:182). *Is there any difference between academic and support staff ETD practices that you experience?* No, even conferences for non-academics, they still go (P11: WF1:23, 202-202)

*Is there any difference between academic and support staff ETD practices that you experience?* No. All opportunities are available for all staff who wish to attend free of charge (P29: XF1:21 285-285). *Is there any difference between academic and support staff ETD practices that you experience?* No, people get to attend workshops outside. That would be for academics and non-academics (P30: XF2:2, 44-45). And also the administrator groups, they go to their own conferences (P30: XF2:3, 55-56).

*Is there any difference between academic and support staff ETD practices that you experience?* No difference between academic and support staff regarding the management of opportunities. HR caters for academic needs, for administrative needs, as well as for your support staff and when we talk support staff we're talking a combination of both, that's why we're trying to stay away from this academic non-academic categorisation because if you look at somebody who is dealing with research, the research unit, they are considered to be non-academic and yet they relate directly to supporting academic issues. On the other hand if you look at our physical support staff they are non-academic classified but they do not contribute to the academic nature as such yet they support the intervention and physical infrastructures (P23: VT1:10, 100-109).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the four SDFs do not perceive a difference between academic and support staff with regard to the availability of ETD opportunities. However, the following quotations are selected from three SDFs with regard to a difference between the academic and support staff, relating to the availability of ETD opportunities:

University of Pretoria etd – Botha, L (2009)

*X do you experience a difference in the availability of ETD programmes between academic and support staff?* The University Council makes funds available for the subsistence and travel expenses of staff who attend approved congresses and conferences abroad but not for support staff (P 4: RD4:2, 4-13). If you look at the position of academics and other categories of staff there is a difference. *Why?* Academics have a lot of funding opportunities (P 5: RF2:14, 242-244). [However], academics are fulfilling the core business of the University and as a result they have more opportunities and additional funds for training than the support staff (P32: RT2:1, 5-7).

*X do you experience a difference in the availability of ETD programmes between academic and support staff?* In terms of the administrative staff, unfortunately very rarely are they exposed to training and development outside of the institution. Rarely. So they would attend more of the generic type courses that are run by HR. Soft skills. People development, people skills (P24: VF1:20, 238-242). If anything at all I find it totally unequal – what's the word... equity does not even come into play. Then on the other hand, the focus is more on the teaching staff and not necessarily on the support and admin staff. So if a department head has to submit something and say I have ten employees in my section, seven of them are lecturing staff, three of them are admin and support staff, they probably would, if there is a small budget allocated it's leftovers to the admin and support, the majority of that budget is definitely utilised, if anything at all it is retained until that person comes up with a need. It's not utilised by the admin person who goes up and says but I would please, please like to attend this particular conference. You're immediately told wait your turn (P24: VF1:34, 454-468).

*X do you experience a difference in the availability of ETD programmes between academic and support staff?* Yes slightly, because preference will be given to academic staff who are upgrading their qualifications in their fields of study and administrative staff acquiring qualifications relevant to their positions (P16: YD1:19, 148-150). We have a broad training policy, and then, um, then we have a specific skills development policy. And we have a teaching development policy. And we have a research policy. So there are various funding windows for the different categories of staff (P19: YF2:23, 186-188). [More funds are available for academic employees.]

The above-mentioned quotations give the impression that there is a difference between academic and support staff regarding the availability of ETD opportunities. However, the last quotation only notes a slight difference in priority. In other words, academic employees are given preference over support staff with regard to enrolling for formal education. During my interview with the SDF I did not feel it necessary to ask any follow-up questions because I had the impression that the difference merely concerned the prioritisation of opportunities; not the perception that academics have more opportunities than support staff or vice versa. The conclusion that can be drawn from the above quotations is that the majority of HEIs do not distinguish between academic and support staff members with regard to the availability of ETD opportunities. However, opportunities for support staff are more restricted than those for academic staff. This is partly the reason why SDFs perceive formal education in workplace-specific skills for academics as follows:

For academics doing a master's or doctorate degree it is part of their task since they use their knowledge and skills gained from empirical research in their task context



(P32: RT2:3, 16-18). The minimum requirement for a lecturer is a master's degree but they can move towards a senior lecturer automatically because their promotion requirements are in their hands. Thus for academics it is more aligned to their jobs than for support staff. In essence the research that they do which could lead to attaining a formal qualification is also work-related (P32: RT2:4, 20-24).

The development opportunities that we provide are first of all the attainment of academic qualifications, particularly for academics. That is, the matter of their work is they need to improve their qualifications. So, our objective is to ensure that all of our academic staff have got PhDs (P27: UF1:9, 138-141). Attainment of academic qualifications and we support that in a number of ways; our preference is for people to study at this University but if there's a specialisation not offered here, then we use other universities as well (P27: UF1:10, 148-151). *And if all academics are on sabbatical, who will remain to do the job?* We buy out the time of the academic to enable them to go on sabbatical. So it might be a junior black female staff member who hasn't yet qualified for a sabbatical, then we pay for a replacement for her for six months where she can complete a master's or a PhD and there's funding (P27: UF1:27, 297-312). Formal education (or the pursuit and completion of full qualifications are traditionally more the domain of academics in the sense that it is a core and integral part of their job as tutor, lecturer, professor, etc. As such, the achievement of qualifications is directly expected and required of academics. This remains one of the major draw cards of a higher education environment in terms of being attractive to job-seekers (P37: UT2:11, 95-112). I believe that it is essential for individuals to fully understand that what makes you competent in one capacity or role, does not necessarily make you competent in another. This is particularly true when an individual moves from a functional or specialised role (or in the HE context, an academic role) into a management role. In the context of the academic role, qualifications are naturally essential. In the context of a management role, the required management/leadership competencies can be attained via skills development interventions and/or workplace mentoring/coaching initiatives (P37: UT2:12, 121-127).

Formal education is more work related to academics than to support or admin employees. Doing actually more than one PhDs is actually part of the job of being an academic. They learn from their experience and then mentor others. This is one way of demonstrating our quality service delivery foci. Another thing is how do you demonstrate knowledge creation if there are no publications and presentations, which in essence are part of or the outcome of formal or informal research? Thus research is part of academic's task, hence could lead or is part of a formal education programme. However, once academics leave their profession or advance to a managerial position, they get trapped in that job description, that is where short courses become important (P34: VT2:2, 13-33).

Education is very specific, because we are a learning institution. We do take on people that are not there yet, not whole people so to speak, so for senior academics the minimum qualification would be a master's if they do not have it they could go internally or externally because it is part of their assignment (P11: WF1:18, 166-169). *Does it differ with regard to support staff?* No. Formal education is workplace-specific skills to a certain extent [she referred to support employees in this context]. Formal education is part of career development, however not necessarily as a part of placement for support staff. However for academics it is a requirement since it is part of their task environment (P35: WT1:3, 16-20).

Well, broadly, the, biggest one that the institutional view, if I can say it like that, is the qualification bettering of staff. But they do see it, especially for academic staff (P29: XF1:3, 137-142). *Qualifications, is it a skill for academics?* Oh, ja, ja, ja (P29: XF1:4, 144-145). It beefs up, you know, the profile of that lecturer. And then I think that's the most important measure that they use because I know for sure that they are all pressurised to do a lot of research and to publish (P31: XT1:6, 41-44). For academics, formal study is rather part of their job, their research that could lead to acquiring a



qualification, is in fact part of their job. While for support staff it is only stated as a kind of minimum requirement when appointed. Not a requirement after employment (P36: XT2:4, 16-19).

Career progress for academics, to us, it's a skills need [he referred to a qualification]. You see, to us it's a skills need, so we, we, we, we would fund that. We have these benchmarks from the Department [Department of Education], how are we going to meet them? (P19: YF2:28, 273-278) *For non-academics also?* Everybody. Uh, everybody, yes. If you anticipate movement, of people, and we cannot restrict that. Yes, yes, we do, because sometimes people get restructured, to totally new areas, and they need to be, uh, developed in formal education. Because, you see, take for example, I, under me I've got people in the exams. These people started off with Standard 10s. But they kept on studying, with our institution, and some of them are doing master's now. Either Public Admin or HR, you know. But now, the dilemma that we're sitting with is, now this person has got a master's, but is still doing, they are still at a job level 11, for example. Is it really fair, when there's a lecturer we recruit from outside, a lecturer's position, we recruit, why can't we develop these people? If we're going to receive skills development only for short learning programmes, we're missing the point, because our business is higher education. Our people need higher education for them to, um, run higher education (P19: YF2:29, 288-308).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that formal education is a work-specific skill for academics. In reflecting on what these SDFs said, I felt it made sense, hence decided to pursue this theme during the group interaction with the SDFs. During the focus group discussion I questioned the five SDFs to find out whether there was reason to believe that certain categories of employees were deprived of development and also why formal education was regarded a work-specific skill for academics. With regard to the first question, the answer was as follows:

*I haven't come across in any of your institutions that non-designated employees are excluded nor that there is a differentiation between academic, administrative and support staff with regard to the availability of programmes. Do you concur with my interpretation?* Yes, from all SDFs (P 1:7 121-123).

My understanding, based on the above-mentioned findings, is that although HEIs support the implementation of the SDA in principle and practice, there is no indication that non-designated employees are excluded from HEIs' employee ETD practices. As regards the perception that formal education was considered a work-specific skill of academics, the answer was as follows:

Academic staff can easily find ways to enrol for formal education since it is part of their task. *Why R?* In the first place in terms of career progression, although minimum qualification requirements is bound to a certain academic position, they could more easily advance to a more senior academic position based on the completion of formal qualification, which is not so in the case of support employees. *Why?* Support staff members are appointed based on a minimum qualification requirement and experience determined for that position and that is where the formal education requirement ends.



Whereas academic positions progress *ad hominem*. In other words they could be promoted to a more senior academic position the moment that they fulfil the requirements attached to a certain academic position. Obviously the qualification level progresses to a more senior academic position. However, for me the most outstanding reason why formal qualifications are more related to the academic task concerns subject-specific knowledge. Doing research forms an integral part of broadening the subject-specific knowledge of the academic. Therefore, you would find that the university might sponsor an academic to complete a full qualification at another HEI, or even abroad in exceptional cases (P 1:5, 87-13).

My understanding, based on the above-mentioned findings, is that formal education is considered a work-specific skill for academics but not for support staff in HEIs.

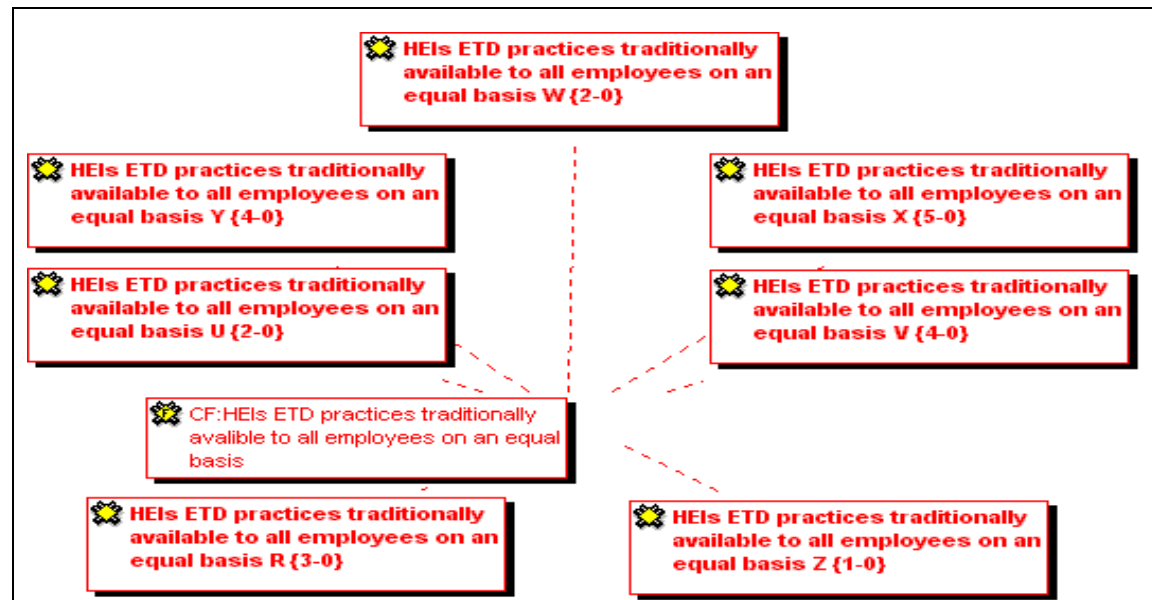
In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinion that there is no distinction between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks. The findings substantiate that there is no a distinction between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks. This finding is in stark contrast to the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Greenaway and Mortimer (1979) as well as Nisbit and McAleese (1979) argue that the length of time for achieving development differs between academic and support staff (P1:528, 951-955; P1:551, 986-991). In addition, the findings substantiate that formal education is generally perceived as a work-related skill for academics, but not for support staff. This finding questions the prevailing theory of who should bear the cost of education. Marginson (1993:49) comments that those who invest in higher education might be rewarded with “higher earnings,”<sup>88</sup> and therefore there is no obvious reason why the rest of the community should be expected to meet their study costs”. Hence, it is generally accepted that the individual should bear the costs of formal higher education (Johanson *et al.*, 2004:27; Flanagan *et al.*, 1998:10). Similarly Hlavna (1992:3) contends it is neither equitable nor cost-effective to expect taxpayers to subsidise the attainment of qualifications. It seems that the aforementioned motivation that the individual should bear the cost of formal higher education does not apply to academic employees in HEIs, because the attainment of academic qualifications by academic staff seems to be a natural part of their task to push forward the frontiers of knowledge. HEIs should, therefore, bear the cost in this regard.

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<sup>88</sup> Marginson's (1993:49) theory of earnings in this context may also refer to intrinsic and not only to extrinsic rewards.

I now present the third of the nine network displays to illustrate that HEIs' ETD practices are traditionally available to employees on an equal basis.

#### 4.3.2.3 HEIs' ETD practices are traditionally available to all employees on an equal basis



**Figure 4.13 HEIs' ETD practices are traditionally available to all employees on an equal basis**

The network display shown in Figure 4.13 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the understanding that HEIs' ETD practices are traditionally available to all employees on an equal basis. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that in all seven HEIs (the research participant group), ETD practices are traditionally available to all HEI employees on an equal basis. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

*Since when have these management and support mechanisms been traditionally available to staff members in this institution? Staff members eligible for training refers to employees appointed for 15 hours or more per week and for 11 or more consecutive months [this implies that there is a performance contract with the staff member] (P 3: RD3:3, 24-26). There has always been a policy in that regard in terms of training and development, and the only thing that could have happened now lately is that it could have been reviewed (P21: RF1:7, 59-62). It has always been there (P21: RF1:9, 68-68).*

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*Since when have these management and support mechanisms been traditionally available to staff members in this institution?* Maybe there is slightly more emphasis now. But I'm not convinced that it is the result of the SDA, you see, because of the business that we're in (P27: UF1:24, 269-271). So, universities by their very nature are very particular about development. Has the SDA changed the way we operate at all? Fundamentally I don't think so, no. In terms of providing us with some easier mechanisms I would say yes. Yes. The unit standards system and the accreditation, the, the, the provider accreditation system has definitely helped us a little bit, but, but the fundamental orientation in principle I would say nothing has really changed (P27: UF1:25, 271-281).

*Since when have these management and support mechanisms been traditionally available to staff members in this institution?* The University regards as essential the provision of opportunities for all employees to improve their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve their ability and the quality of service to clients both in and outside the university (P22: VD1:2, 7-10). It's for everybody. All XX employees including your contract staff, your temporary staff, volunteer staff interns (P23: VT1:11, 113-114). *For what reason?* I guess that the higher education institution like XX believes that they have always been doing continuous professional development so that there was no reason now to formally institute or instruct managers and employees to actually now take on what we call training and development, and career development (P24: VF1:12, 166-171). For as long as far as I know (P24: VF1:19, 235-235).

*Since when have these management and support mechanisms been traditionally available to staff members in this institution?* I think it's history, staff development has always been part of our institution (P11: WF1:3, 20-20).

*Since when have these management and support mechanisms been traditionally available to staff members in this institution?* Was it implemented since the implementation of the SDA? No. No, no. Not. We've done that, we've done that when I joined the institution, it was like that, ja, it was like that. It developed, um, as I said, due to the better funding, better opportunities. But nothing, ja, the structure didn't change (P29: XF1:6, 235-239). I've started here, um, 13 years ago, 1994, and since then, already, all staff had the opportunity to do training in all environments (P29: XF1:15, 59-60). It was there historically on the campus (P30: XF2:10, 141-153).

*Since when have these management and support mechanisms been traditionally available to staff members in this institution?* All permanently employed staff of the University are eligible to be considered for staff development assistance. All contract employees will be assisted on a case-by-case basis up to a maximum amount to be determined on an annual basis by the SDTC (P16: YD1:18, 144-147). *Since when?* That has been around since the inception of the University, I'm sure (P19: YF2:19, 162-162). Continuing education. All of them, have always offered, you know, either short courses, um, I mean, HR has been training people in policies for an example (P19: YF2:20, 167:169). But I would say, the, the, especially development courses, and cont ... you know, have, the need has been there forever (P19: YF2:43, 346-349).

*Since when have these management and support mechanisms been traditionally available to staff members in this institution?* You don't have to be exclusive or say this person is entitled for skills development. I think everybody is entitled to have skills enhanced and it been historically so (P20: ZF1:3, 68-70).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate that employee ETD is a historical function in HEIs and opportunities are available to all employees on an equal basis. Considering that the documentation received from the SDFs matched (triangulated) the SDFs opinion that employee ETD is a historical function in HEIs and that



opportunities are available to all employees on an equal basis, I decided not to pursue this theme during the focus group discussion. Instead, during the focus group discussion I questioned the six SDFs to find out whether there was equality between academic and support employees in HEIs with regard to the funding of ETD opportunities. The answer was as follows:

Because of the nature of Higher Education I suppose, what affects the core business, academic and teaching staff is given more support (P 1:5 87-113).

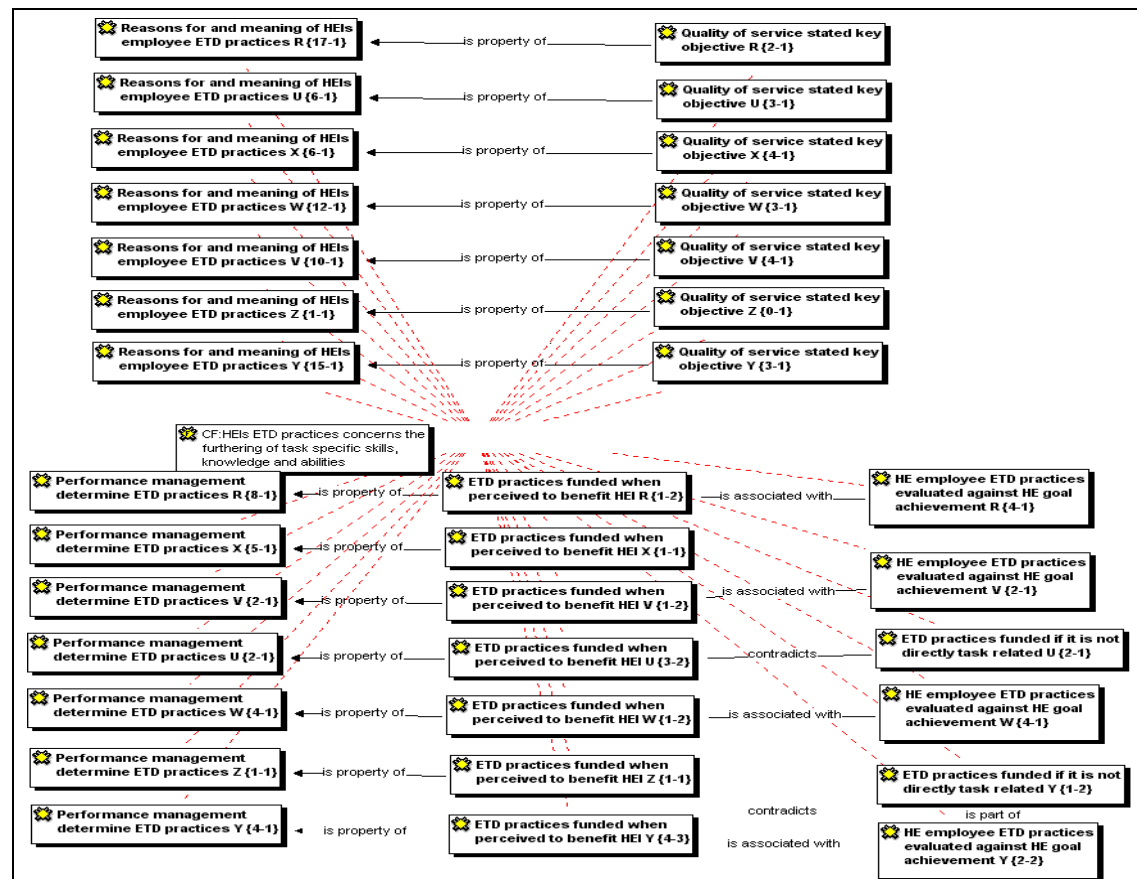
Our support staff are very neglected. There is no career pathing for them [support staff]; another reason why there are restrictions on development is because production is more important than training and development for them [management]. But to make matters worse it is a case of support staff who want to qualify themselves with something that asks for extra money; nobody is prepared to [provide funds] because that job has a ceiling. For academics, promotions are actually in their own hands. They can move from a junior lecturer to a senior lecturer (P 1:5 87-113). But if somebody wants to study internally, they don't have strict rules. No one has to approve it because it is a benefit of Higher Education Institutions. However, there is a restriction on undergraduate study, because staff cannot study during working hours [does not apply for HEIs that provide distance education]. For us it is also restricted to job function. It's a benefit, as much as it is job related. We find our selves with people with qualifications in areas where we cannot employ them and we find that we have a whole lot of people who are doing the wrong [body language pointed to inverted commas] qualifications and because of the type of qualification you have to go and practise and do your articles and we are not in the position to offer that (P 1:4, 66-85).

My understanding, based on the above-mentioned findings, is that there is reason to believe that there is a difference in the ETD approach to academic and support staff in HEIs. Although it has been previously substantiated that ETD opportunities are available to all HEI employees, this finding indicates that the development of support staff is more restricted than that of academic staff.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the understanding of the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' ETD practices that employee ETD is a historical function in HEIs and opportunities are available to all employees on an equal basis. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Jalling (1979) (P 1: 729, 736:739) and Bitzer *et al.* (1998) (P1: 544, 748-751) argue that staff development is a historical function in HEIs and opportunities are available to all employees. However, the empirical findings in this study indicate that development of support staff is more restricted than that of academic staff.

I now present the fourth of the nine network displays relevant to illustrate that HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities.

#### 4.3.2.4 HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities



**Figure 4.14 HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities**

The network display shown in Figure 4.3.2.4 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that the quality of service is one of the predominant reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices (to promote task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities). The network display furthermore illustrates that ETD practices are determined and managed in the context of performance management in HEIs. ETD practices are, therefore, not only



funded when perceived as benefiting HEIs but are also evaluated against their perceived benefit to the HEI (illustrated as in association with). Two of the HEIs (U and Y) mentioned, however, that ETD practices would be supported even if they were not perceived as benefiting the HEIs.

The following quotations selected from each of the seven research participants are relevant to the understanding that HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities towards the provision of quality service:

*What is the purpose of staff development in your institution?* Human resources development opportunities should be geared towards the strategic goal of retaining, developing and utilising skills at the University (P 1: RD1.6, 60-62). Enhancing staff members' employability (P 1: RD1:15, 47-47). It aims to enhance a culture of learning in which continuous learning is nurtured and encouraged in the workplace (P 2: RD2:7, 25-26). In other words, our internal training would focus on enhancing the quality of our service. *Why quality?* To enhance how we generate knowledge (P 6: RT1:29, 26-31). Definitely, it is for the quality service of the University.

*What is the purpose of staff development in your institution?* The University regards as essential the provision of opportunities for all staff in respect of their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve the quality of workplace productivity and staff satisfaction. *Why quality?* If you improve quality, this will result in knowledge gain. In our HE context, it is the quality of our academic service that is the overriding motive for staff development (P 8: UT1.10, 23-26). Staff development (defined as those processes through which the organisation and individuals engage in ongoing learning to meet new challenges and conditions of work) is an integral part of the working life of each member of staff at the University. It is associated with the development needs of the individual, of groups of staff and the achievement of the University's overall strategy. Neither the maintenance of current performance nor the achievement of significant change will be possible without staff who are both committed to the University's objectives and in possession of the necessary skills to achieve them. To ensure this, the University will continue to support staff development which involves all staff equally as partners in achieving the aims of the University (P 7: UD1:3, 8-21). To help individual staff to acquire knowledge and skills which will allow them to carry out their current duties with maximum effectiveness, and thereby contribute to the achievement of agreed objectives.

*What is the purpose of staff development in your institution?* The University regards as essential the provision of opportunities for all employees to improve their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve their ability and the quality of service to clients both in and outside the University (P22: VD1:1, 7-10). The central aim of staff development is twofold. Firstly, it is to develop and enhance the knowledge and skills of individual staff members related to their specific work environment; and secondly, to improve the functioning of the institution as a whole (P22: VD1:6, 29-32). Well, ultimately, remember it is always continuous professional development on the one hand, secondly the idea ultimately is to improve workplace performance, high-quality workplace performance is what we are looking for in our individual staff employee (P23: VT1:4, 40-43). The University regards as essential the provision of opportunities for all employees to improve their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve their ability and quality of service to clients both in and outside the University (P22: VD1:1, 7-10). On the one hand it is to provide quality-relevant interventions, but on the other hand, to enhance performance. More so, our quality motive (P24: VF1:40, 140-149).



*What is the purpose of staff development in your institution?* Staff development at the University focuses on three areas: the technical skills needed to do the job better or latest trends in technology which will assist in improved quality service and efficiency or the overall performance of the individual and in turn the unit. Specialised skills needed for professionals in all fields. These are skills related to the particular specialisation. Formal development – which is assistance towards studying for a formal qualification, immaterial whether it is an undergraduate or postgraduate qualification (P10: WD2:1, 10-18). In terms of the reason for staff development, we at the University feel strongly that the promotion of staff development is towards enhancing the quality of service delivery and service excellence, allowing for improved performance (P10: WD2:6, 25-29).

*What is the purpose of staff development in your institution?* The objectives of this policy are: to promote staff excellence, to develop a culture for high quality lifelong learning; to foster skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth, to foster leadership and innovation, to promote opportunities for skills acquisition in development initiatives, to maximise staff's potential and to provide equal training opportunities for the holistic development of all employees (P12: XD1:4, 22-30).

*What is the purpose of staff development in your institution?* Enhance efficient and effective teaching and learning, research and community service at the University. Provide opportunities to improve skills and acquire new skills to enhance competency levels of all employees in the framework of lifelong learning and continuous organisational improvement (P16: YD1:3, 17-21). Imbue University employees with a sense of a positive career attitude, a professional development ethos and culture of work coupled with accountability and commitment to the vision and objectives of the University (P16: YD1:6, 27-30). The training and development that we engage in, is aligned and supports the bigger mission of the University being quality – research, community engagement and teaching. Without planning, people take ad hoc, you know, courses, that do not actually contribute towards the business of the institution (P18: YF1:7, 31-35). Our ETD planning is just to make sure that we're answering the needs that exist. And also then there would be the other leg of it, which is to contribute to the national and the sector needs (P19: YF2:1, 8-11). It enhances better quality, productivity and job satisfaction (P12: XD1:19, 67-70). I think that, there's a few reasons why I think we're doing that. One, is to make certain that the training and development that we engage in, is aligned and supports the bigger mission of the University being quality research, community engagement and teaching (P18: YF1:8, 30-33)".

*What is the purpose of staff development in your institution?*

It start from skills programme identification, which skills programmes are needed and then again that also building up to career paths that will also lead ultimately to a qualification (P20: ZF1:17, 118-120).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the purpose of HEIs' ETD practices concerns the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities towards providing a quality service. However, in order to achieve the quality service, HEIs implemented or are in the process of implementing performance management systems as a means of managing employees towards achieving this goal. The quotations selected are relevant to this understanding:

*By what means are the ETD needs of individuals determined?* Human resources development initiatives will be based on a thorough needs analysis in the performance



management process (P1: RD1:11, 110-113). It is the responsibility of line management to approve the developmental needs of the staff members, as identified by means of the performance management process (P1: RD1:23, 122-124). The procedure for determining a staff member's training and development needs varies according to the outcomes that the individual or department aspires to or should achieve (P2: RD2:9, 182-184). If the above communication is effective and efficient, the performance review will also become part of the mutual commitment to new performance objectives (P2: RD2:10, 269-276). The outcome(s) of the intended programme are directly aligned with the performance output agreement of the applicant (P3: RD3:4, 45-46). So we have got strategies in place for one we have got the performance management system ... then that's where training come in, that's where the training need is identified (P21: RF1:22, 185-195). Each and every faculty and support division do have their own objectives, their own strategic objectives. So based on that there will be a way or there is a way that they use to identify or specifically the collective training needs for that particular division (P21: RF1:24, 206-209).

*By what means are the ETD needs of individuals determined?* The University has the right to expect that each member of staff, as part of the individual's contractual obligations, will, in collaboration with the line manager, participate in the University's performance management processes which include the opportunity for appropriate ongoing support, undertaking an annual review of the individual's past development and identification of plans for the future (P7: UD1:16, 118-130).

*By what means are the ETD needs of individuals determined?* The employee development cycle should begin with recruitment and selection, followed by induction/orientation, training and practice, and should culminate in an annual performance appraisal (P22: VD1:14, 288-290). In fact there is no measurement at this point in time given the fact that we have only just merged two years ago we're only just putting into place performance management systems (P23: VT1:8, 89-91).

*By what means are the ETD needs of individuals determined?* Training needs must be identified: through the Skills Audit Project; at the beginning (planning phase) of the performance management cycle; during progress reviews of the Performance Management System (P9: WD1:13, 442-448). Personal Development Plans and Accelerated Development Programmes must be reviewed on a quarterly basis as part of the quarterly review of the employee's performance. Progress must be discussed between the employee and his/her supervisor (P 9: WD1:19, 394-397).

*By what means are the ETD needs of individuals determined?* We monitor and identify, by means of a Performance Management Process and other review procedures, areas of their work that could be assisted by training and development activities (P12: XD1:14, 107-109). When I refer to the process, and I refer to the performance management, um, appraisal (P29: XF1:2, 93-97). And that is actually captured in a performance management development system (P29: XF1:11, 44-47). The process works like that, that every line manager has a discussion with every staff member, to determine key performance areas, to identify the individual's training needs, put it in a personal development plan (P29: XF1:12, 48-51).

*By what means are the ETD needs of individuals determined?* We use the performance management system to acquire skills gaps that are identified through performance (P18: YF1:3, 15-17). Recognition for us, should be through performance. *Why?* What we do is performance manage. And if a course or a, uh, intervention has assisted the person to do better in their work, it will show through performance, you know. So, we reward performance, we don't reward attainment of qualifications *per se* (P19: YF2:45, 438-445). Currently we don't have an effective performance management system. However, some would report, it all depends on the line manager (P33: YT1:8, 38-39).

*By what means are the ETD needs of individuals determined?* It's start from skills audit on performance management. I do that, I do that. It all starts from there, doing the audit, skills analysis all that I'm responsible for (P20: ZF1:19, 100-101).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that all seven HEIs have implemented a system of performance management, not only to manage employees towards achieving certain institutional goals but also to determine ETD needs. ETD practices are, therefore, shown to be funded only if they are to the benefit of the particular HEI. The following quotations are relevant to this understanding:

*Is there an overall budgetary provision for the different strategies?* Yes, remember staff development initiatives are only sponsored [provided by external ETD providers] when it is to the benefit of X. However, staff members are entitled to free internal training where possible, and should be allowed to attend development opportunities, wherever possible, in normal working hours (P 1: RD1:9, 104-107)

*Is there an overall budgetary provision for the different strategies?* The need for any particular type of training should be justified by reference to the individual's personal development plan (P 7: UD1:20, 335-338). Both University-wide and School/Service-related [needs] will take precedence (P 7: UD1:21, 340-342). However, as far as the organisation's Bursary Policy is concerned, when it comes to formal qualifications, the employee can only obtain financial support for enrolling for qualifications that are directly job relevant. This has resulted in a perception that the organisation does not allow individuals to grow out of their jobs. However, having said that, the organisation is responsible for ensuring competence in current jobs as first priority in order to ensure survival and competitiveness. Furthermore, the organisation has a limited pool of funds from which to finance employee development – and as such, it has the right to specify current job relevance as a criterion (P37: UT2:41, 63-70).

*Is there an overall budgetary provision for the different strategies?* If the focus is on research and development it's not just a case of go to conferences. You have to have a strategic purpose to go to that conference. Your purpose must either be so that next year I can deliver a paper in there. So our budgets are very tight in that respect (P24: VF1:22, 218-222).

*Is there an overall budgetary provision for the different strategies?* The University will create and make accessible on an ongoing basis meaningful opportunity for all employees' training, education and development. Training must be aimed at developing the competencies required for effective job performance with emphasis on immediate on the job application of acquired competencies (P 9: WD1:35, 81-97).

*Is there an overall budgetary provision for the different strategies?* Yes, however, we believe the employer should not unreasonably withhold support in any form required by the employee with a view to inadvertently result in the disadvantaging of that employee's rights to education, training and development as envisaged in the policy framework and this document but your training needs must be prioritised towards the needs of the institution (P17: YD2:2, 25-28).

*Is there an overall budgetary provision for the different strategies?* It must be job related. I'm sure they won't just attend a course that is not worth it (P20: ZF1:20, 237-238).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the majority of the participating HEIs fund employee ETD programmes when these programmes are related to the employee's task. In addition, I present the quotations that demonstrate that HEIs' employee ETD practices are evaluated against the HEIs' goal achievement:

*Is return on investment measured in some way at your institution?* After completing the approved development programme, the learner is required to forward a detailed report to his/her line manager as well as evaluate the programme on the performance and development management system (P 2: RD2:10, 269-276). The priorities are based on the current job. The University as a whole needs to deliver, it has got objectives that it needs to achieve so therefore priority is given to the current job (P21: RF1:44, 131-134). [Therefore] it is required to put the outcome of what he/she learned into his or her performance management contract. We do have this function but it is not fully utilised. Hence, in a way, there is a gap between what the person gained from a learning programme and how he or she is implementing it. There is no proof, only an assumption that they would apply their new skill or knowledge in their work environment (P32: RT2:13, 69-74).

*Is return on investment measured in some way at your institution?* No, not really. *What do you mean not really?* We only ensure that events are cost-effective (P22: VD1:16, 258-268).

*Is return on investment measured in some way at your institution?* Return on investment – we are far from it. I would love to be in a situation when I could say I mean even now I give people an approval letter that the application was approved, go and make your arrangements, we would like your plan of how you would come back and transfer knowledge. In-house training, we give evaluation forms in terms of the facilitator but we take it and we file it. If I'm honest that's a real weak area and that what bothers me with the audit. If I look at the self-evaluation forms it was sore because it highlighted a lot of weak areas and it comes down to capacity (P11: WF1:26, 271-279).

*Is return on investment measured in some way at your institution?* We discuss needs for people's development against what the institution wants to achieve. And it's structured in that way, that's all we do (P19: YF2:70, 481-482).

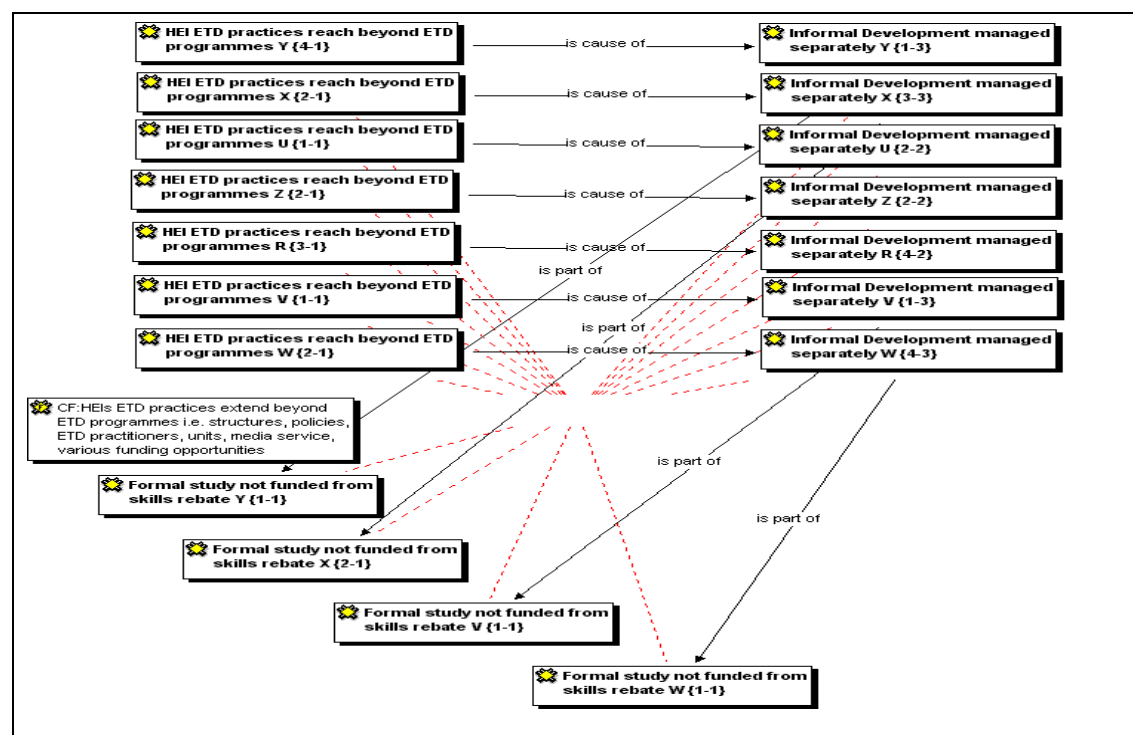
The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that although performance management systems are in place to determine ETD needs, the return on investment in ETD is not determined.

The documentation received from all the SDFs matched (triangulated) the SDFs opinion that HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities towards providing a quality service. In other words, employee ETD programmes are funded when these programmes are perceived as benefiting the HEI. In addition, HEIs implemented performance management systems as a means of managing employee ETD practices but do not measure the return on this investment. I therefore decided not to pursue this theme during the focus group discussion.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the understanding of the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' ETD practices that HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Piper and Glatter (1977:14) argue that "staff development is a systematic attempt to harmonise individuals' interests and wishes, and their carefully assessed requirements for furthering their careers with the forthcoming requirements of the organisation in which they are expected to work" (P1:631 722-725). Similarly Wexley (2002:2) and Reid *et al.* (2004:3) refer to training and development as the planned effort by an organisation to facilitate job-related learning (P2:77, 293-296).

I now present the fifth of the nine network displays relevant to illustrate that HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes.

#### 4.3.2.5 HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes, i.e. structures, policies, ETD practitioners, units, media service, various funding opportunities



**Figure 4.15 HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes**

The network display shown in Figure 4.15 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g.



6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes. Consequently, their ETD practices include structures, policies, ETD practitioners, units, media service and various funding opportunities. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*™ can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The aim of my empirical research was to ascertain whether the context of staff development is perceived as being bound to programmes or whether various structures exist to enable a culture of learning in HEIs. The above-mentioned network display illustrates that in all seven participating HEIs, their ETD practices extend beyond mere programme (ETD) delivery, and include various policies and various ways of managing and funding employee ETD opportunities. In addition, the network display illustrates that as a consequence of ETD practices extending beyond programmes, informal development is managed separately from non-formal or formal development in HEIs. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant to the understanding that ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes:

*What support mechanisms are available to staff with regard to ETD practices?* The Department of Education presents these programmes exclusively for academics (P 2: RD2:12, 81-82). We have Internal IT programmes, which appear in the Department of Information Technology computer training programme catalogue (P 2: RD2:13, 232-234). The University has appointed staff to deliver training services (P 6: RT1:30, 131-133). There are different policies in the staff development umbrella of the University, like for instance we do have development that falls under the conditions of employment [study benefit], another one is human resource development that includes conference attendance as well, there are specific policies and specific funds that pay for development such as conference attendance as well (P21: RF1:55, 45-53).

*What support mechanisms are available to staff with regard to ETD practices?* Well our centre is the official body charged with the promotion of training across the University. It is the function of the centre to support and foster the individual and departmental training and development initiatives identified in the University (P 7: UD1:25, 152-155). Another structure is the staff training centre which is called the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Development and we have a constituted board in terms of our policy (P27: UF1:46, 67-70).

*What support mechanisms are available to staff with regard to ETD practices?* HR would take care of the generic needs of that individual but let's just say that that staff member needs maybe um, a combination of facilitation skills as well as research skills maybe, and as well as specific expertise in their area of focus. Let's just say it's a history lecturer then what we would do is undertake to allow the dean to actually conduct or to identify those specific needs for the specialisation area but we will take care of the other generic needs in terms of for example how research is handled. We've got a research unit so that dean and that individual will contact the research department and say specific training is needed here, or they'll send them to outside-type training for research (P23: VT1:24, 74-84).

*What support mechanisms are available to staff with regard to ETD practices?* We have



portfolio managers (P 9: WD1:31, 187-203). They are accountable for the training and development of employees in their portfolio. Then we have the Directorate: Education Training and Development which conducts needs analysis/skills audit, updates/revises in-house training programmes and facilitators of training (P 9: WD1:32, 256-270).

*What support mechanisms are available to staff with regard to ETD practices?* Our bureau for staff development (P29: XF1:30, 11-11). Then the Centre for Continuing Professional Development is responsible for all the training that must take place in the institution, we compile the workplace plan, we collate all the training needs (P29: XF1:31, 21-25).

*What support mechanisms are available to staff with regard to ETD practices?* We have a teaching development policy, which talks to the development of teaching and learning directly, where you for an example have, uh, assessment, would typically be done by these people, you know, assessment training of assessors, would typically be done by this department, because it has direct impact on teaching and learning (P19: YF2:68, 194-203). Yes, staff development, we actually have a whole department that looks at staff development (P19: YF2:83, 148-150).

*What support mechanisms are available to staff with regard to ETD practices?* Staff development includes bursaries also. I'm only responsible for skills development (P20: ZF1:40, 88-90). Staff development also covers employees' dependants (P20: ZF1:41, 94-96).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that staff development extends beyond the availability of programmes. It therefore includes not only the separate departments responsible for developing and presenting programmes, but also the various funding mechanisms and policies that are in place to enable employee ETD practices. What came as rather a surprise (since it was an issue that was not interrogated as such, but that emerged as the discussion progressed) however, was that all the SDFs mentioned that informal development is managed separately from non-formal and formal development in HEIs. The following quotations selected are relevant to this understanding:

*X you mention that funds for attending conference or workshops are kept separate from your skills funds, could you explain this?* Maybe it's because lecturers do have the opportunity to generate funds for conferences and workshops whilst the non-academics, we don't have the opportunity. So automatically you can't use skills funds for conferences for support staff. I think our reliance on skills funds for skills programmes is about 80%. So that is why we cannot fund conferences from the skills fund. *Do you think it is fair not to use the skills funds for conference attending of support staff.* No, I think it would be fair if it was open across the board (P32: RT2.16, 90-109).

We also have a very strong mentoring programme which obviously is different from courses. A department or a school or a unit will ask us for example, help us set up a mentoring scheme in our school. Then we'll provide a workshop over a number of days broken up into shorter sessions for the whole school to introduce the concept of mentoring. *Would there be a policy in this regard?* No. It's driven by the school and generally there is no cost involved (P27: UF1:19, 204-217).

Deans and directors budget and pay conference fees, transport, travel and

accommodation from faculty or divisional budgets as allocated by central finance. *Why?* Because conference funds, mentoring or coaching activities are managed at departmental level and as we all know, academics generate their own funding to attend conferences. *But why?* I think it is because subject-specific knowledge is not always written in books, it's about sharing of knowledge at conferences (P34: VT2:10, 98-99).

Then there are overseas conferences, there is a separate budget. *What do you mean?* Oh, our conference funds are an additional fund to the skills fund. They [she pointed to a academic person] use their funds at their own discretion (P11: WF1.txt - 11:10, 109-110). The ones that don't reflect [on their WSP/ATR] are the overseas conferences. I put generally conferences on the ATR since there is a lot of conference attendance (P11: WF1:21, 191-193). But with the sabbaticals, the academic departments work around it in terms of getting in extra help like postgraduate assistance but there is no specific strategy because there are too many development activities going on in this institution, you cannot keep track of it (P11: WF1:25, 214-217).

The conferences; they fund out of the money that they raise as departments and then they fund themselves and you know they travel because we feel that with the skills money we will try and have our priorities as an institutions and then we will take care of those priorities like for instance right now research is the most important priority in the institution. So millions have been put into development support in that regard [She referred to discussions and mentor support in this context] (P31: XT1:3, 48-82).

I don't know if it is because this is a XXX university or what, they will organise their development activities there ["there" refers to in faculties and academic departments], organise it for themselves there. They don't feel like they have to ask HR for funds when they go to conferences, they go to overseas... workshops there, they just do it on their own there. (P20: ZF1:6, 171-176).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that informal development is managed separately from formal and non-formal development. Informal development is, furthermore, closely related to the academic task (but is not exclusive to academics) as a means of sharing and generating subject-specific knowledge. Funds for informal development, as stated above, are therefore left in the hands of academics to utilise as they deem fit. The significance of this finding is that in only one of the HEIs was informal development recorded (and only to a certain extent) for WSP or ATR purposes. This indicates that informal development in general is not captured in the WSPs or ATRs of HEIs.

Apart from informal development practices, such as mentoring, coaching, attending conferences or workshops, being managed separately (in terms of funding) in HEIs, the following selected quotations demonstrate that formal development is also budgeted for separately in HEIs:

[F]ormal study is funded via bursary window, thus staff could easily enrol for study at this XX. It is only in exceptional cases where staff get funds for formal study via the skills fund to study at other HEIs (P 6: RT1:35, 120-123).

[If] somebody's doing a PhD in a branch of physics which is highly specialised and the



equipment is not available at this University, then we'll pay for them to go somewhere else. And then for our support staff, similarly we encourage them to attain qualifications that are job-related and most of them study off campus, because they can't attend classes and we're a classroom-based university, not a distance education institution. So, support and academic staff attainment of qualifications, via our bursary fund (P27: UF1:45, 154-163).

We have decentralised budgets as requested by executive deans or directors. Then we do have Department of Education subsidies for postgraduate studies and publishing trust funds [bursary fund] (P34: VT2:3, 37-46).

Formal study is only [funded] from the bursary fund. It comes out of a separate fund, not the skills development fund (P35: WT1:4, 24-25).

Formal education we take it is not funded through the skills funds [rather bursary fund] since it takes a lot of money (P30: XF2:6, 57-65). If that lecturer is required to supervise a PhD student and that lecturer has not a PhD, then that lecturer would apply for bursary funding which is still part of development (P30: XF2:7, 79-82).

If the person studies at another HE institution we fund that from the skills development fund. However, if the employee attends study with us, that comes from our internal benefit funds (P33: YT1:6, 29-31).

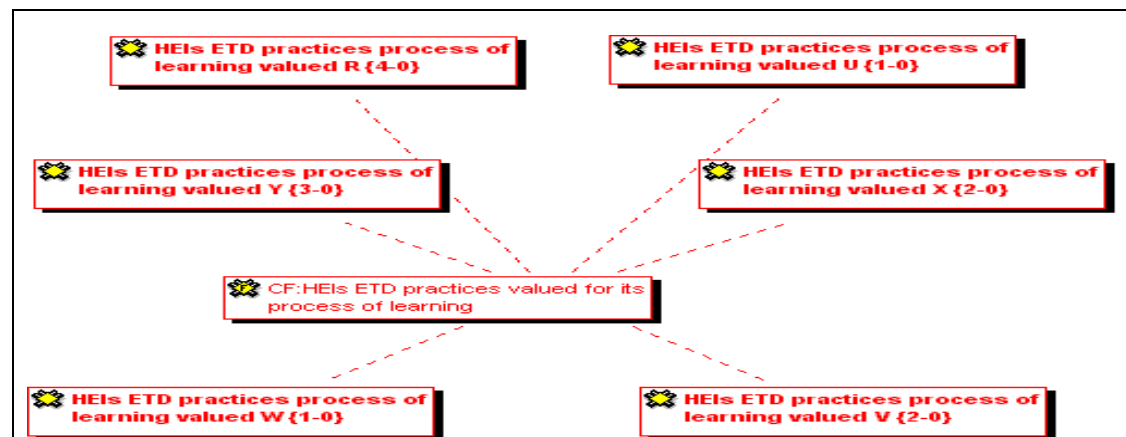
The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that formal study is funded separately from skills funds. Considering that the documentation received from the SDFs matched (triangulated) the SDFs opinion that HEIs' ETD practices include structures, dedicated facilitators, policies, units responsible for the development and presentation of staff development initiatives, and lastly various funding windows to support employee ETD opportunities, I decided not to pursue these themes during the focus group discussion. I decided, however, to pursue the reasons why informal development, albeit also managed separately from non-formal or formal development, is not reflected in the WSPs and ATRs of HEIs. I present these findings in the following section.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the understanding of the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' ETD practices that HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes. It includes structures, policies, ETD practitioners, units, media service and various funding opportunities. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Teather (1979) suggests that staff development includes processes, structures and programmes (P1: 541, 718-720). Similarly, Kapp (1995: 11) argues that staff development includes all the activities, actions, processes and procedures that an institution has developed or uses to enhance the performance and the potential of its human resources (P2:83 364-368). The mismatch that should be noted between the aims of the SDA and the aims of staff development in HEIs is however that the SDA

gives prominence to investment in ETD programmes (refer §4.3.1.3) whereas staff development in HEIs is considered a means towards institutional and individual effectiveness and efficiency.

I now present the sixth of the nine network displays relevant to the rationale and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. The following network display illustrates that HEIs' ETD practices are valued for their process of learning.

#### 4.3.2.6 HEIs' ETD practices are valued for their process of learning



**Figure 4.16 HEIs' ETD practices are valued for their process of learning**

The network display shown in Figure 4.16 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X and Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs' ETD practices are valued for their process of learning. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that in six of the seven participating HEIs, the process of learning is considered essential to employee development. The remaining SDF from the seventh HEI was not available during my empirical data capturing. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants demonstrate this understanding:

Definitely the process, the process is the more valuable, the paper is only the confirmation (P32: RT2:12, 68-69).

Learning in itself is a process that cannot be placed in a linear or static box. The credentials that a person receives after completion of a learning intervention and/or qualification is only as good as the depth and meaning of the learning and insights gained in the actual process. It is in the process of learning that an individual

assimilates new concepts and insights, and undertakes reflection and self-evaluation. In the absence of high-quality experiential and relevant learning, the attainment of credentials just for the sake of receiving a certificate or commendation, becomes meaningless (P37: UT2:21, 197-204).

The process of learning is valuable together with the application of learning on the job to improve performance (P34: VT2:28, 77-78).

We concentrate rather on the process of learning since hopefully it will lead to change in behaviour and performance improvement (P35: WT1:8, 43-44).

The process of learning is more valuable than the credentials, however there are employees that demand a certificate or declaration of competency after completion of a short course (P36: XT2:9, 55-57).

The process of learning is more important as it addresses the development growth of employees' needs attained through reflection and discussions with peers. Thus the process of learning is more important than the paper (P33: YT1:12, 55-57).

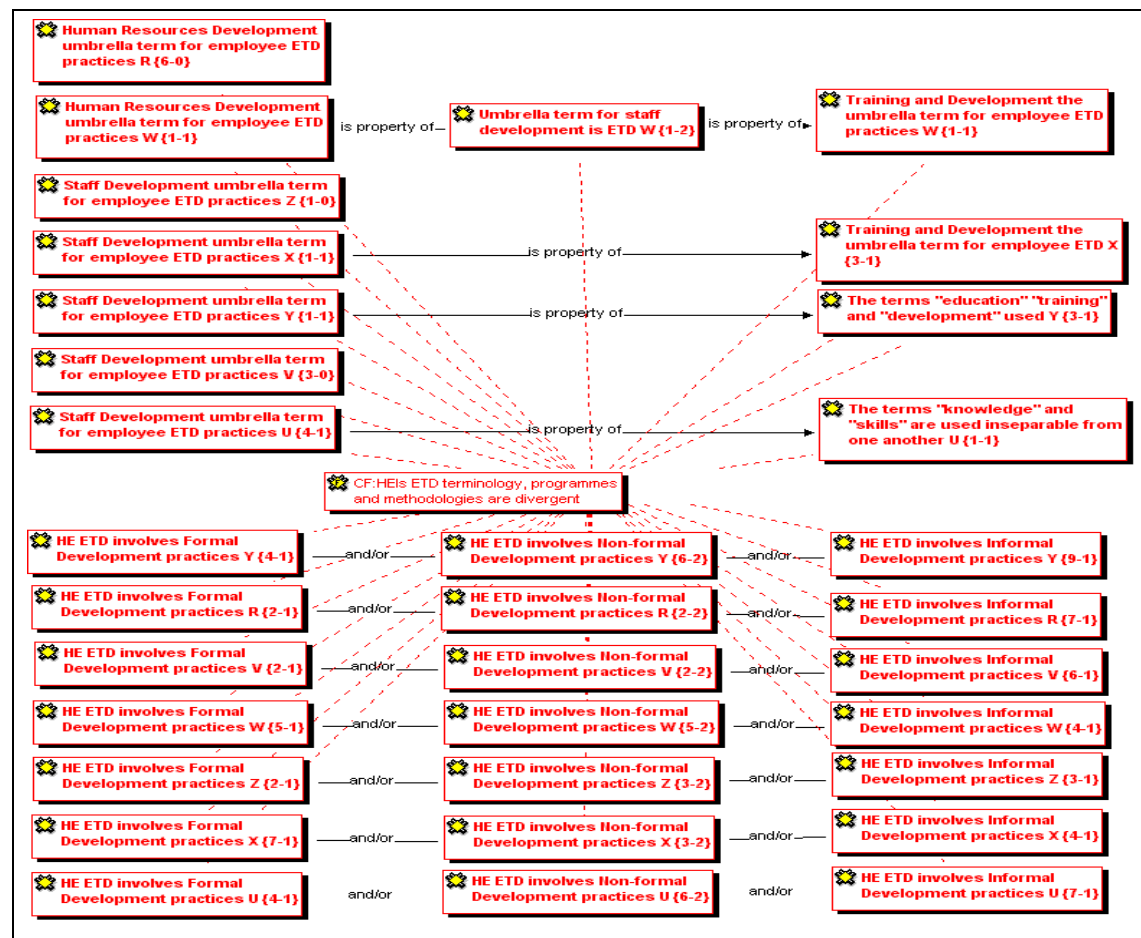
The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the conclusion that HEIs value the process of learning, not necessarily the certification that the person receives after completing a programme.

Considering that six HEIs value the process of learning but not the certification that the person receives after completing a programme, I decided not to include these themes during the focus group discussion.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to understanding the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' ETD practices, namely that HEIs value the process of learning but not the certification that the person receives after completing a programme. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example Allen, Blackwell and Gibbs (2003: 66 to 78) note the trend towards the value of the learning process in staff development (P1:555 1122-1123). Similarly, Ljubljana (1995:68) specifically reports on the staff development practices connected to learning, where learning is acquired from group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery and learning from one another, hence considering the process of learning in HEIs as essential to learning in HEIs (P1:616 1079-1082; P1:617 1088-1093).

I now present the seventh of the nine network displays relevant to the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. This network display illustrates that HEIs' ETD terminology, programmes and methodologies are divergent.

#### 4.3.2.7 HEIs' ETD terminology, programmes and methodologies are divergent



**Figure 4.17 HEIs' ETD terminology, programmes and methodologies are divergent**

The network display shown in Figure 4.17 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs' ETD terminology, programmes and methodologies are diverse. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The aim of this part of my empirical research was to ascertain whether HEIs conform to certain ETD terminology (i.e informal, formal or non-formal) or not. The network display illustrates that among the seven participating HEIs the terminology, programmes and methodologies of learning applied in HEIs are divergent. As illustrated in the above network display, employee ETD programmes are, however, categorised into three distinct categories – formal, non-formal and informal



programmes (refer §2.3.3). The following selected quotations demonstrate that in two of the HEIs the umbrella term for employee ETD is Human Resources Development whereas at the remaining four HEIs this is referred to as staff development:

*What is the general term used in your institution to refer to the education, training and development of staff members?* Human Resources development is the broad term that refers to the development of human resources by means of training and education (P 1: RD1:7, 80-82). *Why Human Resources development?* It's human resource development because it covers the whole aspects of development as in education and training development. Human resources development is the umbrella of human resources development of the institution (P21: RF1:4, 12-16).

*What is the general term used in your institution to refer to the education, training and development of staff members?* We are moving towards changing it now to the term human resources development. *Why?* We are calling it human resources development ... that is the trend in terms of benchmarking (P11: WF1:4, 21-25).

*What is the general term used in your institution to refer to the education, training and development of staff members?* Staff development. Hence our policy is called the Staff Development Policy (P7: UD1:1, 4-10). Staff development (defined as those processes through which the organisation and individuals engage in ongoing learning to meet new challenges and conditions of work) is an integral part of the working life of each member of staff at the University. It is associated with the development needs of the individual, of groups of staff and the achievement of the University's overall strategy (P7: UD1:2, 10-21). *Why?* We have chosen not to use the word skills development. The reason is, in a higher education context our staff by and large, and particularly our academic staff, are not very comfortable with the notion of skills development, because, as far as they are concerned as professionals and as academics, skills belongs to a different realm than the type of work and the nature of the work that they do. And the association of skills generally tends to be associated more with levels of work related to more manual skills, more practical, rather than intellectual cognitive kinds of work that focus on processes of learning (P27: UF1:3, 19-26). Academic would rather prefer the term knowledge development and they are comfortable with staff development, I mean, they see, the concept of development is not a problem. Development, growth You see, the nice thing is that terminology like staff development is comfortable for everybody, nobody is uncomfortable with that, whereas if you had chosen skills development — and we try as far as possible not to, I mean, higher education institutions typically are quite strongly divided between support staff and academic staff (P27: UF1:4, 28-41).

*What is the general term used in your institution to refer to the education, training and development of staff members?* Staff development. Our policy states that it is critical that the university staff development policy, procedures and practices play significant roles in attracting, developing and retaining employees of high quality (P22: VD1:4, 10-12). *What is the general term referred to in your institution?* Staff development (P24: VF1:4, 21-22). We did devise what we call yes a staff development policy (P24: VF1:5, 34-34).

*What is the general term used in your institution to refer to the education, training and development of staff members?* The popular term is Staff development. *Why?* I think Staff Development in a sense that they are aware to be developed (P30: XF2:11, 21-25).

*What is the general term used in your institution to refer to the education, training and development of staff members?* You know strangely enough it's not even called skills development. They talk of either organisation development, or ETD. Or yes, staff development, we actually have a whole department that looks at staff development



(P19: YF2:18, 143-149).

*What is the general term used in your institution to refer to the education, training and development of staff members?* It's education ... general, staff development. Staff development, yes (P20: ZF1:2, 16-16).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the terms used to refer to employee ETD practices are diverse. The following selected quotations furthermore demonstrate that employee ETD opportunities are also diverse:

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Education that refers to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding about principles, systems and theories in relation to a broad subject area. It may take the form of formal learning as in attaining qualifications at an accredited secondary or tertiary education institution (P 1: RD1:18, 88-92). Formal courses as a higher education institution obviously. It's part of the benefit as well (P21: RF1:35, 110-112).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* To help individuals develop skills and/or gain qualifications, which will contribute to the development of their work and equip them for their future career (P 7: UD1:11, 39-41). To assist individuals to gain appropriate nationally and internationally recognised vocational and educational qualifications (P 7: UD1:12, 45-46).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Employee development opportunities, include formal education (VD1:10 70-89).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* The University will create and make accessible on an ongoing basis meaningful opportunity for all employees' training, education and development (P 9: WD1:6, 81-83). According to the new conditions of service, staff can study at the University and they will only contribute towards the cost of 1 yearly module. If they wish to study at another institution, they will be allowed to do so if it is not offered at the University and the University will pay 75 % of the fees towards their studies and they would also qualify for the recommended study and examination leave set out (P10: WD2:2, 19:-24). The policy states quite clearly that you are allowed a certain amount of time off for training and development and for formal qualifications ...if you have a masters or a doctorate ... because we are a learning institution, we make that clear in our policy to say that you have the opportunities for formal qualifications (P11: WF1:7, 87-96).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* It is the policy of the University that staff members will be allowed a discount on tuition fees. An amount equal to the sum of the application fee and annual registration fee is debited (P14: XD3:1, 12-16). The biggest one that the institutional view, if I can say it like that, is the qualification bettering of staff (P29: XF1:13, 138-140).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* The costs covered by the study assistance scheme (subject to annual review by the SDTC) are (a) registration fees (b) 100% of class fees will be granted to a staff member subject to availability of funds (P16: YD1 16:12, 73-83). You see, the reason we do that, is that, we don't strictly only fund short learning programmes, skill programmes, we also fund qualifications. Full qualifications, where a

person, for a staff member, studying say, with another institution. When they study with us, it's an automatic bursary (P19: YF2:12, 76-80).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Ok, you are professors, you are improving your qualifications, you are attending workshops there, but then again here [are people] that need qualification, so let's come together we want to develop you (P20: ZF1:12, 215-225).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that HEIs' ETD programmes are diverse. As such, the above quotations refer to formal qualifications forming part of the ETD diversity in HEIs. The following quotations have been selected to demonstrate that HEIs' employee ETD practices also consist of the initiatives categorised as informal development:

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Mentorship (P21: RF1:10, 113-113). It involves conferences, seminars, workshops that are, how can I say, not considered structured programmes (P21: RF1: 13, 105-105). There are specific policies and specific funds that pay for the conferences (P21: RF1: 16, 51-53). Conferences for lecturers have always been there and workshops and mentorship also (P21: RF1:36, 112-113).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Workshops, seminars and other [round table] activities (P7: UD1:7, 152-160). A fourth strategy that we have used extensively is coaching. We have probably in any given year up to thirty people mainly in leadership positions, but also academics and support staff who need coaching to perform in their jobs. And that coaching is, we've got a team of internal trained coaches and we also contract external executive coaches to provide that coaching (P27: UF1:16, 186-191). Attendance of conferences and presentations at conferences. Both of those are kind of intrinsically part of academics' work, attending and presenting papers, and that is also supported (P27: UF1:17, 194-196).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Coaching, mentoring (P22: VD1:8, 39-39). A variety of staff development opportunities should be offered to all employees based on appropriateness and suitability including the following (P22: VD1:17, 270-284): workshops, conferences and seminars, peer learning and assessment action/group research mentoring and coaching, on-the-job-training. So we're not actually necessarily the training providers, but in certain instances we do actually provide the training, like mentoring (P24: VF1:3, 18-19). If you're a academic you would go to conferences, but remember if the focus is on research and development, it's not just a case of go to conferences. You have to have a strategic purpose to go to that conference. Your purpose must either be so that next year I can deliver a paper there (P24: VF1:18, 217-221). On-the-job training (P24: VF1:25, 322-327). We perceive mentoring and coaching as both relevant to all staff being academic, admin and support staff. Mentoring is used to nurture, motivate and stimulate employees to undertake ETD or CPD, whilst coaching for example is predominantly done by line managers, supervisors, team leaders or peers, hence to coach employees what to do on the job (P34: VT2:8, 82-86).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* The policy states quite clearly that you are allowed a certain amount of time off for short-term interventions like mentoring, coaching (P11: WF1:7, 87-86). For conferences they become very strict, you must present a paper, it falls under development but if there has been a sudden need to attend workshops

overseas, we need now to develop something to manage it (P11: WF1:16, 158-160). Mentoring is viewed as important to yes both academics and support staff because we would lose the skills that the retiring academic or support staff members have if their experience is not shared (P35: WT1:9, 49-51). The 3% made available is for people going on workshops, subject-related (P11: WF1: 9, 107-108).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Coaching and mentoring (P13: XD2:3, 238-238). Then, across all borders, workshops, conference attendance and seminars (P29: XF1:16, 159-166). Mentoring or coaching is perceived as development for support staff in their performance. Academics are used to the concept of mentoring to help students, as in counselling and guiding (P36: XT2:10, 61-63).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* They might use that [departmental funds] to send people to conferences, or to, you know, workshops, or, you know, to training which is not controlled. Development side is more, it's actually for me, it's an easier one. Because it's the one that says, um, especially our academics ... So that's where we, we include things that are related to teaching, learning, research, um, you know, discussion groups, mentoring action research, postgraduate supervision discussions. That would classify as informal development (P19: YF2:31, 321-333). The development might not be accredited, but they are essential (P19: YF2:32, 335-337). *Why?* I will tell you why, for me that's part of development (P19: YF2:34, 353-360). It's a skill. Because they go there, and they come back and translate those skills to our students, otherwise they stay outdated, and I pay for them to attend those things (P19: YF2:35, 363-365). It is more relevant to academics who are dealing with work-based learning (P33: YT1:13, 62-63).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* The opportunity to participate in mentoring and coaching less experienced employees (P22: VD1:18, 337-339).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* They go to conferences, they go to overseas ... workshops there, they just do it on their own there (P20: ZF1:9, 198-199). And I believe there's on-the-job training (P20: ZF1:32, 127-127).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the ETD strategies used in HEIs are diverse. As such, the above quotations refer to conferences, workshops, mentoring, coaching, round-table discussions and many non-accredited and unstructured development initiatives (categorised as informal development) as part of the ETD programme diversity in HEIs. The following quotations selected furthermore demonstrate another ETD strategy, categorised as non-formal development:

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Training refers to the acquisition of skills and competencies by means of structured (curricular) courses or programmes that are not necessarily accredited (P 1: RD1:17, 84-86). Some of them will always be there, priority courses, there have always been soft skills courses in the institution (P21: RF1:34, 108-110).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* We've got an incredibly wide spectrum that we consider as part of staff development. Um, and some of those are non-formal, not formally accredited courses such as supervisory training, stress management (P27: UF1:7, 122-



126).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing short learning courses, oh there are many themes that they address (P22: VD1:17, 270-284).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* We constantly revise programmes and needs come up all the time, you've just seen something like research-writing skills and those are all programmes offered here, facilitated either by one of us, that's our first choice, if we have the expertise. It's those programmes that are structured but not necessarily accredited (P27: UF1:13, 169-172). We do contract quite a lot of private providers to come and provide some of our training and development programmes here (P27: UF1:14, 175-176).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Employee development opportunities, include [non-formal]: SAQA/NQF unit standards linked short courses and qualifications. Assessment programmes. Curriculum/programme design and development courses. Instructional design and learning. Outcomes-based education (OBE) and training courses. Quality Assurance programmes. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) workshops. Research methodology, supervision and related skills programmes. Learning theories and teaching methodology courses. Action Learning and Research programmes. Facilitation of learning programmes. Facilitation of multi-gender, multicultural and multilingual groups of learners. Peer learning and assessment. action research programmes. Empowerment of women in the workplace programmes (P22: VD1 22:10, 70-89). [She referred to the latter programmes as non-formal courses (P22: VD1:17, 270-284).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Then, under training we look at short programmes up to five days, more structured skills development, not always assessment linked to it (P11: WF1:14, 153-154). Development can take various forms. We look at development as a mixture, of up to six-month courses where it fits into your career pathing; it could be short and long-term programmes so it adds to your portfolio, something that you can put up in your CV (P11: WF1:15, 154-158).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Our managerial programme for HODs. It is credit bearing, um, the curriculum is designed, it is built or derived from a specific leadership strategy, in the institution. Um, so, ja, it was very thoroughly designed, so that is a specific category. *It's credit bearing?* Um, yes, on a NQF level we, we, um, pitch it, pitch it, no, no, no, we pitch it on a level 6, a, level 7 (P29: XF1:17, 168-179). *How many of these programme you were talking about are accredited training?* It could be I don't think its more than 20% (P30: XF2:14, 89-91). For example, specifically a programme that's a gap in your need to be a secretary, the, remember the modules, or the outcomes, or the competencies that you need to prove as a secretary, but you still need to do shorthand, if you attend a shorthand training programme. (P29: XF1:18, 203-209).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Skills development assistance may be granted for the duration of the specific course (P16: YD1:15, 127-128). Courses may be short courses that are not accredited but structured, you know outcomes-based (P16: YD1:16, 135-135). A course must be completed in the maximum period of the prescribed duration thereof. Once this time period has expired, staff development assistance will not be renewed, unless mitigating circumstances are identified by the SDF or beneficiary in writing (P16: YD1:17, 138-141).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* I know that they have got a medical background which is

applicable in the hospital there, but then they've got people here, they are working with people here and they have to manage people, they need to go on courses (P20: ZF1:10, 203-204). And in that I've been able to help them with skills programmes, some of them are doing, like I say, starting with skills programmes like customer care (P20: ZF1:24, 149-152).

The above-mentioned quotations clearly demonstrate that HEIs' employee ETD strategies include non-formal development programmes. As such, the above mentioned quotations refer to courses that are structured but that may or may not be accredited (categorised as non-formal development) and that are part of the ETD programme diversity in HEIs.

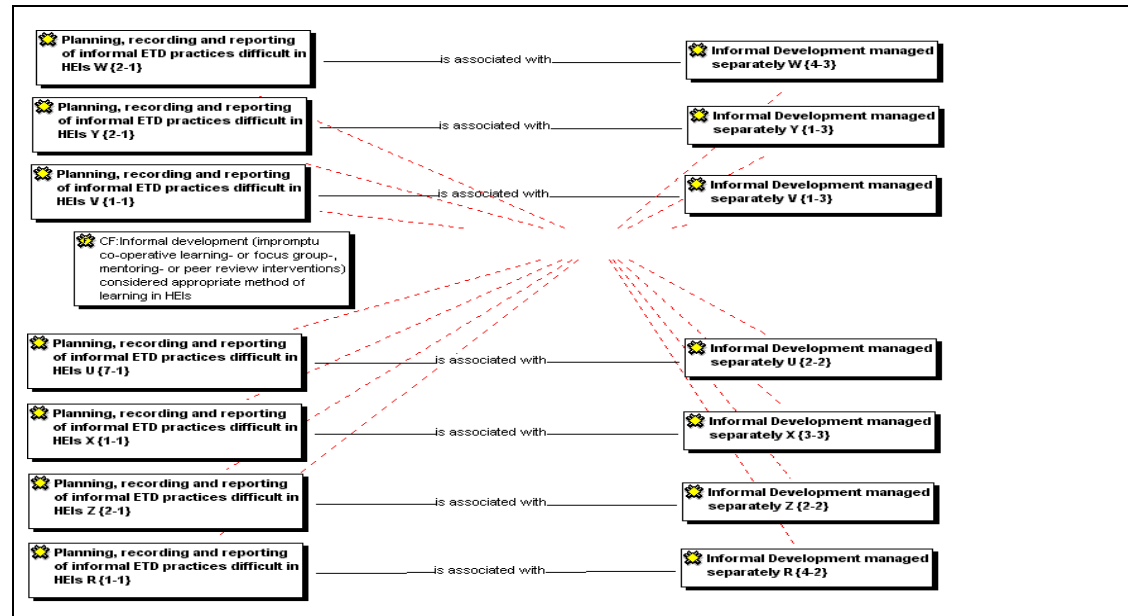
Considering that the documentation received from the SDFs matched (triangulated) the SDFs' opinion that HEIs' ETD practices are divergent, I decided not to pursue this theme during the focus group discussion.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to understanding the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' ETD practices, indicating that HEIs' ETD practices are divergent. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Shore (cited in Teather 1979:77) notes that most Canadian HEIs' staff development consists of formal, non-formal and informal activities (P1:547 838-846). Some authors refer to staff development as an umbrella term, synonymous with terms such as in-service education, staff training or continuous professional development (Gall and O'Brien Vojtek, 1994:1; Greyling, 2001:38; Biggs, 1999:42) (P2:42 264-268).

I now present the penultimate network view relevant to the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. This network display illustrates that informal development (impromptu co-operative learning interventions, or focus group, mentoring or peer-review interventions) is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs.



#### 4.3.2.8 Informal development (impromptu co-operative learning interventions or focus group, mentoring or peer review interventions) is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs



**Figure 4.18 Informal development (impromptu co-operative learning interventions or focus group, mentoring or peer review interventions) is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs**

The network display shown in Figure 4.18 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that informal development (impromptu co-operative learning interventions, or focus group, mentoring or peer-review interventions) is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The following quotations selected from each of the seven SDFs substantiate the view as far as staff development in HEIs is concerned that informal development is the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs:

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Informal development involves conferences, seminars, workshops that are, how can I say, not considered structured programmes (P21: RF1: 13, 105-105). There are specific policies and specific funds that pay for the conferences (P21: RF1: 16, 51-53). Conferences for lecturers have always been there and workshops and mentorship also (P21: RF1:36, 112-113).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Workshops, seminars and other [round table] activities (P7: UD1:7, 152-160). A fourth strategy that we have used extensively is coaching. We have probably in any given year up to thirty people mainly in leadership positions, but also academics and support staff who need coaching to perform in their jobs. And that coaching is, we've got a team of internal trained coaches and we also contract external executive coaches to provide that coaching (P27: UF1:16, 186-191). Attendance of conferences and presentations at conferences are kind of intrinsically part of academics' work, attending and presenting papers, and that is also supported (P27: UF1:17, 194-196).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Coaching, mentoring (P22: VD1:8, 39-39), workshops, conferences and seminars, peer learning and assessment action/group research mentoring and coaching, on-the-job-training (P24: VF1:18, 217-221). On-the-job training (P24: VF1:25, 322-327). We perceive mentoring and coaching as both relevant to all staff being academic, admin and support staff. Mentoring is used to nurture, motivate and stimulate employees to undertake ETD or CPD, whilst coaching for example is predominantly done by line managers, supervisors, team leaders or peers (P34: VT2:8, 82-86).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* The policy states quite clearly that you are allowed a certain amount of time off for short-term interventions like mentoring, coaching (P11: WF1:7, 87-96). For conferences they become very strict, you must present a paper, it falls under development but if there has been a sudden need to attend workshops overseas, we need now to develop something to manage it (P11: WF1:16, 158-160). Mentoring is viewed important.... we would lose the skills that the retiring academic or support staff members have if their experience is not shared (P35: WT1:9, 49-51).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* Coaching and mentoring (P13: XD2:3, 238-238). Then, across all borders, workshops, conference attendance and seminars (P29: XF1:16, 159-166). Mentoring or coaching is perceived as development for support staff in their performance. Academics are used to the concept of mentoring to help students, as in counselling and guiding (P36: XT2:10, 61-63).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* We include things that are related to teaching, learning, research, um, you know, discussion groups, mentoring action research, postgraduate supervision discussions (P19: YF2:31, 321-333). The development might not be accredited, but they are essential (P19: YF2:32, 335-337). *Why?* It is more relevant to academics who are dealing with work-based learning (P33: YT1:13, 62-62).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* The opportunity to participate in mentoring and coaching (P22: VD1:18, 337-339).

*What are the different strategies that your institution considers as education, training and development initiatives?* They [academics] go to conferences, they go to overseas ... workshops there, they just do it on their own there (P20: ZF1:9, 198-199). And I believe there's on-the-job training (P20: ZF1:32, 127-127).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the inference that informal development is considered the most appropriate method of academic staff development in HEIs. In addition, they substantiate the inference that informal development is predominantly visible in academic employees' development. As the



The network display shown in Figure 4.19 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that the term “development” overshadows the term “training” in HEIs. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that in five HEIs the term “development” overshadows the term “training”. In two of the remaining HEIs, the terms development and training are, however, used inseparably whereas at the last HEI the term “training” overshadows the term “development”. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants substantiate the finding that the term “development” overshadows the term “training” in HEIs:

[D]evelopment is the main focus ... would be anything that would enhance the core functions of the University which is learning generation via teaching and research and community services (P 6: RT1:28,26-29).

In the higher education context, our staff by and large, and particularly our academic staff, are not very comfortable with the notion of skills development, because, as far as they are concerned as professionals and as academics, skills belong to a different realm than the type of work and the nature of the work that they do. And the association of skills, generally tends to be associated more with levels of work related to more manual skills, more practical, rather than intellectual cognitive kinds of work that focus on processes of learning (P27: UF1:35, 19-26).

Employee development is regarded as a legitimate form of work activity. All employees are eligible for some form of equitable development opportunity and participation in a given year. High standards and quality of employee development will realise the vision and mission of the University (P22: VD1:22, 162-170). Employee development encompasses five interlinked areas of work: ability to work with students; personal career development; ability to design, implement and modify a curriculum; ability to contribute to institutional development and research (P22: VD1:23, 220-223). Staff development opportunities: The term refers to all courses, programmes, interventions and actions which are offered to employees to promote and improve individual and team competencies (P22: VD1:24, 227-229).

Staff development at the University focuses on technical skills needed to do the job better or latest trends in technology which will assist in improved quality service and efficiency or the overall performance of the individual and in turn the unit (P10: WD2:5, 10-13). We prefer to use the term development at our institution because the term refers to holistic growth (P35: WT1:17, 96-97).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that the term “development” overshadows the term “training” in some HEIs. The following quotations, however, substantiate the finding that in two of the HEIs the term “development” or “training” is used inseparably from or synonymously with each other.

University Skills Development Policy (SDP) must support all relevant employee efforts to further their education, training and development through a skills development scheme, of which the objectives are to enhance efficient and effective teaching and learning, research and community service at the University (P16: YD1.:29, 14-23). The X is obliged to avail to the employee support in financial and other forms in the amount required for the completion of the agreed and stipulated programme/s of education, training and development (P17: YD2:4, 37-39).

To help individual staff to acquire knowledge and skills which will allow them to carry out their current duties with maximum effectiveness, and thereby contribute to the achievement of agreed objectives (P 7: UD1:10, 33-35).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that in two of the HEIs the terms “development” and “training” are used inseparably or interchangeably in HEIs. This does not mean that in the above-mentioned two HEIs the term “training” overshadows “development” in HEIs. The conclusion could thus be drawn that the term “development” tends to overshadow the term “training” in HEIs.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to understanding the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' ETD practices, namely that the term “development” overshadows the term “training” in HEIs. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Nisbit and McAleese (1979:48) argue that although the notion of imparting a set of skills to a novice is understood as training or development in industry, this does not hold true for HEIs which regards staff training as a wider development approach (P1:897, 885-888). Nisbit and McAleese (1979:50) argue that the extensive use of the term "training" is just an "unfortunate choice" for describing the professional requirements of teachers at British universities (P1: 896, 870-880).

In conclusion, in this section I have presented the findings of my entire empirical data analysis in an effort to substantiate the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. The findings indicate the following:

- Development (include formal, non-formal and informal initiatives) refer to the individual's responsibility for self-development;
- No distinction is drawn between the length of time to acquire skills and knowledge of teaching-related and support-related tasks. However, the difference between academic and support staff development seems to indicate that support staff are more restricted in attending development opportunities than academic staff. In addition, it indicates that formal



qualifications are perceived to be work-related skills for academics, which is not the case for support staff;

- HEIs' ETD practices are traditionally available to all employees;
- HEIs' ETD practices concern the furthering of task-specific skills, knowledge and abilities;
- HEIs' ETD practices extend beyond ETD programmes (i.e. structures, policies, ETD practitioners, units, media service, various funding opportunities);
- HEIs' ETD practices are valued for their process of learning;
- HEIs' ETD terminology, programmes and methodologies are divergent;
- Informal development (impromptu co-operative learning interventions or focus group, mentoring or peer review interventions) is considered an appropriate method of staff development for academics (not exclusive) in HEIs; and
- The term "development" overshadows the term "training" in HEIs.

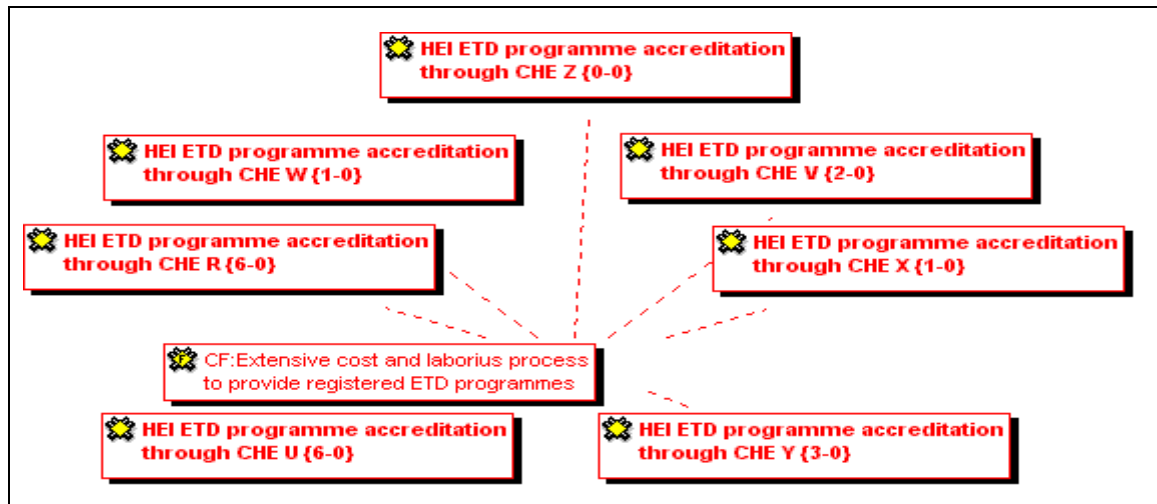
In the following section I present the data analysis of the documented opinions regarding the challenges that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

#### **4.3.3 Documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA**

Eight interrelated themes emerged from the non-empirical data analysis of the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. The eight themes are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA*. The eight themes displayed are: extensive cost and the laborious process involved in providing registered ETD programmes; HEIs' ETD practices differ from national imperatives; HEIs' ETD practices are not co-ordinated for presentation at the ETDP SETA; HEIs submit their workplace skills plans (WSPs) and annual training reports (ATRs) solely to receive grants; the integration of the SDA in traditional HEIs' ETD practices is difficult; lack of support and guidance from the ETDP SETA; HEIs using performance systems refrain from managing national SDA imperatives; and the SDA is perceived as a form of tax. I now present the findings of the empirical data analysis relevant to each of these eight themes. The first of the eight network displays relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA is presented next.



#### 4.3.3.1 Extensive cost and laborious process to provide registered ETD programmes



**Figure 4.20 Extensive cost and laborious process to provide registered ETD programmes**

The network display shown in Figure 4.20 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox for each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the extensive cost and laborious process involved in providing registered ETD programmes. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The aim of this part of my empirical research was to ascertain whether SDFs perceive the provision of registered ETD programmes as costly and laborious with regard to the process of registering programmes. Not one of the SDFs perceived this provision as challenging, since HEIs are by their nature accustomed to developing and presenting programmes that are quality assured by the Committee on Higher Education – more specifically the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). However, the SDFs viewed the provision of short courses under the umbrella of the HEQC process as conflicting with the SDA's intention to present courses aligned to the unit standards of the National Qualifications Framework. The above mentioned network display does not, therefore, illustrate the intended aim of my interaction with the SDFs (that they perceive the provision of registered ETD programmes as costly and laborious), but rather what the SDFs viewed as being problematic in this context. The following quotations have been selected from each of the research participants to substantiate the conflict that SDFs experience with the

provision of short courses being registered with the HEQC but that are not aligned to unit standards:

*What challenges do you encounter with regard to the provision of ETD programmes?* The university is mainly dealing with level 6 [programmes] and upwards on the NQF levels, so mainly the short courses that we intend to present are not necessarily above NQF 6 but would be at the lower levels of the NQF. And with the university it's not its main core function to [present programmes on levels 1 to 5] (P 6: RT1:6, 56-59). For example, we've got a communication degree and you take a certain module and transform that into a short course. For that course to be accredited it needs to be aligned to unit standards, the university is not working on units, no (P 6: RT1:7, 64-67). It is not the core function of universities traditionally to develop short courses (P 6: RT1:8, 72-73). The [short courses] are not standard based. They are assumed to be accredited under the umbrella of CHE but in reality they are not standard based. They are based on the principle of self-accreditation but in reality these courses are not standard based and that is what causes the whole dilemma (P32: RT2:6, 30-35). *What you are saying is that if the university were to present the course then it would not be standard based?* Yes. *OK but why don't you outsource the programme to external providers?* We can, but then we are in conflict with our core business.

*What challenges do you encounter with the provision of ETD programmes?* We have gone the route of not seeking accreditation as a training centre; so our staff development centre is not accredited. Where we offer qualifications we obviously offer them under the umbrella of the University's broad accreditation (P27: UF1:22, 251-255). We also have a private provider, owned by the University, and they provide some programmes for us and we fall under their umbrella, but when we use external providers, we choose them on the basis of their accreditation. So in our selection criteria for providers we look at BEE, we look at a whole range of criteria for accreditation and we still use one or two who are not accredited or provide programmes that are not accredited, but our choice by far is to go for accredited programmes only. So of our total learners that we report every year, I would say about 20% are completing formally accredited programmes (P27: UF1:23, 255-263). It is a pity that South Africa has a duality in its NQF system – i.e. that which is applicable to industry-oriented training providers and that which is applicable to higher education and further education. In essence, we have two NQF systems in place – that of the NQF in its purest form, and that of the HEQC framework. This causes conflict in the way in which quality is regulated from one context to the next, and it further reinforces the divide between industry and education. Ironically, the initial purpose and intention of the NQF was to close the historical gap between industry and education so that the system of “supply and demand” would be better integrated, to the benefit of all SA learners (P37: UT2:18, 166-174).

*What challenges do you encounter with the provision of ETD programmes?* Well, last year at least I managed to get all the training providers that were linked to HR training we got them to apply for accreditation to any one of the SETAs but because the Council for Higher Education does not support SETA-type training or it seems like there's no support, I'm not sure (P23: VT1:14, 217-225). The fact that HEQC does not recognise even though HEQC is supposed to be a quality assurance system, it doesn't recognise unit standards and credit-bearing unit standards (P24: VF1:24, 299-302).

*What challenges do you encounter with the provision of ETD programmes?* The Council for Higher Education sees education as the key focus. Hence we had a situation where in HR training this year, none of our courses are accredited in any way whatsoever (P23: VT1:17, 264-268). We support ETD interventions that are provided by ETQA-accredited providers that use OBE methodology and provide knowledge and skills and values and attitudes P34: VT2:70, 71-72). But why can't we provide training under our own CHE umbrella? *I don't know, you tell me* (laughs). Louw, I think it is a

clash between CHE and unit standard-based training via the SETA you know. *No I am just joking, I agree with you. On the other hand CHE is QA-ing our formal programmes. I don't think they are interested in standard-based development that again is problematic in terms of reporting on NQF programmes in the WSP.*

*What challenges do you encounter with the provision of ETD programmes?*

Our managerial programme for HODs. It is credit bearing, um, the curriculum is designed, it is built or derived from a specific leadership strategy, in the institution. Um, so, ja, it was very thoroughly designed, so that is a specific category, it's credit bearing. Um, yes, on a NQF level we, we, um, pitch it, pitch it, no, no, no, we pitch it on a level 6, a, level 7 (P29: XF1:17, 168-179). *But X why do you need to align the programme to a full qualification level?* I haven't thought about it, everyone is doing it, aligning it to standards. *But X, full qualifications are accredited via CHE and they cannot accredit your course? No they didn't ... we ... we only align it to a course presented by our business school.*

*What challenges do you encounter with the provision of ETD programmes?*

In addition now there's a SETA with standards, there's the Engineering Council of South Africa also with QA (P19: YF2:54, 540-543). We don't want to lose the accreditation by the Engineering Council, because then our students will mean nothing in the market, and our lecturers, you know. So, so, those are the difficulties that I find, especially because SETAs are not even talking to one another, you know, the memorandums of understanding that we mooted are either non-existent or they are not activated fully. The other problem that we have, is that we, we, um, are answerable to the HEQC ... so we have this problem of to whom do we listen (P19: YF2:55, 545-553). *You mean the HEQC or the memorandum with regard to standard-based programmes?* Yes I mean.

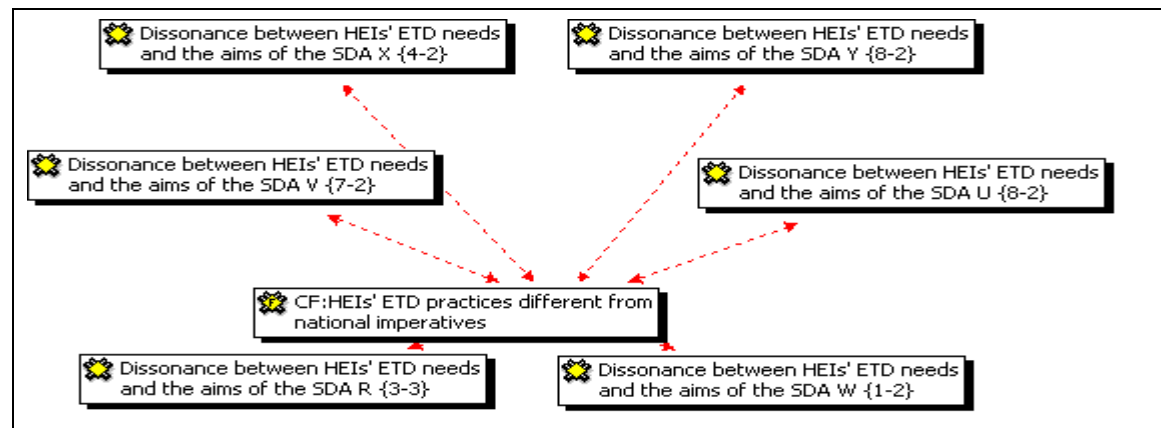
The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that SDFs experience a dissonance between the intended aims of the SDA (as regard to the provision of credentialled programmes) and how programme credit values are assigned with the provision of internally developed programmes that are presented under the banner of the Committee on Higher Education's principle of self-accreditation. The aforementioned dissonance revolves around internal courses not being based on unit standards, as intended by the SDA.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, namely that SDFs experience problems with the provision of internally developed programmes that are presented under the banner of the Committee on Higher Education's principle of self-accreditation. For this reason, internally developed programmes are not based on unit standards as intended by the SDA. As such, this finding pose another challenge that HEIs need to address in order to match the intentions of the SDA as previously explained in this chapter, §4.3.1.1.

I now present the second of the eight network displays relevant to the documented opinions about the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

This network display illustrates that HEIs' ETD practices are perceived as different from national skills development imperatives.

#### 4.3.3.2 HEIs' ETD practices differ from national skills development imperatives



**Figure 4.21 HEIs' ETD practices differ from national skills development imperatives**

The network display shown in Figure 4.21 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X or Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs' ETD practices are perceived as different from national skills development imperatives. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that there is a dissonance between HEIs' ETD needs and the aims of the SDA. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

*Do you experience or perceive a dissonance or mismatch between the aim of the Skills Development Act and the aim of staff development in your institution? Skills Development [from the SDA perspective] has got its own context dealing with designated employees, it has got specific objectives and much different as compared to the human resources development in our institution that deals with development for all against institutional needs (P21: RF1:3, 23-25). I would say our institution's staff development portfolio in a way is aligned with the requirements of the Skills Development Act. ... The only thing that the WSP wants, it requires that there should be a focus on a designated groups and it should be distinct in that regard in the WSP, but every education and training planned in the University it should be in that WSP in the plan itself. Everyone should be there (P21: RF1:25, 226-234).*

*Do you experience or perceive a dissonance or mismatch between the aim of the Skills Development Act and the aim of staff development in your institution? There's not even the slightest match. The SETAs ... are driven by labour imperatives (P28: UF2:1, 7-10).*

I don't think the integration of education and labour is happening and I don't foresee it happening quickly. So what I'm saying is, to start off with, the starting point of the SETAs is labour so the entire focus is manual practical kinds of skills (P28: UF2:2, 13-20). Their understanding of the needs of professionals is close to zero and they're a machine driven by the imperatives of labour. That's the bottom line. *Would say they've got little or no understanding of higher education needs?* Um, that's the general comment (P28: UF2:3, 22-33). I feel a certain sense of disquiet, even anxiety about the dissonance between the skills emphasis of, again, I mean it's the DoL, basically that's dictating those and the standards to which we are held accountable. *Are you referring to the National Skills Strategy?* Yes. They are not interested in our development strategies (P28: UF2:7, 76-89).

*Do you experience or perceive a dissonance or mismatch between the aim of the Skills Development Act and the aim of staff development in your institution?* Between the SETA, the authority and the employer there is confusion as to what the SDA is (P23: VT1:14, 217-225). According to the ETDP SETA their SSP does differentiate between its different constituent members. Yet most of their skills programmes are geared for NQF 1 to 5 which is not always relevant to the HEI (P34: VT2:18, 167-169).

*Do you experience or perceive a dissonance or mismatch between the aim of the Skills Development Act and the aim of staff development in your institution?* HE does not have ample opportunities in the sectoral plan. I don't think it is focused on HE enough. The reason being the majority of our staff are qualified and highly qualified. The Skills Development Act actually talks to the lower levels. The bulk of our staff are not in the lower levels (P29: XF1:23, 309-313).

*Do you experience or perceive a dissonance or mismatch between the aim of the Skills Development Act and the aim of staff development in your institution?* There is no alignment but sometimes I think it's just a coining of words, but I don't think there is a difference between us and the spirit of the SDA. We may be pushing it in another subtle way that the SETA may not be pushing it, see it, ja (P31: XT1:17, 94-97). *Should we hide our intentions from the SETA?* No. The SETA would have to accept the way we're doing things and maybe try to audit (P31: XT1:18, 124-128). However, this example of the occupational codes, HEIs are excluded (P36: XT2:21, 117-118).

*Do you experience or perceive a dissonance or mismatch between the aim of the Skills Development Act and the aim of staff development in your institution?* I think, the University would have liked to see a situation, where we have *carte blanche* on the way that we apply skills development money without the restrictions that we are having (P19: YF2:50, 507-514). Because sometimes what we would like is to focus on something which is not a SETA priority. Their sector skills plans ... defeat sometimes the purpose, because their priorities might not be our priorities. Um, and you might find we want to emphasise a certain type of development direction, which is not the direction that they're taking. When we're suffering and we're not getting, um, people with scarce skills, that for us is a key problem, like I have said, with engineers, we're losing civil engineers (P19: YF2:51, 514-525). *So you're saying that we as HEIs actually fall into the core functions of various SETAs?* (laughs ) Yes, I experience misalignment, uh, if we had generic SETAs, you know, for example, if we had a SETA that would be looking at higher education, that would have been better. We would be more willing to speak to such a department without Labour which has no business to be mingling, in terms of our business. You've got a common interest. So, you know, it's all these things that I think are frustrating, um, the delivery of skills development in higher education (P19: YF2:53, 539-540). Now, they focus mostly on Early Childhood Development and teachers but not on HE as such (P33: YT1:23, 108-110).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the HEIs' ETD practices are perceived as differing from national skills development imperatives. Since all the

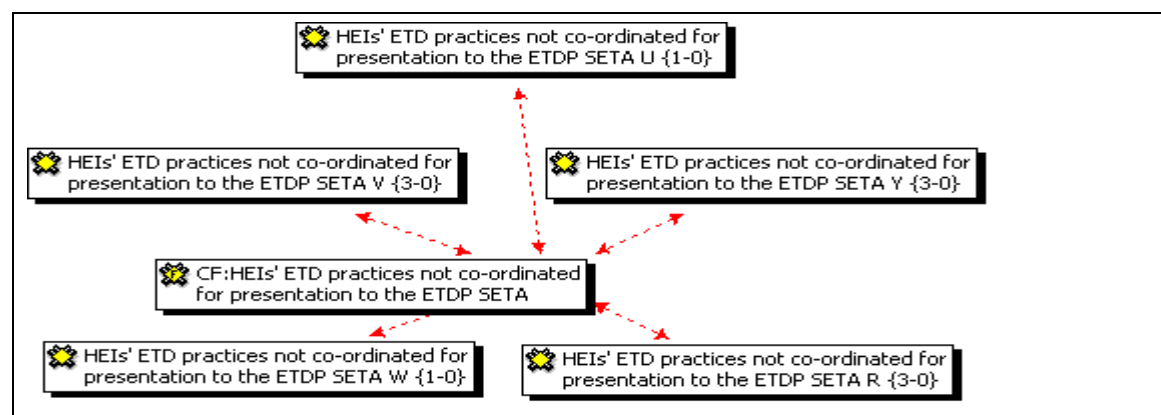


participating SDFs experienced a dissonance between HEIs' ETD needs and the aims of the SDA, I decided not to pursue this theme during the focus group discussion.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, namely that SDFs experience a dissonance between HEIs' ETD needs and the aims of the SDA. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Greyling (2001:3) points out that "[most] institutions of higher education will battle with reforming and transforming staff development towards national imperatives since conflicts of interest are imminent between the focus of staff development in HEIs and that of national imperatives" (P2:13, 137-141). Similarly, Barry (2000:9) contends that SA organisations are reluctant to integrate their developmental initiatives with the broader aims of the SDA (P2:74, 142-144).

I now present the third of the eight network displays to illustrate that HEIs' ETD practices are not co-ordinated for presentation to the ETD P SETA.

#### 4.3.3.3 HEIs' ETD practices are not co-ordinated for presentation to the ETD P SETA



**Figure 4.22 HEIs' ETD practices are not co-ordinated for presentation to the ETD P SETA**

The network display shown in Figure 4.22 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from five of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W



and Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs' ETD practices are not co-ordinated for presentation to the ETDP SETA. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

*Would you elaborate on how you perceive our representation at the ETDP SETA? We have the skills development facilitator's forum and now we're proposing that we need to have a forum again on the board, on the ETDP SETA chamber as well, since there is no one who represents us (P 6: RT1:34, 163-165). There were SAUVCA representatives in the past, now HESA (P21: RF1:53, 259-260). Lately we have a skills development facilitators' forum, the Gauteng region, and we always meet and discuss all these issues that affect higher education specifically (P21: RF1:54, 264-266).*

*Would you elaborate on how you perceive our representation at the ETDP SETA? Higher education is located in a levy chamber and in that levy chamber higher education has got minimal representation. So if you talk about voice, I think lobbying is going to have to happen outside the structures (P28: UF2:16, 170-176).*

*Would you elaborate on how you perceive our representation at the ETDP SETA? The SETA has never really questioned us to the point where we were open about how we feel about it. (P34: VT2:18, 167-169). No, even the SSPs are not really disseminated and discussed with SDFs. It would be great if the SETA could provide reports to employers on their staff development initiatives and opportunities (P34: VT2:38, 194-196).*

*Would you elaborate on how you perceive our representation at the ETDP SETA? It's only this workshop that we have once a year. No it's not sufficient. I think when we talk more they will come to know what the needs of Higher Education are. When I speak to other SDFs we have the same sentiments (P11: WF1:56, 368-370).*

*Would you elaborate on how you perceive our representation at the ETDP SETA? Not for the HE as such. See now this example of the occupational codes, HEIs are excluded (P36: XT2:21, 117-118)*

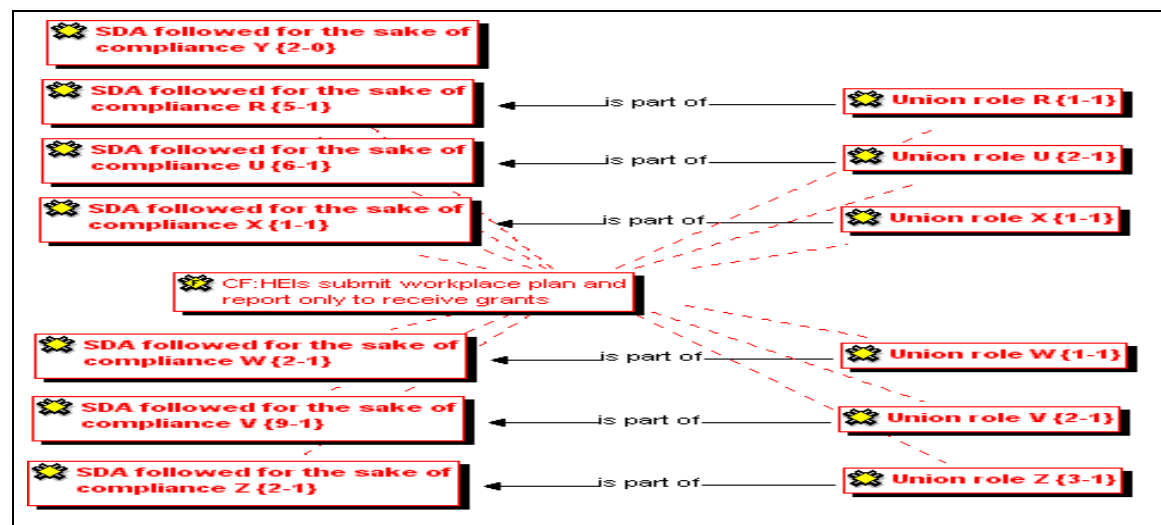
*Would you elaborate on how you perceive our representation at the ETDP SETA? What we would like to focus on, is not SETA priorities (P19: YF2:88, 511-516). They focus mostly on Early Childhood Development and teachers, but not HE as such. They focus mainly on teachers in private schools. It is only teachers not lecturers in HEIs (P33: YT1:29, 108-110). The second thing that I feel is a problem with the SETA is that, um, they don't have equal representation from all constituencies. By that I mean that they have surrounded themselves, with people that don't understand higher education, and they frustrate higher education. And because they do that, then higher education, um, you know, they create this schism between themselves and higher education, where there's a misalignment every time. Higher education, you see, let's start with the core of the problem. The core of the problem is that the SETA ... is a labour, a Department of Labour thing (P19: YF2:80, 600-612).*

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that there is inadequate representation of HEIs in the ETDP SETA structures. In addition, the number of fora to debate issues relating to HEIs is limited.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, namely that there is inadequate representation of HE in the ETDP SETA structures. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example the ETDP SETA skills adviser structure does not provide for a co-ordinating function so that the HEI-specific needs from the nine provinces can be consolidated for presentation to the ETDP SETA chamber. This implies that, because the skills development matters submitted by HEIs are not co-ordinated, they cannot be presented as HEIs' collective needs to the ETDP SETA levy chamber (P1:914 472-490).

I now present the fourth of the eight network displays to illustrate that HEIs submit their workplace skills plans (WSP) and annual training reports (WSPs) solely to receive grants.

#### 4.3.3.4 HEIs submit their Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report solely to receive grants



**Figure 4.23 HEIs submit their workplace plan and report solely to receive grants**

The network display shown in Figure 4.23 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the finding that HEIs submit their workplace skills plans (WSP) and annual training reports (WSPs) solely

to receive grants probably because each HEI has its own statute. The network display illustrates that HEIs submit their workplace plan and report solely to receive grants. In addition the network indicates that the role of labour unions (signatures on the WSPs and ATRs), is part of HEIs following the requirements of the SDA. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The following quotations selected from each of the research participants demonstrate that HEIs adhere to the SDA for the sake of compliance:

*Do you experience that your university is contributing to the aims of the SDA?* To me what they see now is just the rebate. That's all that they see and, yes. But they don't see it in a broader context of economic development of the entire country and of the institution as well (P 6: RT1:21, 171-174). I think they see it to that level only they don't see it beyond that (P 6: RT1:33, 169-171). I would say it is just an administrative thing, it's about compliance (P21: RF1:30, 277-278).

*Do you experience that your university is contributing to the aims of the SDA?* My past experience tells me that most of the reporting is done purely for the sake of satisfying bureaucracy rather than intelligent engagement. Yep, this is a nightmare (P8: UT1:3, 28-30). Shortcuts will be taken and data churned out just so that one can comply (P8: UT1:6, 39-40). Far too many employers see this as just a tax and dismiss the cumbersome process involved in accessing grants (P26: UD2:2, 103-106). There is a strong school of thought in our institution represented by at least one of our deans and others, which says we do not belong in the skills development environment, we should not be paying levies, um, we shouldn't even comply with SETA requirements and skills development requirements (P28: UF2:9, 143-150). Given my experience as an SDF in the organisation, my personal view is that we are still implementing the SDA with a view to compliance rather than competitiveness. At present, the WSP and the story that it tells, are not being properly integrated in the rest of the HR structures and top management structures in the organisation. The data that it yields from year to year should be used to review and reformulate employment equity initiatives, talent acquisition initiatives (particularly for individuals under the age of 35 years), critical and scarce skill initiatives, succession planning (when viewing data of employees in key positions over the age of 55 years), etc. At the present moment, the WSP and ATR are loose-standing documents that are submitted in order to receive levy funds from the SETA. It must be improved so that it becomes not only a mechanism for the refund, but also an integral part of the HR system of the organisation (P37: UT2:29, 285-297).

*Do you experience that your university is contributing to the aims of the SDA?* It wasn't and if anything at all it was seen as a hindrance somewhat, because now you had to do the compliance issue which forced the responsibility onto either HR or any of the other units. None of the other units wanted to do it, because they didn't understand it. HR took it and ran with it but then to the exclusion of a possible integration of the different interventions because they didn't have time, they didn't have the right kind of capacity in terms of the number of people. So their focus then became compliance (P24: VF1:6, 63-74). The compliance issue became such a logistical nightmare in essence, because you had one person who was legislated in terms of the skills development facilitator but if that person wasn't trained properly and didn't have a strategic mind and didn't have a good leader who saw that person's role as being strategic, as being a strategic partner, I am afraid it fell by the wayside. Then you had the one versus the other, the compliance versus the strategic focus (P24: VF1:7, 87-94). I believe, Louw, I'm sorry to say our higher education institutions are focused as much as they say that they are focused on knowledge creation, I think they are focused more on achieving subsidies and not necessarily looking at quality (P24: VF1:29, 349-367). It was seen as a

hindrance somewhat because now you had to do the compliance issue which forced the responsibility onto either HR or any of the other units. So their focus then became compliance (P24: VF1:43, 67-74). Thus it is a legal requirement that employers must comply with minimally. A pain in the neck as it does not link and integrate with HEI and CHE requirements (P34: VT2:13, 127-130. More see it as a waste of time and a lot of nonsense (P34: VT2:36, 189-191).

*Do you experience that your university is contributing to the aims of the SDA?* No, I do it because its expected and it is statutory but it is not adding value to my work at all (P11: WF1:30, 342-343).

*Do you experience that your university is contributing to the aims of the SDA?* It seems like it is only towards compliance [no further comment, even when asked why?] (P36: XT2:16, 96-96).

*Do you experience that your university is contributing to the aims of the SDA?* We don't want to lose grants, we have to do what they want (P19: YF2:57, 566-570).

*Do you experience that your university is contributing to the aims of the SDA?* Top management really doesn't want to, it hasn't really sunk in that this should be a boardroom issue, it should be one of, it should be on the agenda. It's also one of most important things. They just discard it, and I don't know whether we're not playing our part as HR (P20: ZF1:11, 262-269).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that HEIs tend to fulfil the requirements of the SDA solely to receive grants and as an act of compliance. In addition, the role of union representatives on the skills development committees of the various HEIs does not contribute to advancing the aims of the SDA in HEIs. The following quotations are relevant in this regard:

*Tell me about the role that union representatives play on your skills committee?* What is their mandate with regard to skills development, do they really know the rationale of the act. *Why don't you discuss it with them?* To schedule a committee to discuss the issue we do not get this easily. We are not even always all present at the formal committee meetings since they also have their own responsibilities. Thus it is ideal but not practical. *The culture of HEIs is all about debating issues but this a example that we are actually shooting ourselves in the foot* (P32: RT2:24, 182-189).

*Tell me about the role that union representatives play on your skills committee?* Even our two major "unions" are not called unions, but staff associations so we for example have the academic staff association and the support staff union predominantly which is called ALTSA which is Administrative Library Technical Staff Association again. And there are also unions represented, Nehawu and Meshawu, who are classical unions, but a very small percentage of membership compared to the other two. They function like unions. They function as unions on campus, yes, and they sit on the forum as well, as unions (P27: UF1:36, 41-51). The union representatives can only fulfil a valuable and contributory role if they are trained in the mechanisms of the SDA, SDLA, WSP and ATR. Although we have trained up members in the past, issues of continuity remain a problem as new representatives join the committee at various intervals and often have no orientation to the skills planning context. Unfortunately, it seems as if certain union representatives use the committee and the sign-off of the WSP/ATR as a bargaining tool and refuse to sign off the documentation at the last minute in order to gain leverage in other bargaining areas (P37: UT2:32, 312-319).

*Tell me about the role that union representatives play on your skills committee?* The

union fulfils the role when they attend meetings to contribute to discussions and provide direction for employee development. But they are not always available for discussions, not always a priority compared to conditions of service, salaries, EE, etc. (P34: VT2:17, 161-164).

*Tell me about the role that union representatives play on your skills committee?* Our labour reps, when they are in the critical phase in negotiations, they withhold to sign it off our plan as ransom (P11: WF1:58, 387-387).

*Tell me about the role that union representatives play on your skills committee?* We debate issues (P36: XT2:20, 115-115).

*Tell me about the role that union representatives play on your skills committee?* When I came here there was nothing. I invited, I remember when this person was here, he tried to form a committee, it couldn't. It was me, this person and drop in the unions in there and the top management. It's been a struggle. It's been a struggle. It's not well established (P20: ZF1:28, 272-275). They do sign because we normally invite them ... this union when we talk about this we invite them, say, this is what we want, we want a committee. Even if it doesn't materialise, the committee, but I would keep on doing my job and when in the signature stage I would say remember I called you and this is what I wanted and this is also one of the reasons why we wanted you so we need a signature here (P20: ZF1:29, 278-283). But what I know for sure was that the unions were not involved from the word go, and that was a concern that if you don't involve us from the word go, it can create a problem when you come and say this is a product. They would say but we were never part of this, how can we just come and sign on the dotted line, which is to me a fact. I believe that they should have been involved from the word go, from the preamble, say this is it, do you agree with this. So that when it comes to say show it to people, this is the end product, and everybody would have played a part and say, it wouldn't give a problem (P20: ZF1:39, 47-55).

*Tell me about the role that union representatives play on your skills committee?* Not really, they do not attend meetings. They do understand the context of the Act, but I don't know why they do not attend (P33: YT1.txt - 33:22, 104-105).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that union representatives on the skills development committees do not contribute to furthering the aims of the SDA in HEIs; instead they appear to be an obstacle in the process of submitting the WSP and ATR.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, regarding the HEIs submitting their workplace skills plans and annual training reports solely to receive grants. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Le Grange (2004:1) argues that the general trend of HEIs is to recover as rebates the skills development levies they have paid, not to further the aims of the SDA (P2:16 152-155). In addition to this finding, another finding that should be noted is that union representatives on the skills development committees do not contribute to furthering the aims of the SDA in HEIs,



instead they appear to be an obstacle in the process of submitting the WSP and ATR.

I now present the fifth of the eight network displays relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. This network display illustrates that HEIs find it difficult to integrate the SDA within its staff development practices.

#### 4.3.3.5 The integration of the SDA in HEIs' ETD practices is difficult

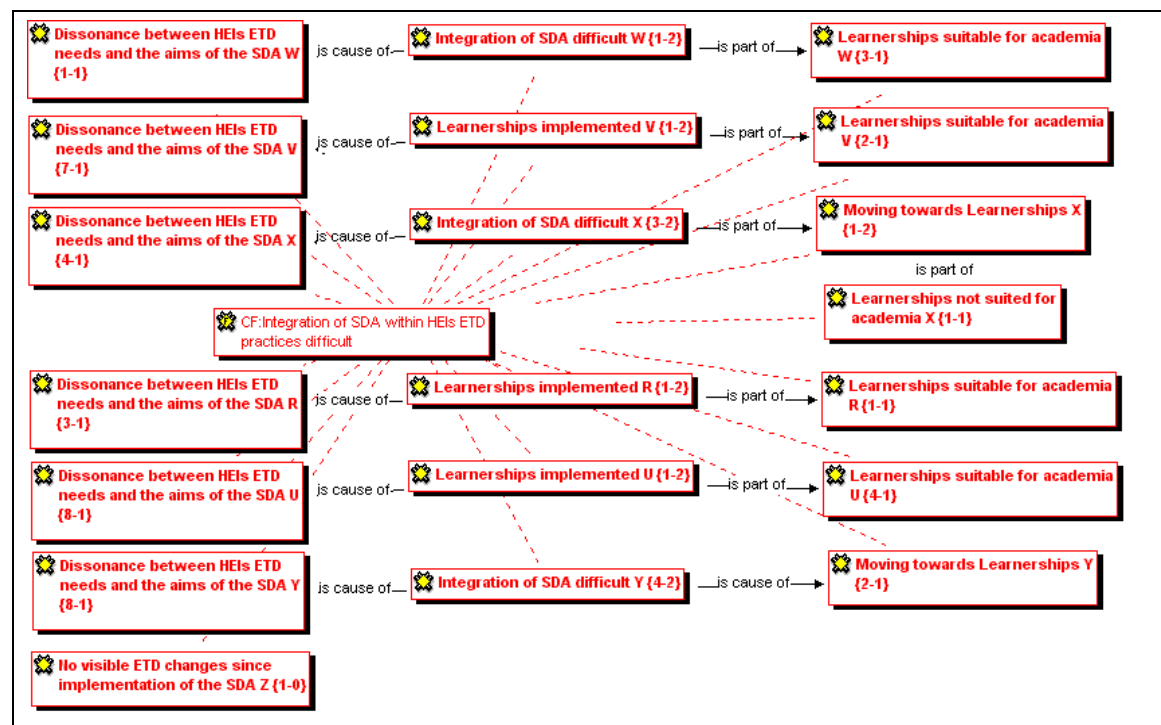


Figure 4.24 The integration of the SDA in HEIs' ETD practices is difficult

The network display shown in Figure 4.24 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X or Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that the integration of SDA in traditional HEIs' ETD practices is difficult. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that, based on the dissonance that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, three of the six HEIs find the integration of the SDA in HEIs' practices difficult, whereas the other three HEIs have taken steps with the



implementation of learnerships to integrate the SDA in the ETD practices of these three particular HEIs. The data analysis indicates however that the implementation of learnerships is on a small scale or implemented with various problems encountered, so that the integration of the SDA in HEIs could be regarded as problematic. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant to the understanding that HEIs find it difficult to integrate the requirements of the SDA in the staff development ambit of HEIs:

The Skills Development Act, it is not really aligned to the way the University perceives staff development since they look at skills development for builders or artisans while we look at knowledge generation. Hence, the [SDA] focuses not only but mostly on learnerships, internships and ABET and so forth, whereas in the staff development of the University the main focus would be anything that would enhance the core functions of the University, which is learning generation via teaching and research and community service. In other words our internal training would focus on enhancing the quality of our service in terms of how we generate knowledge... yes, and they would look at delivering skilled builders (P6: RT1:36, 22-31).

Yes, there is progress towards the education, training and development of designated staff, take for example our ABET programme especially, is going well but not development that focuses on skills for academia for example because skills for academia are perceived as knowledge generation by means of activities that are not perceived as skills [development from the SDA perspective] (P35: WT1:18, 100-101).

The SETA requires some of the extraordinary things we may still be arriving at (P30: XF2:19, 167-169). Well I would say maybe the SETA would have for now they would have to accept the way we're doing things and maybe try to audit us or based on how we're doing things (P31: XT1:19, 124-128). I am not aware of clear changes, only to say that the thinking of people has changed towards skills development being key to performance, but what skills development is in terms of what the SDA requires is questionable (P36: XT2:17, 99-104).

They [employees] start to know that there is an emphasis on development (P33: YT1:20, 93-94). Yes, an emphasis on development, but our management does not know exactly or understand well what the SDA means or how it works. [Therefore] I cannot say that the emphasis on development is due to the implementation of the SDA (P33: YT1:21, 98-100).

It seems to me that the implementation of the Skills Development Act hasn't as yet affected the institution. *Not at all? Why?* I, I, I, you know, I believe personally it is because the top management really doesn't want to, it hasn't really sunk in that this should be a boardroom issue, it should be one of, it should be on the agenda. It's also one of most important things. They just discard it, and I don't know whether we're not playing our part as HR to make it a point to them or what (P20: ZF1.20:42, 257-269).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the HEIs experience difficulties with the integration of the requirements of the SDA. An example of the difficulty that HEIs experience in this regard, is the implementation of learnerships. The following quotations are relevant in this regard:

*Could you explain or give an example of problems that you encounter with*

*implementing learnerships that are outlined in the SDA?* We have implemented a Security Learnership for support staff, but this learnership is not core to HE, rather it fits in our support environment. Now we have to work across SETAs to earn our rebate (P32: RT2:17, 112-112).

*Could you explain or give an example of problems that you encounter with implementing learnerships that are outlined in the SDA?* We have been implementing learnerships in the past and we will certainly be doing so again in the future. However, the main focus of these learnerships has been on the acquisition and development of talented students or PDI students in a range of critical or scarce skill areas. For example: learnership for postgraduate students in Business Intelligence Systems but we battle to implement a learnership core to HE (P37: UT2:43, 243-247).

*Could you explain or give an example of problems that you encounter with implementing learnerships that are outlined in the SDA?* Currently we have 50 artisans, such as electricians, painters, carpenters and plumbers on learnerships (P34: VT2:11, 101-116).

*Could you explain or give an example of problems that you encounter with implementing learnerships that are outlined in the SDA?* We approached the Admin group [implementation of learnerships]. Learnerships I believe should be investigated for scarce skills occupations. But for academics it could also work in terms of developing practical skills (P36: XT2:13, 75-77).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the learnerships implemented in HEIs are limited and furthermore that the learnerships are not aligned to the core function of HEIs (teaching, research and community engagement). When I questioned the SDFs about the viability of implementing an academic learnership, the response was as follows:

For academics where a learnership would entail including a subject-specific qualification (i.e. master's in chemical engineering) plus a postgraduate certificate in HE to enhance their "facilitation" skills, would be difficult to implement. We talk about unemployed people as in students that would be on the learnership, then both qualifications as I said have to be completed. However, a learnership for currently employed academics, over a period of one year, would provide more time for practice in the field of teaching say for instance. I feel a learnership is much more effective because it allows for an integrated workplace and formal learning approach. For example, we introduced a short course in research methodology for 60 lecturers, we found, not that we did not do proper checks, that the lecturers learned a lot, but I came back into my section, I implemented this for the first week and now I'm back to my old style because my entire department is doing it in the old style. Had it been a learnership that would probably run over a year, you know the concept of practice, practice, practice before mastering, which is the basic design paradigm of learnerships, there would have been better results of ingrained learning (P34: VT2:11, 101-116).

Not. No practical. Lecturing schedules are fixed, where can we get time for them to do the practical component of the learnership? The lecturers have a minimum of a master's degree. Therefore, they must be sponsored to gain a formal degree and in addition a formal teaching or facilitation qualification, not as a combination of both qualifications. Thus skills programmes are more favourable or the shortcut to gain skills and knowledge because they will not easily attend or enrol for two qualifications simultaneously (P32: RT2:28, 213-218). *What you are saying is that when the HEI would for instance register master's degree students, they would have to continuo with*

*their subject-specific qualification but simultaneously complete for example a teaching learnership. Now I understand what you mean with following two qualifications simultaneously.*

I do not believe that learnerships are generally appropriate for academic staff. Their studies are mainly at advanced NQF 8 levels and are, by their unique nature, not suited to the generic nature of learnerships. For support staff, there is more applicability. We have not started with learnerships. The main obstacles are the very bureaucratic nature of the process. This is all I want to say now because my time is bit limited today (P 8: UT1:12, 9-14). We have been implementing learnerships in the past and we will certainly be doing so again in the future. However, the main focus of these learnerships has been on the acquisition and development of talented students or PDI students in a range of critical or scarce skill areas. For example: a learnership for postgraduate students in Business Intelligence Systems (HR/ICT in focus) (P37: UT2:26, 243-247). I certainly do believe that where academics are moved into different roles – e.g. technical and/or management roles, a well-structured learnership programme will have merit/value in providing both theoretical and practical/experiential competencies (P37: UT2:27, 253-255). As regards academics, my view is that the PGCHE is focused on formal education in the attainment of a full qualification that could be transformed to a learnership for those already employed. However, skills programmes that focus on good ETD practice – e.g. facilitation, assessment, design/development of materials, etc. – are essential training interventions to develop specific practical skills. I am not familiar enough with the PGCHE curriculum content to comment, but I would hope that the PGCHE encapsulates good ETD practice by leveraging off the unit standards that are available for specific ETD roles. In so doing, we would not be reinventing the wheel and causing unnecessary duplication – but we would ensure that PGCHE provides both broad educational value and integrates relevant national unit standards (P37: UT2:28, 261-270).

If employed people could access learnerships, this would benefit HE as we could get graduates who then work towards their postgraduate qualifications or the subject field of learning facilitation. As it is presently structured, it does not work for HE academia (P10: WD2:4, 4-9).

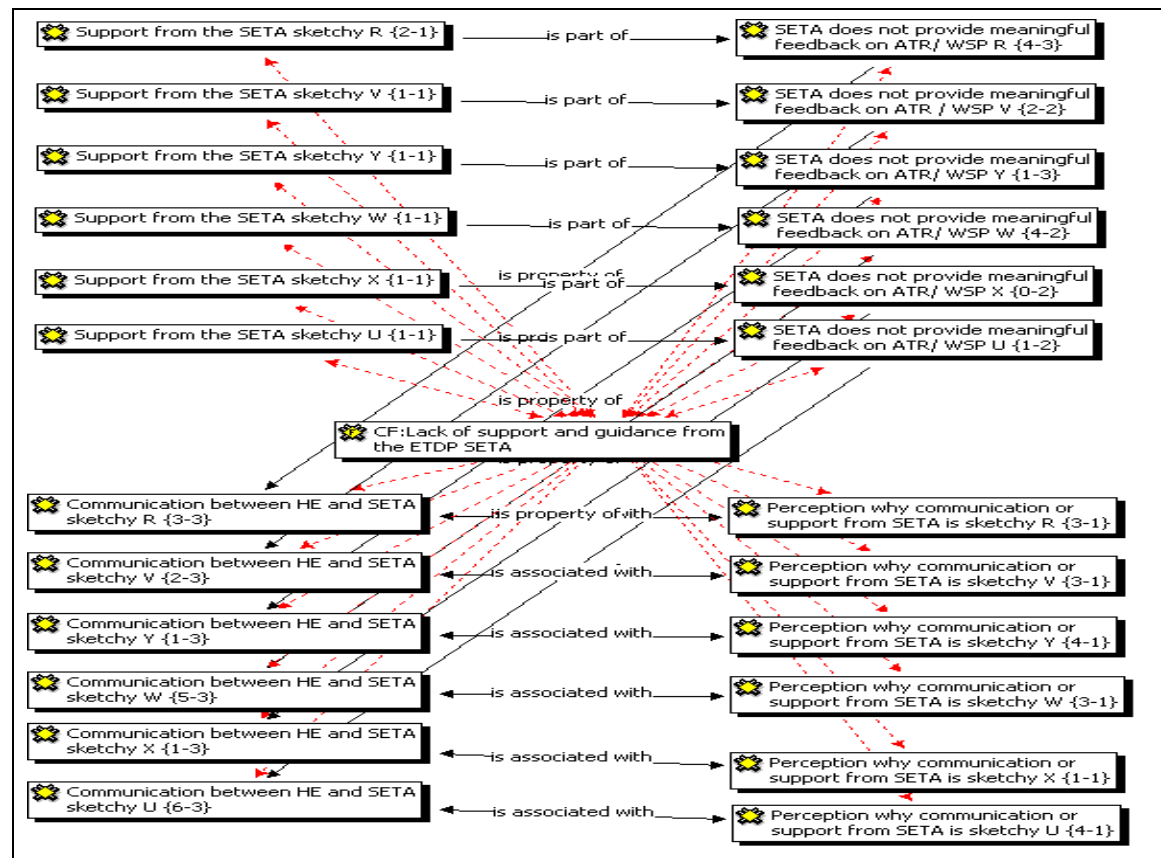
We are not yet moving towards the implementation of learnerships. We are still in the process of identifying where to implement it. If one has already a qualification in a specialisation area and has to move to another specialisation area, then a learnership would assets them in that regard. With a learnership the person is not taken fully out of his/her workplace since it is designed to accredit workplace learning towards a workplace qualification. However, for academics, if the learnership would be for one area of his/her task it may work (P35: WT1:12, 64-70).

At this stage, I'm not sure if learnerships are suitable for academia. If you consider following a subject-specific qualification and a teaching qualification simultaneously, I don't know if it would be do-able (P35: WT1:22, 121-123).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that there is resistance to the implementation of an academic learnership. The resistance is based on the anomaly that a teaching learnership for academic staff would entail studying for a subject-specific qualification and a teaching qualification simultaneously, hence it is not known if it would be feasible, as stated by one of the SDFs (P35: WT1:22, 121-123). This adds to the difficulty that HEIs encounter with the integration of the SDA in HEIs.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, namely that the integration of SDA in traditional HEIs' ETD practices is difficult. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example Reiner *et al.* (2000:2), Greyling (2001:3), Botha (2003:1) and Van der Westhuizen and Maharasoa (2004:39) note the challenges pertaining to the integration of HEI staff development practices with the requirements of the SDA (P2:1, 4-7). I now present the sixth of the eight network displays to illustrate that HEIs perceive a lack of support and guidance from the ETDP SETA.

#### 4.3.3.6 Lack of support and guidance from the ETDP SETA



**Figure 4.25 Lack of support and guidance from the ETDP SETA**

The network display shown in Figure 4.25 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti™*) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my understanding that there is a lack of support and guidance from the ETDP SETA and the reasons for

this. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that communication between HEIs and the ETDP SETA as well as support from the ETDP SETA is sketchy. This is partly due to the ETDP SETA's inability to give meaningful feedback to HEIs regarding their submitted WSPs and ATRs. The network display also illustrates that there are certain perceptions (by SDFs) of the reason that communication or support between the SETA and HEIs is sketchy. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants demonstrate that support from the ETDP SETA is sketchy:

*Is there support from the SETA?* Communicate that to them? If there is a forum to discuss such kinds of you know, of issues, then we will. Ja, ... there were SAUVCA and the others (P21: RF1:39, 258-260). The question is after all those discussions, what is done afterwards? Do they take the suggestions and the ideas and put them for implementation or what's happening to them (P21: RF1:47, 260-262).

*Is there support from the SETA?* No, not even their structures support staff development in higher education with the skills advisers for example even in the dispensations where previously they had a skills adviser who covered higher education nationally, then through the phase where they'd be now, which is provincial skills advisers. You've got one skills adviser advising a province covering from Early Childhood Development through to political parties, labour organisations, trade unions, libraries, all sorts, and then a little bit of higher education (P28: UF2:13, 33-39).

*Is there support from the SETA?* No, not really, we submitted many ETD proposals for HEI-specific financing in research, ODETD, project management, Assessor/Moderator education, training and development and no response [4 June 2008] has been received to date (P34: VT2:32, 64-67).

*Is there support from the SETA?* No support from the SETA (P11: WF1:33, 374-375).

*Is there support from the SETA?* See this example of the occupational codes, HEIs are excluded (P36: XT2:29, 118-118). There is no support from them.

*Is there support from the SETA?* Sometimes they do, it just depends on who you are working with (P33: YT1:10, 47-48). *But that support is on an individual basis, not collectively?* Yes.

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that there is a lack of support from the ETDP SETA. I now demonstrate that part of the problem is that the ETDP SETA does not provide meaningful feedback to HEIs regarding their submitted WSPs or ATRs:

The SETA has never really questioned us to that extent to the point where we were open about the problems that we encounter with skills planning, this is how I feel about it. We never had forums to bring about that kind of discussion, nor individual feedback on our WSP for that matter (P25: VF2:3, 41-44). I personally find that the SETA looks at higher education with one eye only. The reason for that is, are they paying us the skills



levies, because we're the highest payer of levies (P25: VF2:5, 86-88).

Because firstly if really that was supposed to be happening, the SETA would be engaging with us in the sense that they will, after we have submitted the WSP, tell us the shortfalls of our planning and you know get to unpack the, our plan and tell us, give us some sort of a report but I couldn't see a report comparing the 2006 [WSP] with the 2005 [WSP] for example. This is what was happening, this is where you were, this is where you are, and this is where you were supposed to be and this is the kind of strategies that you can put in place and this is how we will support you but that kind of function it doesn't, hu-uh, and that is the only way we could move forward (P21: RF1:31, 278-287). No way that the SETA would come back to you to say there was progress in terms of the following, we identified that this designated group was developed (P21: RF1:32, 292-294). We should try to get the SETA to understand through open debates the context of HEIs. We never get feedback. For example [the SETA could respond] from your first report you have closed this gap, now you need to go there (P32: RT2:30, 224-226).

What really worries me is what the department (or SETA) will do with all these data. If there is a clear and reasonable purpose then one doesn't mind putting in the effort but in this case (P8: UT1:4, 30-32). *Do you think it has to do with the absence of feedback from the SETA regarding our WSP for example?* Feedback, what feedback?

No support from the SETA. They focus too much on the administrative part in terms of the paperwork. It became just more red tape associated with it, but they don't put enough energy in the qualitative part of it. They need to take it now a step further. And say after now so many years we should have been there. As a SETA now we have taken now what you have submitted to us. Sending us just a rough thing of so many people have submitted a WSP. That doesn't tell me anything. But have they judged in terms of skills, have we moved or not, as this University if you have contributed towards the skills levels of people in any way. Have they even looked at our profile to say that this University five years ago it looked like this and spending so much money and you have changed (P11: WF1:42, 317-327). We are so inundated with the administrative part of the SETA. I think we are now past the due dates we are now in quality I should be coming to you and ask what differences, what are we as a constituency going to do about our quality. We can only do it if everyone shares the same sentiment. We need to stop to talk about d-dates (P11: WF1:45, 378-383).

No definitely not, maybe in the future, the establishment of the HE facilitators community of practice, the SETA will listen to our collective needs (P33: YT1:27, 124-125).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that the ETDP SETA does not provide meaningful feedback to HEIs on their submitted WSPs or ATRs. Feedback on the submitted WSPs or ATRs is only part of the lack of communication between HEIs and the ETDP SETA. I now substantiate that the lack of communication stretches even further than the lack of feedback on WSPs or ATRs, since the ETDP SETA does not add value to staff development in HEIs:

We [always] had a Skills Development Adviser with us and she'd take the minutes and she would tell us that that those concerns or our ideas would be presented to the board of the SETA, but we don't know afterwards if that is really being taken into consideration for implementation or what happens to them (P21: RF1:29, 269-273). *The question is rather after all those discussions what is done about it?* Yes, do they take the





suggestions and the ideas and put them for implementation or what's happening to them? They don't let us know (P21: RF1:40, 260-262). *Now how do they communicate to you?* They prefer to provide feedback verbally than committing that in writing. *Why?* Because they are all so indecisive, they are not sure of the answers that they need to give us. It is also a legal issue, the moment they put their answers on paper it means that they are committing themselves (P32: RT2:8,46-49).

No, what really worries me is what the SETA will do with all these data. If there is a clear and reasonable purpose then one doesn't mind putting in the effort but in this case [not] (P 8: UT1:4, 30-32). Lately we have the skills development facilitators' forums that's the Gauteng region and we always met and discuss all these issues that affects the higher education specifically (P21: RF1:41, 264-266). By all accounts and feedback received, the perception exists that no-one really goes through the data in the necessary detail in order to convince organisations and SDF's that the statistics are being used in an optimal or meaningful manner. In broad terms, the perception exists that the SETA only reviews the submission in terms of template/technical correctness and financial data. Instead, the SETA should also focus more closely on the story that the WSP/ATR tells with regard to competitiveness, sustainability, employment equity. These are where the true qualitative aspects of the WSP/ATR are critical in nature! (P37: UT2:35, 343-351).

We submitted many ETD proposals for HEI-specific financing in research, ODETD, Project Management, Assessor/Moderator education training and development, and no response [4 June 2008] was received to date (P34: VT2:5, 64-67).

I am going to say something because I feel safe it's not them forcing us to do something we are doing it anyway whether the Skills Act came in or not. It only becomes only farcical. I don't get feedback from the SETA, there is no added value, why are we doing it? It's becoming a farce like a tax with no institutional value. In terms of what they want to do with it I don't know (P11: WF1:28, 310-314). It's only this workshop that we have once a year. No it's not sufficient. I think when we talk more they will come to know what are the needs of higher education. When I speak with other SDFs we have the same sentiments (P11: WF1:32, 366-370).

It would be nice if they would come back with an evaluative report on the implementation of our WSP. This way I could formally indicate to our skills forums where we have problems. It would enhance my credibility as SDF (P36: XT2:8, 49-52).

Sometimes they do. *You mean communicate with you.* Ja, it just depends on who you are working with (P33: YT1:10, 47-48).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that there is a lack of communication between HEIs and the ETDP SETA. When we discussed what the reason for the lack of communication between the SETA and HEIs could be, the following was noted:

The Department of Labour, they are the ones who really know the purpose of the Act but people who were given the mandate to implement the Act like SETAs are not clarifying it with them (P32: RT2:20, 135-153). We should try to get the SETA to understand through open debates the context of HEIs (P32: RT2:32, 224-226). *Why don't they provide feedback?* Because they are also indecisive, they are not sure of the answers that they need to give us. It is also a legal issue, the moment they put their answers on paper it means that they are committing themselves (P32: RT2:33, 47-49).

Let's suggest and encourage greater co-operation and communication between the DoE, DoL and DTI. HEIs can play a significant role in assisting the NSF and the SETAs to achieve their objectives on all NQF levels and should not be marginalised, either

deliberately or by mistake (P26: UD2:9, 222-225). *Has the DoL involved the DoE as there appears to be no engagement with the education side?* There continues to be this dissonance and it is time to resolve it (P26: UD2:10, 143-145). They're located *You mean the SETA* ....in the Department of Labour and I don't think the integration of education and labour is happening and I don't foresee it happening quickly (P28: UF2:2, 13-20). Their structures do not support staff development in higher education with the skills advisers for example even in the dispensations where previously they had the skills adviser who covered higher education nationally, then through the phase where they'd be now which is provincial skills advisers. You've got one skills adviser advising a province covering from Early Childhood Development through to political parties, labour organisations, trade unions, libraries, all sorts, and then a little bit of higher education and so and now they propose new structure where they're going to designate someone who's specifically for higher education. Through all of that even the people they appoint in those structures are people who do not have an understanding of higher education, simple as that (P28: UF2:4, 33-45). The SETA itself is dealing with issues of uncertainty as well as rapid staff turnover, lack of continuity, lack of capacity (P37: UT2:19, 179-186).

I personally find that the SETA looks at higher education with one eye only. The reason for that is, are they paying us the skills levies, because we're the highest payer of levies (P25: VF2:5,86-88).

Not a proper forum scheduled (P11: WF1:48, 378-378).

It is new information to us and even the SETA people. But I'm worried that there could be different perceptions [interpretations] (P36: XT2:28, 5-5).

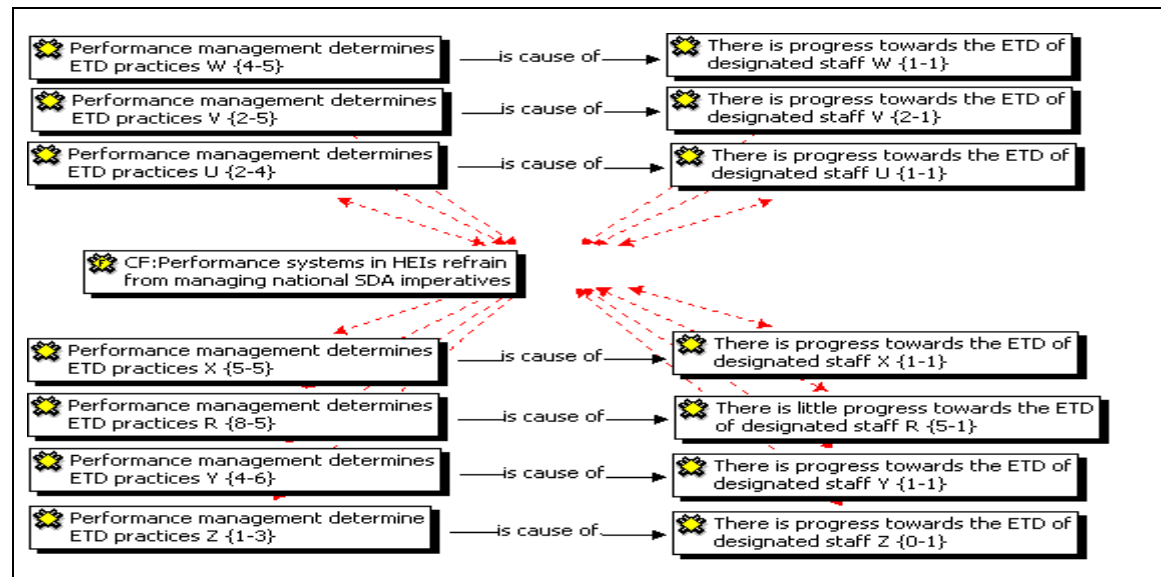
The SETA has got a high turnover rate of staff, and therefore they cannot even build, eh, eh, um, um, institutional memory, or institutional history. So the new person, every new person coming in has got their idea (P19: YF2:60, 595-600). And they start from scratch and then they leave. So, we, we don't have someone. *How many faces of the SETA have we seen?* Exactly.

The reasons for the ETDP SETAs' lack of communication are either structural, i.e. high staff turnover, or due to the lack of someone dedicated to liaise with the HEIs, or due to a lack of knowledge about the aims of the SDA.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, namely that there is a lack of support and guidance from the ETDP SETA. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Strydom (2004:292) and Van Niekerk (2004:111) note that staff development in HEIs is being hampered by the lack of support and guidance from government through the ETDP SETA.

I now present the seventh of the eight network displays relevant to illustrate that HEIs' performance management systems include national SDA imperatives.

#### 4.3.3.7 HEIs using performance systems enhance the management of national SDA imperatives



**Figure 4.26 HEIs using performance systems enhance the management of national SDA imperatives**

The network display shown in Figure 4.26 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the inference that HEIs' performance management systems include national SDA imperatives. In other words, HEIs' performance management systems do not refrain from managing national SDA imperatives. As such, progress (six of the seven HEIs) is being made with the ETD of designated staff in six of the seven HEIs (little progress is being made with the ETD of designated employees in university Y). The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). Since performance management systems determines ETD practices (refer §4.3.2.4) the following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant to the understanding that progress is being made with the ETD of designated employees in most HEIs:

*Are any of these strategies available exclusively to designated employees in your institution?* There's another strategy that I haven't mentioned, number 8, and that is special programmes. Now we have over the last five, six, seven years introduced a number of special programmes that were specifically for development purposes for people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Now, we had a programme for example called GOOT, Growing Our Own Timber, where we focused specifically on black and female academics. We also established here, with grant funding that we got

from various donors, a unit that we called the Equity Development Unit and that was situated here in our unit. It's now been moved to another unit, but it was very specifically aimed at academics in particular but also on support staff from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. So those were very specifically targeted (P27: UF1:40, 285-295).

*Are any of these strategies available exclusively to designated employees in your institution?* Our discretionary funds pay for specific development interventions as per ETDP SETA allocations, for example ABET, learnerships or internships (P34: VT2:30, 43-45). Currently we have 50 artisans such as electricians, painters, carpenters and plumbers on learnerships. However, it is towards admin or support staff (P34: VT2:31, 101-103).

*Are any of these strategies available exclusively to designated employees in your institution?* Yes there is progress towards the education, training and development of designated staff, take for example our ABET programme especially is going well (P35: WT1:18, 100-101).

*Are any of these strategies available exclusively to designated employees in your institution?* Yes, ABET (P36: XT2:19, 111-111).

*Are any of these strategies available exclusively to designated employees in your institution?* Each one of the eight occupational classes would have its allocation in the budget, percentage wise. Roughly speaking. Just to make sure that it's fairly distributed, you know, on the entire, and then it's on a pyramid basis, that it's smaller on the top, and bigger at the bottom. Yes. That's right. And they have other advantages. You have ... you have ... That's right. Exactly. So it's more or less like that, but then on a percentage basis. Then, that pyramid I divide again, vertically, where I say, in each one, how much then goes to women. *So you have funds available for programmes specifically for designated staff?* Yes, for example for, for people with disabilities (P19: YF2:77, 112-120).

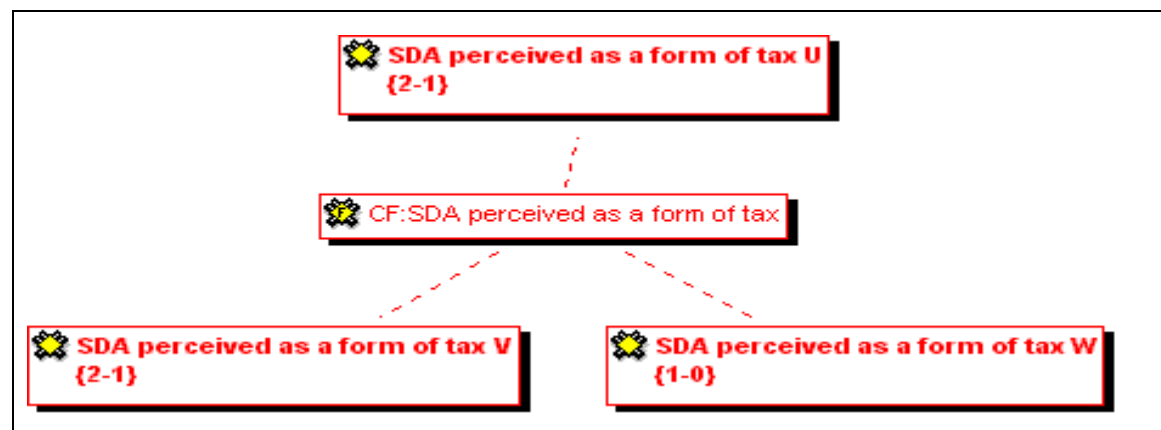
The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that progress is being made with the development of designated employees. One of the examples given of such progress was ABET (see Figure 4.3.3.1). Against this background it is clear that HEIs' performance management systems include the management of national SDA imperatives, in particular the development of designated employees.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, namely that the HEIs' performance management systems refrain from managing national SDA imperatives. The above-mentioned substantiation of the finding that progress is being made with the development of designated employees contradicts the documented opinions that HEIs' performance management systems refrain from managing national SDA imperatives. Consequently, I suggest that the challenge HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA is not due to the lack of performance management systems in HEIs as a

means of managing national SDA imperatives, but rather to the dissonance between the aims of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs.

I now present the last of the eight network displays relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. This network display illustrates that HEIs perceive the implementation of the SDA as a form of tax.

#### 4.3.3.8 The SDA is perceived as a form of tax



**Figure 4.27 HEIs perceive the SDA as a form of tax**

The network display shown in Figure 4.27 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from three of the seven research participants (the letter U, V and W in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs SDFs perceive the SDA as a form of tax. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that three of the seven SDFs perceived the implementation of the SDA as a form of tax. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

Far too many employers are seeing this as just a tax and dismiss the cumbersome process involved in accessing grants (P26: UD2:2, 103-106). *Does it include you?* Yep. There is a strong school of thought in our institution represented by at least one of our deans and others, which says we do not belong in the skills development environment; we should not be paying levies, um, we shouldn't even comply with SETA requirements and skills development requirements (P28: UF2:9, 143-150). *I agree at least we should pay 50% of the 1% because HEIs are subsidised by approximately 53%.*

Our skills committee perceives the SDA as a tax on employers to fund the improvement of skills and qualifications in SA. Thus it is a legal requirement that employers must comply with minimally. A pain in the neck as it does not link and integrate with HEI and

CHE requirements (P34: VT2:13, 127-130).

I am going to say something because I feel safe. It's not them forcing us to do something we are doing it anyway, whether the Skills Act came in or not. It becomes only farcical. I don't get feedback from the SETA, there is no added value, why are we doing it? It's becoming a farce like a tax with no institutional value. In terms of what they want to do with it, I don't know (P11: WF1:64, 310-314).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that three of the HEIs view the implementation of the SDA as a form of tax. I concur with the above-mentioned SDFs' quotations and also believe that HEIs' skills levy should be 0,5% instead of 1% because HEIs' operational budgets are subsidised by approximately 50% of the funds obtained from the government.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs' encounter with the implementation of the SDA, namely that HEIs perceive the SDA as a form of tax. This finding matches the findings of the non-empirical data analysis. For example, Lee (2002:4), Ziderman, (1996:313), as well as Whalley and Ziderman (1990: 377) caution that industry might view the levy-financing scheme as an additional tax (P1:88 423-424). Similarly, Cloete (2001:8) argues that private and public organisations consider the SDA as yet another tax (P2:8, 145-147).

In conclusion, the above-mentioned network displays and quotations provide a clear understanding of the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA, as indicated below:

- The SDFs did not express their concern about the extensive cost and laborious process of providing registered ETD programmes, but pointed out the tension involved in providing internal programmes which are not credit-bearing programmes, since these are quality assured on the principle of self-accreditation whereas the SDA portrays the notion of credit-bearing courses based on unit standards.
- HEIs' ETD needs differ from national SDA imperatives. HEIs support the ETD needs for all employees in relation to institutional needs, whereas the SDA prioritises the development of designated employees.
- HEIs' ETD practices are not co-ordinated for presentation to the ETDP SETA. This unequivocal understanding points to the lack of fora to discuss HEIs'



ETD matters and also to their lack of representation on the ETDP SETA forums.

- HEIs encounter problems with the integration of the SDA. Core to this problem is the dissonance between HEIs' perception of staff development as predominantly a function of knowledge generation whereas from the SDA's perspective the focus is on labour, in other words on tangible visible skills. The difficulty of integration is furthermore exacerbated by the lack of support and communication between HEIs and the ETDP SETA. HEIs', therefore, tend to submit their WSPs and ATRs solely to receive grants and some HEIs label the skills levy as a form of tax.

I have presented the findings related to the documented understanding about the rationale for and meaning of the implementation of the SDA in SA, the documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices and the documented opinions regarding the challenges HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA.

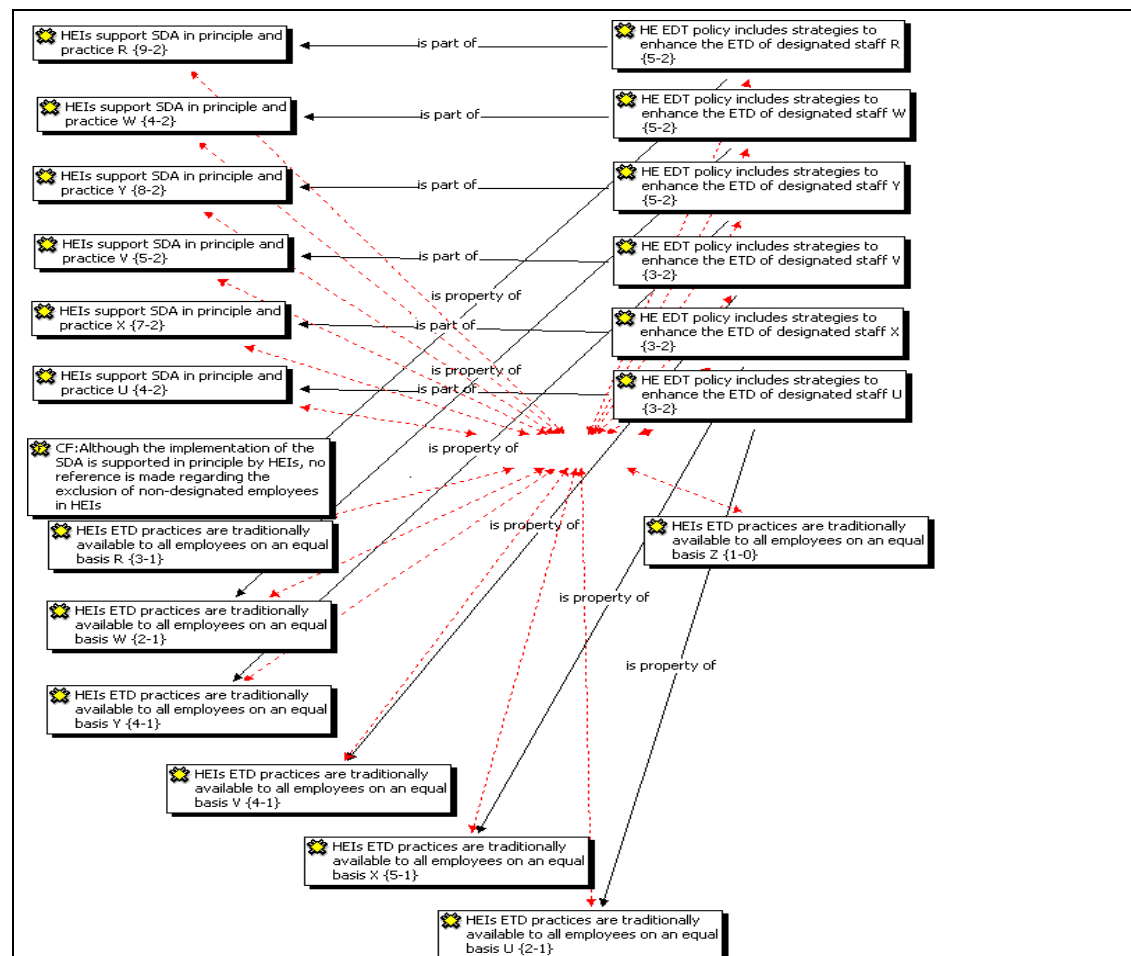
I now present the findings related to my personal opinion about the effect of the implementation of the SDA in SA; my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices; and my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs. The reason is that I wanted to determine whether my personal opinions are corroborated by the opinions of the SDFs.

#### **4.3.4 Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA**

My personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA is grouped into the eight interrelated themes that are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Personal opinion about the reasons for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA*. The eight themes displayed are as follows: Although the implementation of the SDA is supported in principle, no reference is made to excluding non-designated employees in HEIs; the descriptions of terminology in the SDA and explanations tendered by government officials are confusing; education credentials are viewed as a substitute for employee ability; the relationship between investment in ETD and economic prosperity is not proven; the SA workplace ETD policy framework focuses on the labour market, not on HEIs as

social institutions of SA; the SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but its compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness; the SDA is implemented on the assumption that ETD will lead to economic prosperity; and the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour. I now present seven network displays on the empirical data analysis relevant to each of these eight themes.

#### 4.3.4.1 Although the implementation of the SDA is supported in principle, no reference is made to legitimising the exclusion of non-designated employees



**Figure 4.28 Although HEIs support the SDA in principle, no reference is made to excluding non-designated employees**

The network display shown in Figure 4.28 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that, although the implementation of the SDA is supported in principle in HEIs, HEIs do not exclude non-designated employees from ETD opportunities. The aim of this part of my empirical research was to ascertain whether there is reason to believe that although

the implementation of the SDA is supported in principle in HEIs, non-designated employees are excluded from participating in ETD practices. The network display illustrates that HEIs' employee ETD practices are traditionally available to all employees in HEIs. Furthermore, HEIs' ETD policies include strategies to enhance the ETD practices of designated employees. This does not mean that non-designated employees are excluded from participating in HEIs' employee ETD practices, but rather that strategies additional to HEIs' ETD portfolio are implemented to enhance the development of designated employees. The following quotations demonstrate that HEIs include ETD strategies to enhance the development of designated employees:

Redress the imbalances resulting from the past (P 1: RD1:2, 48-48). In accordance with the University's equity policy there is a commitment to combating all unfair discrimination (P 7: UD1:6, 23-29). The staff development policy shall take cognisance of the following sections in that document: promotion criteria, alternative progression and succession planning, Employment Equity Policy (P22: VD1:19, 103-115). To this effect the University Skills Development Policy (SDP) must support all relevant employee efforts to further their education, training and development through a skills development scheme (P16: YD1:2, 14-16). To provide some kind of initiatives towards designated employees (P24: VF1:2, 9-14). Training and Development Policy [must] be aligned to the Equity Plan, Recruitment and Selection Policies to support transformation (P 9: WD1:1, 131-137).

The above-mentioned quotations (representative of all seven HEIs in the sample) indicate that the employee ETD policy environment includes strategies to promote the development of designated employees. The following selected quotations substantiate, however, that HEIs' ETD policies are not exclusively meant for designated employees. ETD opportunities are therefore also available to non-designated employees, as follows:

It aims to enhance a culture of learning in which continuous learning is nurtured and encouraged in the workplace (P 2: RD2:7, 25-26). To ensure this, the University will continue to support staff development which involves all staff equally as partners in achieving the aims of the University (P 7: UD1:3, 8-21) The University regards as essential the provision of opportunities for all employees to improve their levels of skills and knowledge in order to improve their ability and the quality of service to clients both in and outside the University (P22: VD1:1, 7-10). The policy serves as a mechanism for the integration of training and development interventions into broader performance improvement initiatives and alignment of training with the 2015 Strategic Plan (An Agenda for Transformation) and other human resources policies (P 9: WD1:3, 17-20) Refers to all training practices that lead to the development of the maximum potential of all staff members and enhances better quality, productivity and more job satisfaction (P12: XD1:3, 68-70). Enhance efficient and effective teaching and learning, research and community service at the University. Provide opportunities to improve skills and acquire new skills to enhance competency levels of all employees in the framework of lifelong learning and continuous organisational improvement (P16: YD1:3, 17-21).

In the above-mentioned quotations, the term “all” – referring to designated and non-designated employees – is the common denominator in all seven of the HEIs in the sample. In addition, it should be emphasised that the HEIs' employee ETD opportunities have traditionally been available to all employees (see Section 4.3). The following selected quotations are relevant in this regard:

There has always been a policy in that regard in terms of training and development and the only thing that could have happened now lately is that it could have been reviewed (P21: RF1:7, 59-62). *Since when were these management and support mechanisms traditionally available to staff members in this institution?* Maybe there is slightly more emphasis now. But I'm not convinced that it is the result of the SDA. You see, because of the business that we're in (P27: UF1:24, 269-271). [*He referred to HEIs being institutions of learning, used to providing learning opportunities to employees and the general public*]. For as long as far as I know (P24: VF1:19, 235-235). [S]taff development has always been part of our institution (P11: WF1:3, 20-20). It was there historically on the campus (P30: XF2:10, 141-153). But I would say, the, the, especially development courses you know for all ... have been there forever (P19: YF2:43, 346-349). I think everybody is entitled to skills enhancement and it been historically so (P20: ZF1:3, 68-70).

The above-mentioned quotations demonstrate that staff development has been traditionally available in HEIs. During the focus group discussion I furthermore questioned the six SDFs to determine if there is reason to believe that certain categories of employees are deprived from development. The answer was as follows:

I haven't come across in any of your institutions that non-designated employees are excluded nor that there is a differentiation between academic, administrative and support staff with regard to the availability of programmes. Do you concur with my interpretation? Yes from all SDFs (P 1:7 121-123).

My understanding, based on the above-mentioned findings, is that although HEIs support the implementation of the SDA in principle and practice, there is no indication that non-designated employees are excluded from HEIs' employee ETD practices.

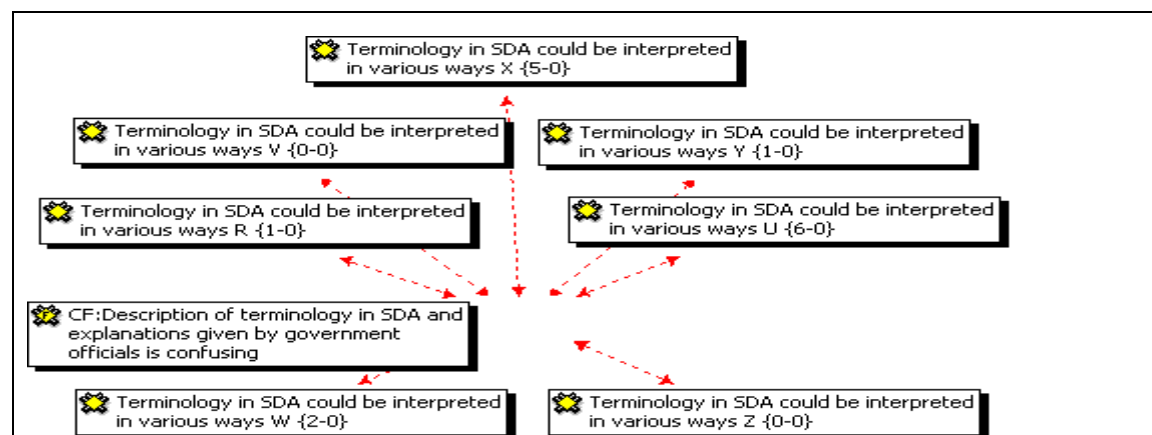
In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA, namely that although the implementation of the SDA is supported in principle in HEIs, HEIs do not exclude non-designated employees from ETD opportunities. This finding matches my personal understanding that the SDA should be viewed as a regulation applicable to all categories of employees in organisations. For example, the authors cited in the survey of the body of scholarship do not express the belief that education and training should be legislated to ensure the education and training of employees from certain groups, nor that the education and

training of employees should be governed by bodies external to an organisation (in this case the HEIs) (P1:523, 584-588). The argument (Mdladlana, 2003:1) that: "The organisations that stand to gain the most are those that equip their employees with knowledge, talent, skills and opportunities to deliver and create value" does, furthermore, not exclude certain categories of employees in organisations (P1:864, 176-180).

Against this background I argue that if the ETDP SETA were to implement guidelines to compel HEIs to give preference to designated employees, it would not only be discriminatory against non-designated employees but would also exclude non-designated employees from contributing to HEIs' effectiveness and efficiency.

I now present the second of the seven network displays relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA. The following network display illustrates that HEIs perceive the terminology in the SDA and explanations given by government officials are confusing.

#### 4.3.4.2 Descriptions of terminology in the SDA and explanations given by government officials are confusing



**Figure 4.29 HEIs perceive the descriptions of terminology in the SDA and explanations given by government officials as confusing**

The network display shown in Figure 4.29 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that the terminology in the SDA and explanations given by government officials are confusing. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice:



Outputs). The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

There is it also mentioned that the single greatest impediment to economic growth in South Africa is the shortage of skills, then they elaborate and adds occupations such as scientists, managers engineers so its immediately mixed with formal education and skills the formal distinction between education and skills collapse. The Skills Act does not help us in this way (P5: RF2:7, 195-204).

Universities will join different job titles to the prescribed 'Occupational Codes' for instance. *[In other words it is clear how we should align Higher Education job titles with the national prescribed job titles]*. All this terminology of Occupational Code on the WSP and Occupational Category EE is becoming very confusing for all but the handful of people who work with it regularly (P8: UT1:7, 40-44). *[Yes I do agree with you, I wonder why it's confusing?]* Again each organisation will define their own definition of 'scarce' and so what exactly a collective database of all this will mean is questionable (P 8: UT1:8, 46-50). There is a fundamental problem in the failure to define skills which is a persistent weakness in the Skills Act. A narrow view that skills are the solution to a human and economic problems is problematic and misleading (P26: UD2:3, 119-122). The concept of 'skills' requires definition. It can be argued that only when a society has a fundamental level of education in place can we start talking about skills (P26: UD2:15, 137-139).

Skills is so broad (P11: WF1:31, 363-364). *What do you mean by broad?* The SDA is clear that we should address past imbalances, however, the guidelines on skills are not clear. Even if we look at what we are implementing and what other HEIs are implementing, it is clear that our understanding of the Skills Act is not the same. *Why?* Because we don't debate issues (P35: WT1:21, 115-118).

It could be scarce and critical skills, you know. I don't know whether to refer to critical skills in a sense that if we have to do a project ...or institutional staff development, what do they need? (P30: XF2:15, 119-123).

No, the Skills Act highlights what is required but doesn't go into the details. The Skills Act is clear in terms of redressing past inequality. In that aspect the Act is clear. However, the guidelines are not clear (P35: WT1:1, 3-5).

It is new information to us and even the SETA people, but I'm worried that there could be different perceptions [interpretations] (P36: XT2:1, 4-5). No, it is not clearly defined (P33: YT1:2, 7-7).

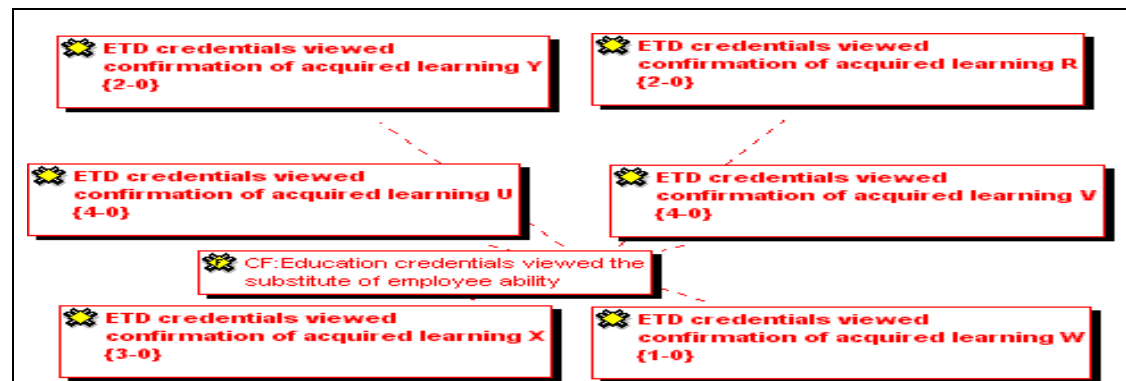
The above-mentioned quotations substantiate that all the SDFs perceived the terminology and descriptions of terminology in the SDA as confusing.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) that corroborate with my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA, namely that the terminology in the SDA and the explanations tendered by government officials are confusing, hence delaying the implementation of the SDA.



I now present the third of the seven network displays to illustrate that HEIs view the ETD credentials as a confirmation of acquired learning.

#### 4.3.4.3 Education credentials are viewed as a substitute for employee ability



**Figure 4.30 HEIs do not consider education credentials as a substitute for employee ability**

The network display shown in Figure 4.30 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that HEIs view the ETD credentials as a confirmation of acquired learning, hence contradicting the SDA that promotes the perception that credentialled learning is a substitute for employee ability. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that HEIs view ETD credentials as a confirmation of acquired learning. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

*Is any form of recognition issued to the participant after the completion of a programme and why?* Yes, certificates or qualifications, but it is a confirmation that the person has acquired some degree of learning during the intervention and therefore he/she is deemed competent (P32: RT2:11, 64-66).

*Is any form of recognition issued to the participant after the completion of a programme and why?* If an employee is completing a short course ... formal credentials in accordance with the NQF are not critical (P37: UT2:3, 32-36). *What do you mean by suitable?* By suitable I mean that the credits might be for the purpose of acquiring the necessary CPD points. This ensures that learners benefit at the end of the day by receiving credible certificates of competence (P37:UT2:7, 50-56). The credentials that a person receives after completing a learning intervention and/or qualification are only as good as the depth and meaning of the learning and insights gained in the actual process. It is in the process of learning that an individual assimilates new concepts and insights, and undertakes reflection and self-evaluation. In the absence of high-quality experiential and relevant learning, the attainment of credentials just for the sake of receiving a certificate or commendation, becomes meaningless (P37: UT2:22, 198-

204).

*Is any form of recognition issued to the participant after the completion of a programme and why?* Yes, certificates stating the recommended credits, but people who attend training without credentials will not necessarily be less skilled than the person who attends accredited training in terms of competency certificates (P23: VT1:23, 169-180).

*Is any form of recognition issued to the participant after the completion of a programme and why?* Unfortunately not all courses are necessarily accredited. QA or the accreditation of a programme is an internal self-driven system, it has nothing to do with certifying the competency of a person (P24: VF1:21, 245-255). Most organisations, like Microsoft, like IBM, they don't necessarily take you on because you've got a qualification (P24: VF1:30, 381-392). The credentials that the person receives after completing a programme as well as the process of learning, are valuable together with the application of learning on the job to improve performance (P34: VT2:7, 76-78).

*Is any form of recognition issued to the participant after the completion of a programme and why?* Rather the process of learning is valuable towards change in behaviour and performance improvement, not the certification *per se* (P35: WT1:26, 43-44).

*Is any form of recognition issued to the participant after the completion of a programme and why?* Some of the modules of our programmes, we can align to formal programme modules at the business school, so it's not officially credit-bearing, it is just pitched at that level, it's outcomes based, it's not officially credit-bearing (P29: XF1:33, 176-179).

*Is any form of recognition issued to the participant after the completion of a programme and why?* Yes we provide a letter of participation, but Louw we reward performance, we don't reward attainment of qualifications *per se* (P19: YF2:69, 444-448).

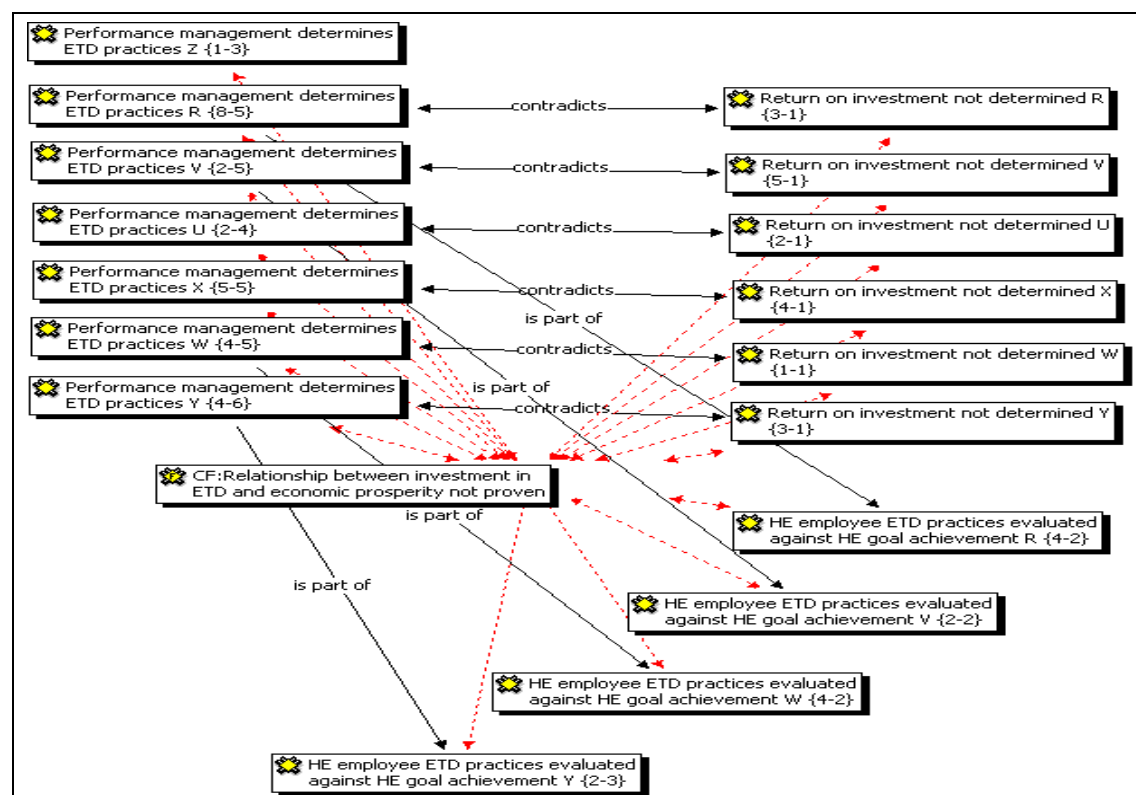
The above-mentioned quotations substantiate that certification, whether in the form of credits or as a statement of competency issued to employees after the completion of a learning programme, is viewed as a confirmation of having successfully demonstrated the learning outcomes. Furthermore, two of the above-mentioned quotations selected from the respective SDFs clearly state that HEIs do not remunerate employees on the basis of their qualifications, but for their performance (see quotation P19: YF2:69, 444-448 and P35: WT1:26, 43-44).

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) that corroborate with my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA that HEIs view the ETD credentials as a confirmation of acquired learning, hence contradicting the SDA that promotes the perception that credentialled learning is a substitute for employee ability. Based on the perception held by SDFs regarding the value of credentialled learning, it substantiates the finding that the aim of the SDA, which equates credentialled programmes with benefiting the individual in financial terms, is in start contrast with the rationale of staff development in HEIs. Since, it has been previously substantiated that HEIs do not measure the return on ETD investment (refer §4.3.2.4) which is why none of the

SDFs mentioned that HEIs pay an individual more after completing a training programme, it corroborates with my opinion that the SDA is implemented on the assumption that ETD would lead to the economic prosperity of the individual or country at large.

I now present the fourth of the seven network displays to illustrate that the return on investment in ETD practices in HEIs is not determined as far as staff development is concerned.

#### 4.3.4.4 The relationship between investment in ETD and economic prosperity is not proven in HEIs



**Figure 4.31 The relationship between investment in ETD and economic prosperity is not proven in HEIs**

The network display shown in Figure 4.31 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the view that the relationship between investment in ETD and economic prosperity is not proven, hence that the SDA is implemented on the assumption that investment in ETD will lead to economic prosperity. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be



viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The aim of my empirical research was to ascertain whether HEIs determine the return on their investment in employee ETD. The network display illustrates that performance management is essential to determining employees' ETD needs, and that HEIs' employee ETD practices are evaluated against HEI's goal achievement. The return on investment in ETD practices is not determined as far as staff development is concerned. If HEIs do not measure the return on investment to illustrate that there is a relationship between investment in ETD and economic gain, the relationship between investment in ETD and its economic return is based on a dubious assumption. Since all seven HEIs' SDFs substantiated that performance management systems was applied to identify ETD practices (refer §4.3.3.3.), and that HEIs approved ETD when it was perceived as contributing to the goals of the HEI, i.e. to the improvement of quality service, I decided not to present these quotations again. Therefore, I present the selected quotations to substantiate the finding that the return on HEIs' investment in ETD practices is not determined:

*Do you measure return on investment?* Our development opportunities have got nothing to do with giving people incentives or higher salaries or promotion ... it's more on development in terms of improving their own performance or enhancing their own performance at the jobs they have been appointed to do (P6: RT1:3, 39-43). It is required to put the outcome of what he/she learned into his or her performance management contract. We do have this function but it is not fully utilised. Hence, in a way there is a gap between what the person gained from a learning programme and how he or she is implementing it. There is no proof, only an assumption, that they would apply their new skill or knowledge in their work environment (P32: RT2:34, 69-74).

*Do you measure return on investment?* No, take probation as an example. The aim of probation is a development period during which a staff member is prepared through a variety of strategies, most especially through discussions around performance to achieve permanent appointment, or tenure, if you like (P27: UF1:41, 127-132). Probation is a development mechanism. The development opportunities that we provide are first of all the attainment of academic qualifications particularly for academics. That is, the nature of their work is they need to improve their qualifications. So, our objective is to ensure that all of our academic staff have got PhDs for pushing knowledge frontiers purposes not to pay or promote someone (P27: UF1:42, 137-141).

*Do you measure return on investment?* We do not measure any type of event in terms of its financial return. We link PDPs somewhat to the vision and mission of the local units, the faculties, then the divisions and so on, and then we try to tie it back to the vision and mission of the institution (P25: VF2:9, 7-9). We would like to identify skills needs and number of planned events and then accordingly budget for planned training and then calculate return on investment in completed training (P34: VT2:44, 144-146). *In other words you would like to do it, but you are not currently doing it?* True. (P34: VT2:44, 144-147).

*Do you measure return on investment?* Return on investment? We are far from it. I would love to be in the situation when I could say, I mean even now I give people an approval letter that the application was approved, go and make your arrangements. We would like your plan on how you would come back and transfer knowledge (P11:



WF1:54, 270-275).

*Do you measure return on investment?* Employees are at this moment not required to report on the training that they have completed. Academics are required to write a report after attending a conference as a means to share knowledge. Development is managed by the individual, hence he/she is not required to indicate formally where new knowledge is applicable to his or her performance (P36: XT2:7, 36-41).

*Do you measure return on investment?* We use the performance management system to ascertain skills gaps ... but we don't measure if it happened. It's a line manager prerogative to say, the business is changing and we need most skills in x, for example (P18: YF1:9, 15-18).

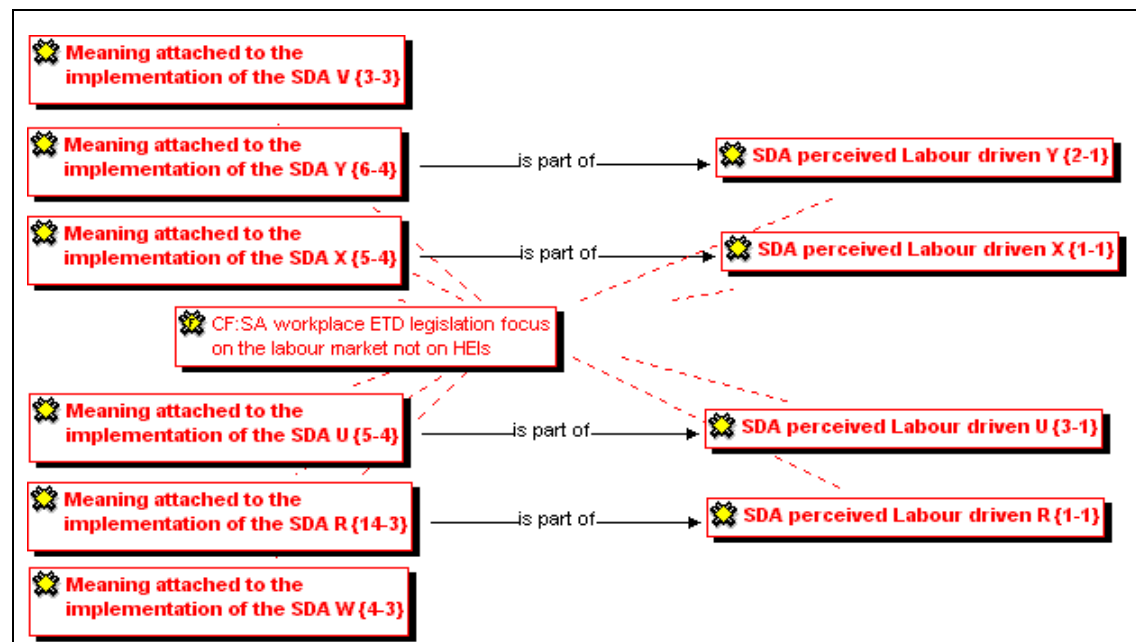
The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that HEIs do not measure the return on the investment in employee ETD practices in financial terms. During the focus group discussion I questioned the six SDFs to determine if they could give an example to demonstrate that a person earned more after completing a learning programme. They could not provide any examples, thus substantiating yet again that return on investment is not determined in HEIs. When I asked the SDFs if it was possible to determine the return on investment in financial terms, hence to demonstrate that there was a relationship between investment in ETD and economic prosperity, one of the SDFs replied as follows: "How can we measure that? There are so many variables!" (P 1:17, 206-208).

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) that corroborate with my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA, contending that the relationship between investment in ETD and economic prosperity is not proven, with the result that the SDA is implemented on the assumption that investment in ETD will lead to economic prosperity. This finding also corroborate with the views of authors cited in the survey of the body of scholarship. For example, Schultz (1961:1), one of the leading proponents of Human Capital Theory, states: "Although it is obvious that people acquire useful skills and knowledge, it is not obvious that these skills and knowledge are a form of capital, [or] that this capital is a substantial part of a product of deliberate investment" (P1:784, 1569-1573). Similarly, Lin (1999:29) postulates that the proponents of Human Capital Theory portray the value of investment in education as an ideology for influencing the masses to internalise the values of this theory (P1:611 1546-1548). It is not clear whether educated people are necessarily more productive or wealthier than uneducated people (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4; Livingstone, 2002:1; Baptise, 2001:195; Quiggin, 2000:130; Livingstone, 1997:9) (P1:818, 1643-1646). Based on the findings of the SDFs that corroborate with the views of the

above-mentioned authors, it is clear the SDA was implemented on the (unproven) assumption that ETD would lead to economic prosperity.

I now present the fifth of the seven network displays to illustrate that HEIs perceive the SA workplace ETD policy framework to focus on the labour market and not on HEIs as social institutions of SA.

#### 4.3.4.5 The SA workplace ETD policy framework focuses on the labour market not on HEIs as social institutions of SA



**Figure 4.32 HEIs perceive the SA workplace ETD policy framework as focusing on the labour market, not on HEIs as social institutions of SA**

The network display shown in Figure 4.32 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the contention that SA's workplace ETD policy framework focuses on the labour market and not on HEIs as social<sup>89</sup> institutions of SA. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that four of the SDFs perceived the SDA as labour-oriented, in other words driven from a labour imperative associated with manual skills. The network display

<sup>89</sup> Llop (2006:xi) refer to HEIs as social institutions which are by nature not profit driven, rather viewed essential to a country's socio-economic development.



furthermore illustrates that the perceptions of these four SDFs are part of their perception of the meaning of and reasons for the implementation of the SDA. I now present the selected quotations to substantiate that the SDFs consider the implementation of the SDA as labour driven:

*Why is it called the Skills Development Act?* (Laughs) because it's labour driven and labour was talking from the background where people from designated groups needed skills like artisan skills, that is where it started but now suddenly education, training and development are under the umbrella of the Skills Development Act. I think it was actually the labour approach, that is where it came from (P32: RT2:10, 55-60).

*Why is it called the Skills Development Act?* Since the introduction of this new legislation there has been a tension between education and labour at national departmental level. That tension hasn't been resolved. *How* so? It is alleviated somewhat by some discussions that happened between the two departments but something like that, if our, you know if it came to a point of us being driven and being substantially disadvantaged as far as grants are concerned, I foresee it being escalated to the level of the minister of education and I think we will get support there. You know it's the labour-education tension (P28: UF2:10, 174-183). So what I'm saying is to start off with, the starting point of the SETAs is labour so the entire focus of all of the SETAs and including ours even though ours should be slightly different I think the ETDP SETA, the focus is on labour and skills development in the sense as we said right in the beginning of the interview the first phase of being manual practical kinds of skills (P28: UF2:11, 15-20).

*Why is it called the Skills Development Act?* Because its from a labour perspective, labour detected that they didn't have enough aspects in certain prime jobs, hence they developed this Skills Act and then the sector which is our SETAs and them are working for labour, because they then were given the jobs of saying you can then break yourself up into the different areas of labour and then you will work for us (P36: XT2:26, 141-145).

*Why is it called the Skills Development Act?* It always been from a labour perspective and they started from scratch with the Skills Development Act (P19: YF2:61, 600-601).

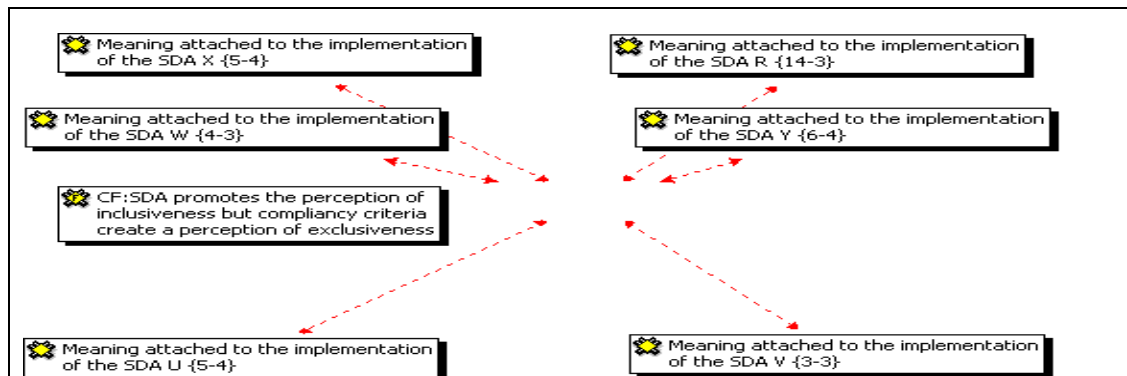
The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that the participating SDFs perceive the SDA as a labour-driven initiative towards the attainment of tangible skills, such as artisan skills (P32: RT2:10, 55-60) and manual practical skills (P28: UF2:11, 15-20). During the focus group interaction with six SDFs, I enquired why they perceived the SDA as labour driven. One of the SDFs replied that the SDA was: "now about designated development". I then asked why do they (ETDP SETA officials and HEIs SDFs) emphasise the development of designated employees and not the development of all staff? The answer was as follows: "It stems from their mandate [ETDP SETA officials] that they receive from the Department of Labour. Their targets derive from the National Skills Development Strategy" (P 1:20, 211-216). This clearly demonstrates that the implementation of the SDA is labour driven and, as a result, is predominantly focused on tangible skills, not on the knowledge generation that is the core business of HEIs.



In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA, namely that SA's workplace ETD policy framework focuses on the labour market (tangible skills required to enhance organisations profit margins) and not on HEIs as social institutions of SA. The finding that the participating SDFs perceive the SDA as a labour-driven initiative towards the attainment of tangible skills, therefore, matches my personal opinion that SA's workplace ETD policy framework focuses on the labour market and not on HEIs as social institutions of SA understanding. For example, government portrays the SA economy as a dualistic economy: "A First-World economy based on a skilled labour force and a Third-World economy based on marginalised or unskilled workers regarded as unemployable" (P1:301, 167:169). The government, furthermore, argues that an increase in the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market will improve the return on that investment (Republic of South Africa, 2004:4) (P1:890, 143-145). This clearly demonstrates that the SDA is implemented as a means of promoting the labour market, not on promoting HEIs as social institutions in SA. These quotations indicate that the SDA was implemented to enhance tangible skills, not the skills associated with the generation and dissemination of knowledge.

I now present the penultimate network display relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and the meaning of implementing the SDA in SA. The network display illustrates that HEIs perceive the SDA to promote the perception of inclusiveness but its compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness.

#### 4.3.4.6 SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness



**Figure 4.33 HEIs perceive the SDA as discriminatory against non-designated employees**

The network display shown in Figure 4.33 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate that the SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but its compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates the meaning that the participating SDFs attached to the implementation of the SDA. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants substantiate that the SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but its compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness:

*Why are the criteria for mandatory grants based on the target achievement of 85% blacks, 54% women and 4% disabled people if our economy depends on all South Africans? What it requires is that there should be a focus on a designated group and it should be distinct in that regard (P21: RF1:26, 230-233). Why? The SDA's purpose is to redress the imbalances of the past, the target being meaningful and accredited training that would also include formal qualifications for 85% blacks, 54% women, 4% disabled and youth. Does this mean that white males are excluded? I think on these targets white males are excluded simply because they are perceived as previously advantaged. But if you look at these targets it does not add up to 100% and it does not say that white males are excluded. Yes. I do not know how they [DoL] came up with these percentages. It seems as if the percentages given for women and the disabled are included in the 85% for blacks. So in principle it is mainly about prioritisation towards designated groups. Otherwise the SDA would be perceived as discriminating against white males. But then again why did they [DoL] decide on these percentages, why did they not put a small percentage, like for disabled for white males? So it means that they did it deliberately (P32: RT2:18, 116-128).*

*Why are the criteria for mandatory grants based on the target achievement of 85% blacks, 54% women and 4% disabled people if our economy depends on all South Africans? They ... start to look at how many people from designated groups did we train (P28: UF2:8, 123-134).*

*Why are the criteria for mandatory grants based on the target achievement of 85% blacks, 54% women and 4% disabled people if our economy depends on all South Africans? I would assume that these specific percentages have been stipulated in order to ensure the necessary progress in relation to national objectives. These percentages are in place to narrow the divide between those who were historically advantaged in comparison to those who have been historically disadvantaged. These percentages, if implemented and realised in organisations, should level the "playing field" as far as opportunity and progression are concerned (P37: UT2:2, 16-27).*

*Why are the criteria for mandatory grants based on the target achievement of 85% blacks, 54% women and 4% disabled people if our economy depends on all South Africans? The targets set for blacks, women, disabled and youth are to redress past discrepancies. Previously probably 5% of women were identified for training and that is what we need to lift because women always came second. In terms of representation we need to acknowledge that there are more women than men (P34: VT2:1,4-9).*

*Why are the criteria for mandatory grants based on the target achievement of 85% blacks, 54% women and 4% disabled people if our economy depends on all South Africans? ...its mainly focused on the previously disadvantaged in the lower levels. We all know that, if you look at the priorities at the SETA and the NSDS targets, it's not for people to get Master's and Doctorates. If, if we, if we pump the funds in the Masters and the Doctorates again the people on the lower levels will not have opportunities (P29: XF1:26, 265-270).*

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that the SDA is perceived as focusing on designated staff members. Although the data captured from all the SDFs pointed to the SDA being perceived as focusing on designated staff members, I decided to determine the implications of the prescribed percentages (85% blacks, 54% women and 4% disabled people) on HEIs staff development practices that are available to all employees. The answer was as follows:

The skills funds according to them [SDA *vis-à-vis* members of the ETDP SETA] is specifically for skills initiatives that they will prescribe from a national imperative but at the same time they are expecting us {HEIs} to be pro-active as well to come up with our needs. But then they [Government] are not into supporting core businesses and therefore institutions should budget for core business training. Institutions should budget over and above the 1% should budget for core institution training and development (P 1:15, 182:189). Before the SDA came into place institutions were budgeting for training, their core business. This is now about designated development (P 1:18, 210-214). Universities have always been spending more than the 1% in terms of training their staff (P 1:19, 219-222).

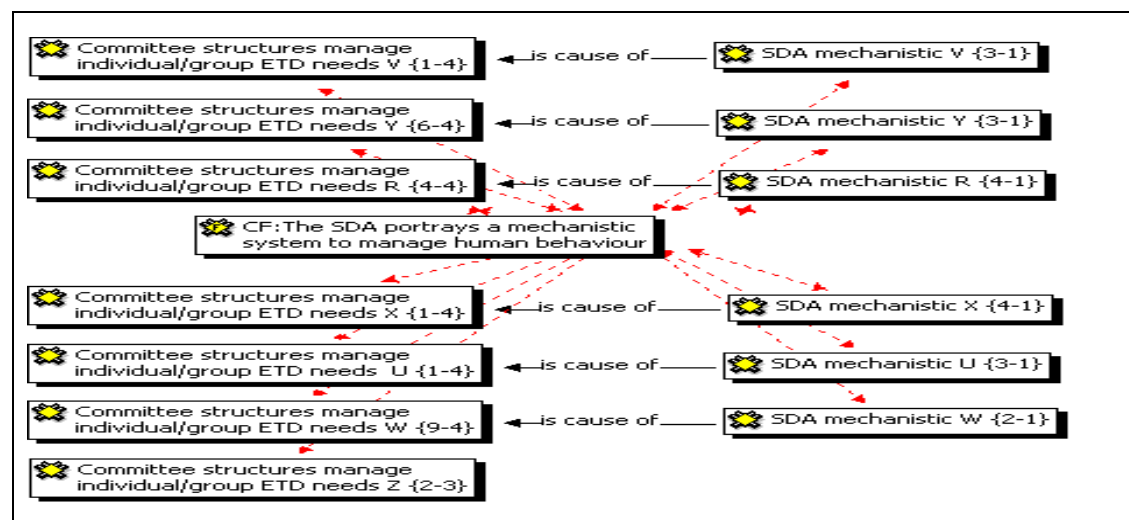
My understanding, based on the above-mentioned findings, is that the SDFs perceive the implementation of the SDA as not only for the development of designated employees (substantiated in §4.3.4.1), but also that the 1% levy grant should be reserved solely for the development of designated employees. This substantiates the

inference that although the SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness, its compliance criteria could create a perception of exclusiveness.

In this section I present the finding (representing the whole group of participants) that the SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but its compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness. This finding corroborate with my personal opinion that the SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but its compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness. For example, although the template provided by the ETDP SETA does not restrict HEIs from planning and reporting on their education and training initiatives for staff members in designated groups only, the criteria used for evaluating the HEIs WSPs and ATRs are based solely on the previously described NSDS targets (percentages) (P1:346, 452-456).

I now present the final network displays relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA. The following network display illustrates that HEIs perceive the SDA to portray a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour.

#### 4.3.4.7 The SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour



**Figure 3.34 The SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour**

The network display shown in Figure 4.34 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V,



W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the conclusion that the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that HEIs view the implementation of the SDA as being mechanistic about the management of human behaviour. The consequence (illustrated as a cause of) is that committee structures have been implemented in HEIs to manage individual or group ETD needs. The following quotations are selected from each of the research participants (SDFs) to substantiate that the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour:

For the SETA it's about numbers on our plan, so to receive our mandatory grant it's about putting figures on paper and that's that (P6: RT1:38, 158-160). I would say just an administrative thing (P21: RF1:56, 277-278). But, you know, all they look at is who signed and not what your intention is with your workplace skills plan (P21: RF1:58, 288-289).

Now, we could put ourselves in the position where we say you know we're selective about our compliance but I would have liked to find a way where we can agree where we can find a middle way where we can accommodate both their imperatives and our needs. That proves difficult though because they are not interested in our development strategies, rather the amount of money we invest (P28: UF2:22, 84-89).

It would be great if the SETA could provide reports to employers on their staff development initiatives and opportunities because at this stage it is rather the tally of heads that counts (P34: VT2:41, 194-196).

My problem with the SETA is that it is so mechanical. I submitted on e-mail but the signed document went to them later. It's about figures on paper (P11: WF1:59, 386-387). It only becomes farcical. I don't get feedback from the SETA, there is no added value, why are we doing it? It's becoming a farce like a tax with no institutional value. In terms of what they want to do with it, I don't know (P11: WF1:60, 312-314). They focus too much on the administrative part in terms of the paperwork (P11: WF1:61, 317-328).

Just becomes a paper exercise to report to the SETA (P19: YF2:96, 574-578).

The above-mentioned reference to “figures on paper” (P6: RT1:38, 158-160), “amount of money we invest” (P28: UF2:22, 84-89), “tally of heads that counts” (P34: VT2:41, 194-196) (P11: WF1:59, 386-387), “a paper exercise” (P19: YF2:96, 574-578) substantiate the conclusion that the SDA is perceived as a mechanical system for managing human behaviour. In addition, the introduction of a Skills Development Committee in an HEI (statutory requirement) is another indication of promoting systems that manage human behaviour. The following quotations have been selected as supporting this statement:

The Skills Development Committee (SDC) remains the mechanism for gaining legitimacy for, and assuring the quality of learning and development at institutional level (P 1: RD1:21, 254-256). Each and every department, support department and faculty





has got a Human Resources Development Committee with representation from management and unions. Those committees identify collective and fund individual training needs in their faculties or departments (P21: RF1:23, 196-200).

Our so-called training committee which is required by the legislation (P27: UF1:4, 28-41). Our Training and Development Committee assists with the development of the Workplace Skills Plan, that informs all employees on the development of the Workplace Skills Plan, implementation and progress with the Workplace Skills Plan and Report (P 9: WD1:29, 343-352). The Staff Development Consultative Forum promotes development opportunities for all staff through the establishment of strategic directions and the development and review of relevant ETD policy. It is advised by relevant university committees, particularly with respect to legal requirements and organisational changes and developments (P 7: UD1:26, 197-202).

I have two committees. *Why?* The one is called the skills development committee, which is more of a management monitoring committee. Each member there is specifically tasked to represent their section in terms of skills needs and taking back information in terms of these are the type of interventions that are available at the University (P24: VF1:37, 506-515).

We have to appoint a Training Committee according to the Skills Development Act to develop a Workplace Skills Plan in support of the University's strategic initiatives and objectives that would provide a blueprint from which co-ordinated and coherent staff development activities in all sectors of the University could proceed (P12: XD1:13, 78-84).

Our Skills Development Training Committee (SDTC) will, on an annual basis, review the targets, costs and any other elements of the Skills Development Policy that need to be updated or aligned with the needs of the University or requirements of legislation (P16: YD1:9, 42-45). In addition, the Skills Development Training Committee of the University will determine the training needs of the University and record these in the yearly WSP, which will also set annual targets of priority training needs of the University (P16: YD1:11, 54-57). So, you know, we discuss needs of people's development against what the institution wants to achieve. And it's structured in that way (P19: YF2:65, 466-482).

People in HR responsible for training and development and with union representatives as other stakeholders, I must say all, let me say from the two campuses are responsible for sort of drawing up and discussing the policies. I remember there was also some independent body, I just forgot the name, that was hired by the University who convened all those workshops that we had (P20: ZF1:21, 36-41).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the contention that the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA, namely that HEIs view the implementation of the SDA as a mechanistic notion of the management of human behaviour. This finding matches my personal understanding that the SDA's focus on preferential treatment for certain staff categories in HEIs is another example of the way in which Human Capital Theory is embedded in the fabric of the SDA. The reason is that prioritisation implies

that organisations have to implement decision-making systems which by implication manage humans in a way similar to managing the machines in a production chain.

In conclusion, in this section I present the findings of the empirical data analysis to substantiate my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA. The findings indicate the following:

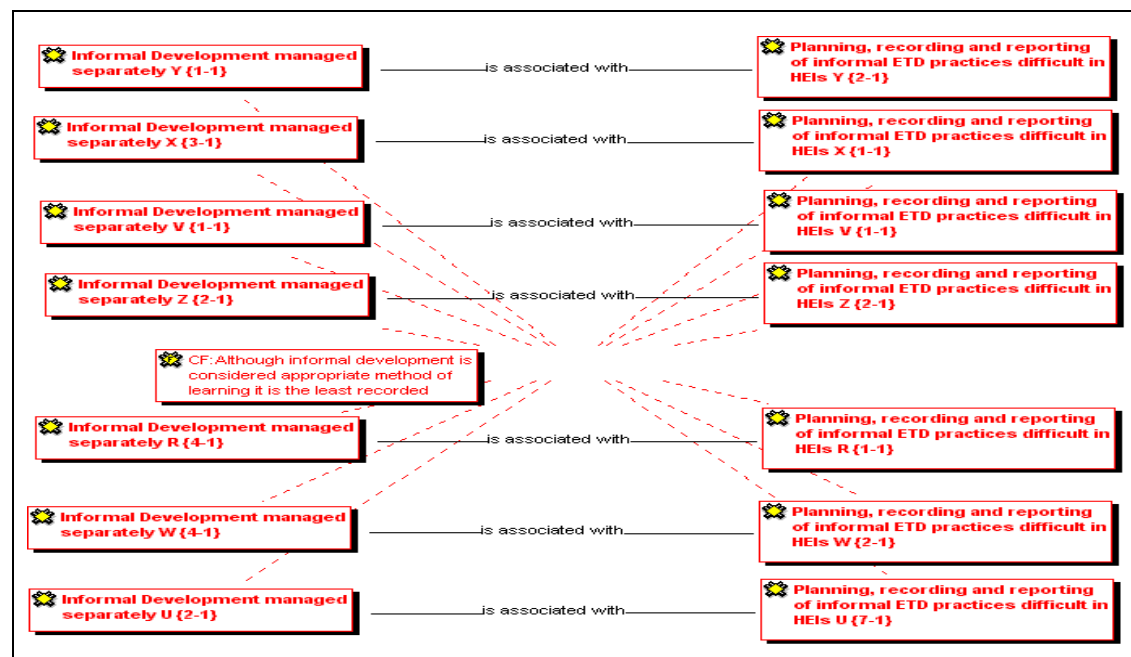
- The SDA should be viewed as a governmental regulation (ruling) that is applicable to all categories of employees in organisations. If the ETDP SETA were to implement guidelines to compel HEIs to give preference to designated employees, it would not only be discriminatory against non-designated employees but would also exclude non-designated employees from contributing to HEIs' effectiveness and efficiency.
- The terminology in the SDA and the explanations tendered by government officials are confusing, delaying therefore the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.
- HEIs view the ETD credentials as a confirmation of acquired learning, contradicting therefore the SDA which promotes the perception that credentialled learning is a substitute for employee ability.
- The SDA is implemented on the assumption that investment in ETD would lead to economic prosperity. This relates closely to the theory of Human Capital.
- SA's workplace ETD policy framework focuses on the labour market and not on HEIs as social institutions of SA.
- The SDA promotes the perception of inclusiveness but compliance criteria create a perception of exclusiveness.
- HEIs view the implementation of the SDA as mechanistic for the management of human behaviour.

In the following section I present the data analysis relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices.

#### 4.3.5 Personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices

My personal opinions about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices (refer §3.3) are grouped into three interrelated themes presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Personal opinions about the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices*. The three themes displayed are: although informal development is considered an appropriate method of learning as far as staff development in HEIs is concerned, it is the least recorded; the trend of referencing ETD practices as human resources development indicates that employees are managed on the basis of the theory of Human Capital; and the value HEIs attach to the process of learning, i.e. informally oriented and self-driven or motivated learning, seems to have close ties with Social Capital Theory. I now present the findings of the empirical data analysis relevant to each of these three themes, as well as the first network of the three displays to illustrate that although informal development is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs (specific to academia), it is the least recorded.

##### 4.3.5.1 Although informal development is considered the most appropriate method of learning, it is the least recorded



**Figure 4.35 Although informal development is considered the most appropriate method of learning, it is the least recorded**

The network display shown in Figure 4.35 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my personal opinion that although informal development is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs (specific to academia), it is the least recorded. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The above network display illustrates that the separate management of informal development is associated with the difficulty of planning, recording and reporting on informal development to the ETDP SETA. The reason for managing informal development separately from non-formal and formal development is substantiated as follows:

We cannot record mentoring events, unless they respond in such a way. Some of them [line managers] do, they call it on-the-job mentoring or coaching and that we would include in our WSP. But [mentoring or coaching] is the least-recorded development method at our HEI (P34: VT2:9, 89-94). Not because it is not in our hands ... there is no specific strategy because there are too many things [informal development initiatives] going on in this institution; you cannot keep track of them (P11: WF1:25, 214-217). Unfortunately the skills programme [mentorship] would be recorded, however it is rather difficult to record development gained from mentoring or coaching processes (P35: WT1:10, 54-56). Mentoring courses are recorded but not mentoring activities. We can't easily record mentoring or coaching events (P36: XT2:11, 67-69). It could only be recorded if a person went for mentoring or coaching training, not the mentoring process itself (P33: YT1:14, 65-66). It is difficult to capture on the ETDP SETA WSP and ATR template (P33: YT1:24, 114-115).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the conclusion that informal development is not a structured and scheduled event. There is, however, also another reason why informal development is managed separately in HEIs. The following quotations presented are relevant in this regard:

Maybe it's because lecturers do have the opportunity to generate funds for conferences and workshops while the non-academics don't have the opportunity (P32: RT2.:16, 90-109).

It's [informal development] driven by the school (P27: UF1:19, 204-217). Our levy funds are organised into different pools, i.e. those that are included in bursary funding, those included in training and development funding, and those used for external seminars or other specialised short courses (P37: UT2:25, 234-239). Deans and directors budget and pay conference fees, transport, travel and accommodation from faculty or divisional budgets as allocated by central finance (P34: VT2:10, 98-99). Then there are overseas conferences, there is a separate budget (P11: WF1.txt - 11:10, 109-110). The conferences they fund out of the money that they raise as departments ... millions have been put into development support in that regard [she referred to discussions and mentor support in this context] (P31: XT1:3, 48-52). They don't feel like they have to ask HR for funds when they go to conferences, they go to overseas workshops there, they just do it on their own there. (P20: ZF1:6, 171-176). Attendance of conferences and presentation at conferences, both are intrinsically part of academics' work to attend

and present papers (P27: UF1:18, 194-204). Maybe it's because lecturers do have the opportunity to generate funds for conferences and workshops while the non-academics don't have the opportunity (P32: RT2.:16, 90-109). Attendance of conferences ... that is decentralised, each school will fund out of its research funds (P27: UF1:18, 194-204).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the contention that informal development fits predominantly in the context of academic employee development. In addition, informal development is managed separately in HEIs because it is not structured learning and takes place in faculties and departments. It is therefore understandable that it is difficult to record. The following quotations selected support the contention that informal development is difficult to capture in HEIs' WSPs and ATRs:

The actual mentor training such as the internal short courses are recorded on our WSP or ATR, but not the mentoring event itself. We cannot record mentoring events, unless they respond in such a way. Some of them [line managers] do, they call it on-the-job mentoring or coaching and that we would include in our WSP. But [mentoring or coaching event] is the least-recorded development method at our HEI (P34: VT2:9, 89-94). Not because it is not in our hands ..., there is no specific strategy because there are too many things [informal development initiatives] going on in this institution, you cannot keep track of it (P11: WF1:25, 214-217). Unfortunately the skills programme [mentorship] would be recorded, however it is rather difficult to record development gained from mentoring or coaching processes (P35: WT1:10, 54-56). Mentoring courses are recorded but not mentoring activities. We can't easily record mentoring or coaching events (P36: XT2:11, 67-69). It could only be recorded if a person went for mentoring or coaching training, not the mentoring process itself (P33: YT1:14, 65-66). It is difficult to capture on the ETDP SETA WSP and ATR template (P33: YT1:24, 114-115).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the contention that informal development is difficult to plan, record and report. This matter was also discussed at the focus group meeting. One of the SDFs argued:

Coaching is for academics and more predominantly interventions such as conferences, workshops, collaborative work seminars. In both cases a little bit more to the academic side, because it is funded from their own departmental funds (P 1:12, 166-167). *Do you all agree with her?* Yes all 6 SDFs (P 1:8, 131-135). *Why is informal development important?* Some of them are for CPD points, OK or for career pathing. *If we say that is important can we capture these kinds of interventions?* No, not really. *Why?* It is the least tangible development that we have, it is rather shaded away when it comes to captured development (P 1:9, 137-143). Mentoring, learning events are not easily captured – sometimes it takes three years and this extends beyond a SETA reporting time-line (P 1:13, 175-178).

The above-mentioned quotation substantiates yet again, the conclusion that informal development is the means of development, although predominantly in the academic staff category. Since informal development is not easily planned and recorded, it is

understandable that informal development is sparsely reflected in HEIs' WSPs and ATRs.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices, namely that although informal development is considered an appropriate method of learning in HEIs, it is the least recorded in HEIs. Informal development is, therefore, sparsely reflected in HEIs' WSPs and ATRs. This finding matches the non-empirical data analysis with regard to informal development considered as an appropriate method of learning in HEIs as far as staff development for academia is concerned. For example:

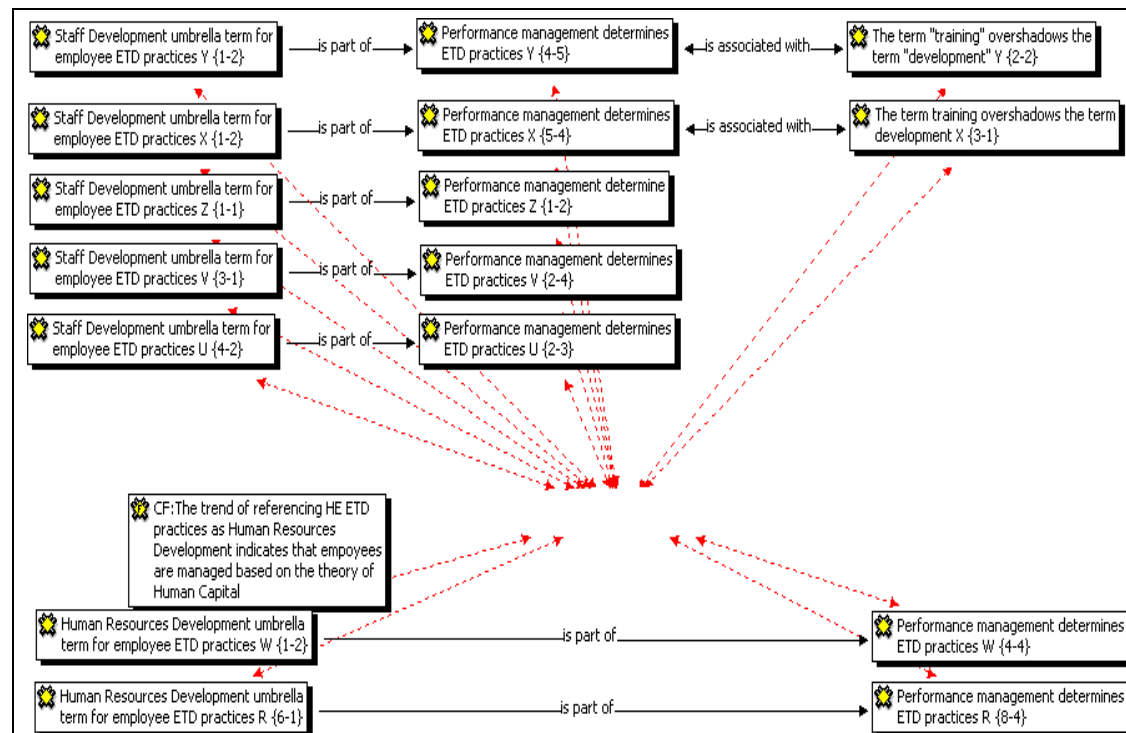
The learning gained through informal social practices has become pivotal to the learning process in HEIs Allen *et al.* (2003) and Blackwell *et al.* (2003). Similarly, Shahnaz *et al.* (2005) report on a case study at the Bowling Green State University (Ohio) on the development needs of 92 departmental chairs. The response rate of 60% to a questionnaire survey revealed that the departmental chairs believed that the most successful training interventions were round-table discussions or off-campus speakers from other higher education institutions (Shahnaz *et al.*, 2005:588) (P1: 924, 1182-1187).

The empirical findings substantiate, however, the conclusion that informal development is not only considered an appropriate method of learning (in the academic staff development category) but also not easily planned and recorded.

I now present the penultimate network display relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices. The following network display illustrates that the trend of referencing ETD practices as human resources development in HEIs indicates that employees are managed on the basis of the theory of Human Capital.



#### 4.3.5.2 The trend of referencing ETD practices as human resources development practices indicates that employees are managed on the basis of the theory of Human Capital



**Figure 4.36 The trend of referencing ETD practices as human resources development practices indicates that employees are managed on the basis of the theory of Human Capital**

The network display shown in Figure 4.36 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my understanding that the trend of referencing ETD practices as human resources development indicates that employees are managed on the basis of the theory of Human Capital. The network display illustrates that performance management in HEIs determines ETD practices, and is therefore a cause of either the term “development” being overshadowed by the term “training” (in two HEIs) or for human resources development being used as the umbrella term for employee ETD practices (in two HEIs). The following selected quotations indicate that the term “human resources development” is used in two of the seven participating HEIs, as follows:

Human resources development is the broad term that refers to the development of human resources by means of training (P 1: RD1:7, 80-82). *Why human resources*

*development?* It's human resource development because it covers the whole aspect of training and development (P21: RF1:4, 12-16). We are moving towards changing it now to the term human resources development. *Why?* We are calling it human resources development ... that is the trend in terms of benchmarking (P11: WF1:4, 21-25).

The following selected quotations indicate that performance management is essential to determining employee ETD practices in all seven participating HEIs:

Human resources development initiatives will be based on a thorough needs analysis in the performance management process (P1: RD1:11, 110-113). It is the responsibility of line management to approve the developmental needs of the staff members, as identified by means of the performance management process (P1: RD1:23, 122-124). The outcomes of the intended programme are directly aligned with the performance output agreement of the applicant (P3: RD3:4, 45-46). The employee development cycle should culminate in an annual performance appraisal (P22: VD1:14, 288-290). Training needs must be identified ... at the beginning (planning phase) of the performance management cycle (P9: WD1:13, 442-448). Personal Development Plans and Accelerated Development Programmes must be reviewed on a quarterly basis as part of the quarterly review of the employee's performance (P 9: WD1:19, 394-397). Monitor and identify, by means of a Performance Management Process and other review procedures, areas of their work that could be assisted by training and development activities (P12: XD1:14, 107-109). And that is actually captured in a performance management development system (P29: XF1:11, 44-47). We use the performance management system to acquire skills gaps that are identified through performance (P18: YF1:3, 15-17). It starts from a skills audit on performance management. It all starts from there, doing the audit, skills analysis, all that I'm responsible for (P20: ZF1:19, 100-101).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the inference that HEIs use performance management systems to manage the performance of their employees, including the identification of ETD needs. Against the background of the two SDFs who referred to HEIs' employee ETD practices as human resources development and the substantiation that all seven participating HEIs implemented performance management systems as a means of managing employees' performance, these clearly indicate that HEIs promote the perception of managing employees based upon Human Capital Theory. During the focus group interaction, one of the SDFs argued as follows:

My institution checks a lot, in terms of – if you go to a training programme, report back to us, as if return on investment is the overriding emphasis (P 1:1, 11-13). *However, you all said earlier that in not one the HEIs are return on investment measured.* Yes Louw, but we are not talking about return on investment, rather you know that people are required to report back after a learning intervention, not only verbally but also on their performance management systems so as to be monitored. *Is this visible in all our HEIs?* Yes to a greater extent (P 1:1, 11-13).

This implies that there is reason to believe that HEIs' employees are perceived as a resource to be used for achieving the goals of HEIs. In §4.2 (Figure 4.7) I present the

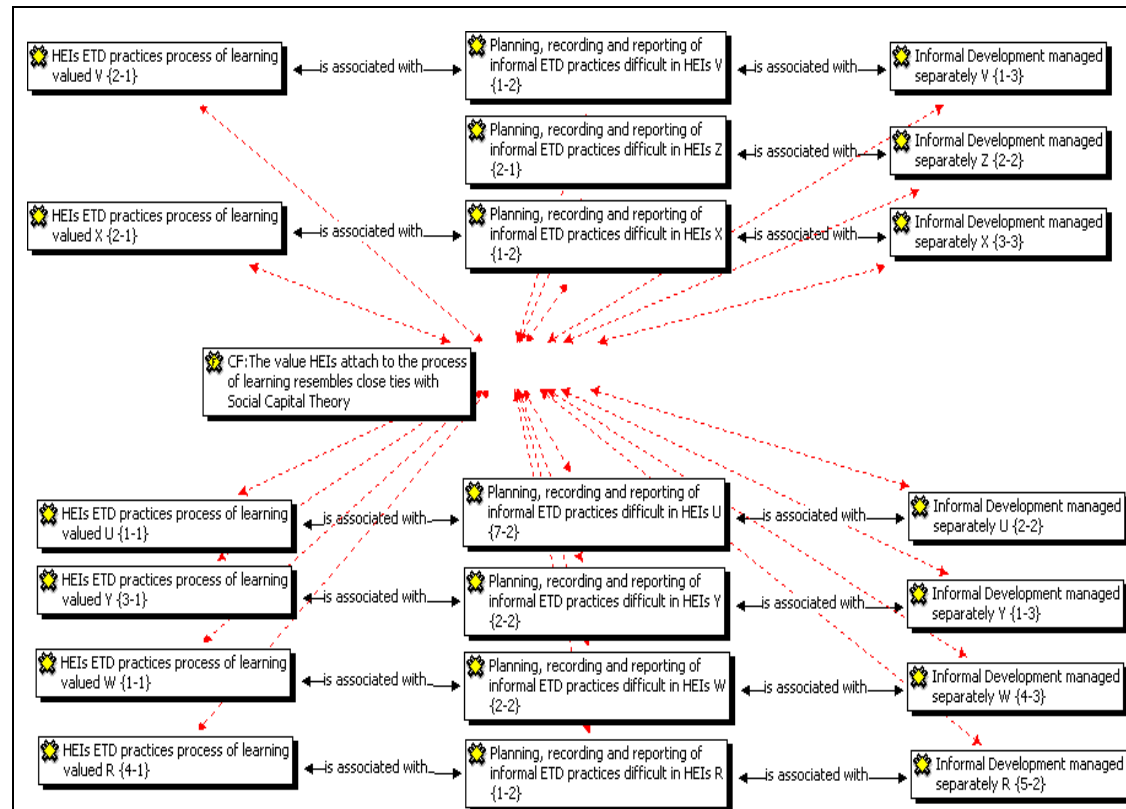
quotations selected from my non-empirical data analysis below. I substantiate the theory of Human Capital as follows:

Proponents usually give a one-sided view of Human Capital, based upon the perceived economic benefit as the prime value of this theory, while downplaying human behaviour and the interests of those who participate in education (Baptiste, 2001:198; Quiggin, 2000: 136). (P1:932 1540-1544). Livingstone (1997:9) argues: "Human Capital equates workers' knowledge levels with their levels of formal schooling... [to] estimate individual economic returns to learning." Lin (1999:29) postulates that the proponents of Human Capital Theory portray the value of investment in education as an ideology for influencing the masses to internalise the values of this theory (P1:933 1544-1548). Lin (1999:29) argues that Human Capital Theory is a capitalist scheme embedded in society, where the dominant class calls for investment to be made in human beings to capture the surplus value generated. Lin (1999:29) comments that the term "capital" in Human Capital Theory is highlighted to refer to certain elements. The first element is the surplus value generated and pocketed by the capitalists, and the second element is the investment by the capitalist, with expected returns in a marketplace (Lin, 1999:29). Therefore, Lin (1999:29) asserts that Human Capital Theory is based on the "exploitative social relations between two classes" (P1:934, 1549-1557).

The quotations highlight the inference that the proponents of Human Capital theory perceive humans as a resource to be used for the benefit of someone else, in this case the HEIs. Based on the evidence that HEIs apply performance management, and that there is clear evidence of a growing number of employee ETD practices called human resources development, my opinion is that HEIs are moving towards managing employees on the basis of the theory of Human Capital.

I now present the last network display to illustrate that the value that HEIs attach to the process of learning, indicates that HEIs' ETD approach seems to have close ties with the theory of Social Capital.

#### 4.3.5.3 The value that HEIs attach to the process of learning (informally oriented and self-driven or motivated learning) seems to have close ties with Social Capital Theory



**Figure 4.37 The value that HEIs attach to the process of learning (informally oriented and self-driven or motivated learning) seems to have close ties with Social Capital Theory**

The network display shown in Figure 4.37 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my personal opinion that the value that HEIs attach to the process of learning as well as HEIs' acknowledgement of informal development as a means of development, indicates that HEIs' ETD approach seems to have close ties with the theory of Social Capital. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The above network display illustrates that HEIs value the process of learning instead of the credentialled outcome thereof. Furthermore, informal development is difficult to capture in HEIs, especially for WSP or ATR purposes, since it is managed separately from formal and non-formal development because informal development involves activities such as round-table debates,

networking, mentoring or coaching. My opinion, therefore, is that informal development seems to have close ties with the theory of Social Capital.

Since the SDFs have substantiated my inference that informal development is managed separately from non-formal or formal development in HEIs (refer §4.3.2.5), and that informal development is difficult to capture (refer §4.3.2.8), I now present the quotations selected from each of the seven participating SDFs to substantiate my conclusion about the names that are frequently used to refer to informal development:

It involves conferences, seminars, workshops that are how can I say not considered structured programmes (P21: RF1: 13, 105-105). Conferences for lecturers it has always been there and workshops and mentorship also (P21: RF1:36, 112:113). We have used extensively is coaching. We've got a team of internal trained coaches and we also contract external executive coaches to provide that coaching (P27: UF1:16, 186-191). Attendance of conferences and presentation at conferences. Both of those are kind of intrinsically part of academics' work, attending and presenting papers, and that is also supported (P27: UF1:17, 194-196). Coaching, mentoring (P22: VD1:8, 39-39). Workshops, conferences and seminars, peer learning and assessment, action/group research, mentoring and coaching, on-the-job-training. So we're not actually necessarily the training providers, but in certain instances we do actually provide the training, like mentoring (P24: VF1:3, 18-19). If you're an academic you would go to conferences (P24: VF1:18, 217-221). On-the-job training (P24: VF1:25, 322-327). Mentoring is used to nurture, motivate and stimulate employees to undertake ETD or CPD while coaching for example is predominantly done by line managers, supervisors, team leaders or peers, hence to coach employees what to do on the job (P34: VT2:8, 82-86). Interventions like mentoring, coaching (P11: WF1:7, 87-96). Workshops, conference attendance and seminars (P29: XF1:16, 159-166). Academics are used to the concept of mentoring to help students as in counselling and guiding (P36: XT2:10, 61-63). We include things that are related to teaching, learning, research, um, you know, discussion groups, mentoring action research ... discussions. That would classify as informal development (P19: YF2:31, 321-333). The developments might not be accredited, but they are essential (P19: YF2:32, 335-337). It is more relevant to academics who are dealing with work-based learning (P33: YT1:13, 62-62). Conferences, they go overseas ... workshops there, they just do it on their own there (P20: ZF1:9, 198-199). And I believe there's on-the-job training (P20: ZF1:32, 127-127).

The above-mentioned quotations list the labels that SDFs attach to informal development. This list includes activities such as round-table debates, networking, mentoring or coaching that seem to be based on a learning methodology that pursues learning through the process involved and not through its credentialled outcomes.

During the focus group discussion, one of the SDS argued as follows:

*What do you consider as Informal development?* It is about discussions, brainstorming and reflection that is not time bound (P 1:10, 147-148). We know that we learn more from our peers, much as you can say that it has to go according to the number of credits or hours that we sit there but in that conferences we would be gaining more than the courses that you think you provide internally on the standards that you think. So in a

way it is really shifting us to think twice about informal development. *Do you all concur with what she says?* All heads nodded agreement (P 1: 11, 151-158).

The above-mentioned quotation highlights the fact that informal development is part and parcel of HEIs employee development enterprise. It furthermore indicates that informal development is about debates and round-table discussions with the goal of sharing information. This seems to correspond closely with Social Capital Theory. I presented in §4.2, Figure 4.7.I. I the quotations selected from my non-empirical data analysis, in which I explain the theory of Social Capital as follows:

Social Capital is regarded as the spin-off, by-product or surplus value of human interaction (Crossley, 2006:286; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11,12 and 18 (P1:843, 1749-1750). Social Capital is 'social' because [it] involves people behaving sociably" and "[it] could be described as a form of 'capital' because [it] refers to a resource that produces action" (Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:18; Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2003:2; Gabby and Leenders, 2001:6 (P1:847, 1752-1755). Social Capital Theory refers to an intangible resource which spontaneously accrues during social interaction and serves as the impetus, trigger or motivation to act (Collier, 2003:22) (P1:850, 1767-1770).

The above-mentioned quotations clearly indicate that Social Capital (i.e. trust, commitment or motivation) is the result of interaction between people. This resonates well with the intention of informal learning with regard to staff development that takes place in HEIs.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices, namely that the value that HEIs attach to the process of learning as well as HEIs' acknowledgement of informal development as a means of development, indicate that HEIs' ETD approaches seem to correspond closely with the theory of Social Capital. Based on informal development being justified as the most appropriate method of development for academic staff (the larger employee category of HEIs, refer §2.3.6) and that the methodology applied in informal development resides in group discussions or debates (refer §2.3.6), there is reason to believe that the HEIs' ETD orientation seems to correspond closely with the theory of Social Capital.

In this section I present quotations to substantiate the following:

- Although informal development is considered an appropriate method of learning in HEIs, it is the least recorded. HEIs WSP and ATR consequently



portray a skewed picture of HEIs staff development opportunities provided for employees.

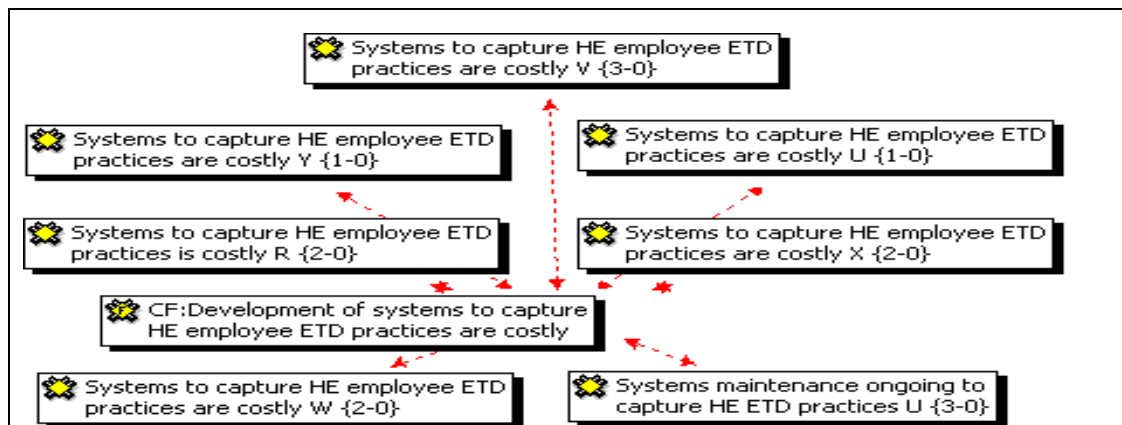
- The growing trend of referencing HEIs employee ETD practices as human resources development points towards employees being managed on the basis of the theory of Human Capital.
- The value that HEIs attach to the process of learning, informally oriented and self-driven or motivated learning correspond closely with Social Capital Theory.

In the following section I present the data analysis relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

#### **4.3.6 Personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs**

My personal opinion is grouped into 13 interrelated themes that are presented in the textboxes linked to the textbox labelled: *CF: Personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs*. The 13 themes displayed are: the development of systems to capture HE employee ETD practices is costly; dissonance between HEIs' employee ETD needs and the aims of the SDA; the government aims to take control of HEIs' employee ETD practices through enforcement of institutional structures; the government, through the SDA, compels HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD to benefit unemployed SA citizens; HEIs have less funds for ETD practices than they had before the implementation of the SDA; limited public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to social disorder between the ETDP SETA and HEIs; The SDA ETD WSP and ATR time-frames differ from HEIs' actual ETD time-frames; the SDA's focus on designated employees could create negative social relations in HEIs; the enforcement of a levy grant system is a sign that government mistrusts HEIs' employee ETD practices; the implementation of the SDA could be perceived as an invasion of institutional privacy; the process of learning is not valued, rather the value attached to certification; the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour; and withholding levy grants would perpetuate government's financial power over industry. Next I present the findings of the empirical data analysis relevant to each of these 13 themes. I now present the first of the 13 network displays to illustrate that the development of systems to capture HE employee ETD practices is costly.

#### 4.3.6.1 Development of systems to capture HE employee ETD practices is costly



**Figure 4.38 Development of systems to capture HE employee ETD practices is costly**

The network display shown in Figure 4.38 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my conclusion that the development of systems to capture HE employee ETD practices is costly. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that five of the participating HEIs perceive the development of systems to capture HE employee ETD practices as costly. In addition, three of the HEIs found the ongoing maintenance of systems to capture HEIs' employee ETD practices challenging. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants substantiate my inference that the development of such system(s) is costly:

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* It's costly and it requires constant maintenance. For any changes made on the template, the system also needs to be amended accordingly (P32: RT2:31, 230-231).

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* ... have to spend huge sums and commit a large number of hours reporting on data which won't really be usefully. Too much detail at a central government level is confusing, probably inaccurate and therefore not much value in directing national policy (P 8: UT1:5, 32-36).

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* We capture the data. Our data management programme or system is the XXX system (P24: VF1:32, 432-433). It is not really difficult to capture our ETD practices. We try to align our ETD interventions to the SETA template requirements using faculty divisional excel spreadsheets, but to get the information from them is somewhat difficult (P34: VT2:19, 173-175). The HEI's IT system processes

do not address the need to capture staff development interventions. In addition the SETAs which are DoL-oriented and HEIs that are DoE-oriented must become more aligned and user friendly in their automated systems. HEIs do not really use technology to increase speed and accuracy in their reporting processes (P34: VT2:24, 200-204).

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* It is not really difficult to capture our ETD practices on the SETA template because it is a matter of dropping figures on paper, but I rather battle with internal IT compatibility problems (P35: WT1:19, 105-107). I am currently using X to capture info and there is as I understand compatibility problems with the SETA systems (P35: WT1:25, 135-136).

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* When I have the information on my desk it is fairly easy to capture it, but to gather the information is another thing (P36: XT2:22, 122-123). Oh yes, systems to capture ETD practices are costly and secondly because of our merger people are confirmed in new positions, so there are plenty of priorities being identified that need to be addressed (P36: XT2:24, 132-135).

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* As the DoL's templates are changing, our systems need to be changed and that needs maintenance (P33: YT1:28, 129-130).

The above-mentioned quotations clearly substantiate the inference that the SDFs perceive the development of an information technology (IT) system or systems to capture ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes as costly. In addition, the information technology system(s) need to be constantly changed to accommodate the ETDP SETAs' WSP or ATR requirements. The following selected quotations substantiate the inference that SDFs experience as a challenge the continuing maintenance of the previously mentioned systems, based on regulatory changes.

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* For any changes made on the template, the system also needs to be amended accordingly (P32: RT2:31, 230-231).

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* It seems to me that even once the systems work and mapping of existing data has been done, the maintenance of this will become a significant component of whoever maintains jobs and will require considerable liaison with recruiters and heads of departments to determine both scarcity of skills and critical skills. It's all madness. It astounds me how the department (or the SETAs) can formulate requirements like these with so little apparent thought to how they will be implemented in large organisations (P8: UT1:9, 52-59). In particular, one of the aspects that emerges constantly, is the problem associated with localising the system for optimal use in the unique South African skills development arena (P37: UT2:37, 355-359). The introduction of the new OFOs is one such example. This will necessitate a review of the current IT Management System in order to ensure that the codes are integrated in all the job profiles that exist in the organisation. This will lead to easier and quicker reporting in accordance with OFO requirements (P37: UT2:37, 355-359).

*What are the challenges that you encounter with the capturing of ETD practices for WSP or ATR purposes?* Already we have received feedback that the OFOs may change again in September this year – as such, with this constant state of flux, it becomes impossible to align the IT system in conjunction with an off-the-shelf IT system in one



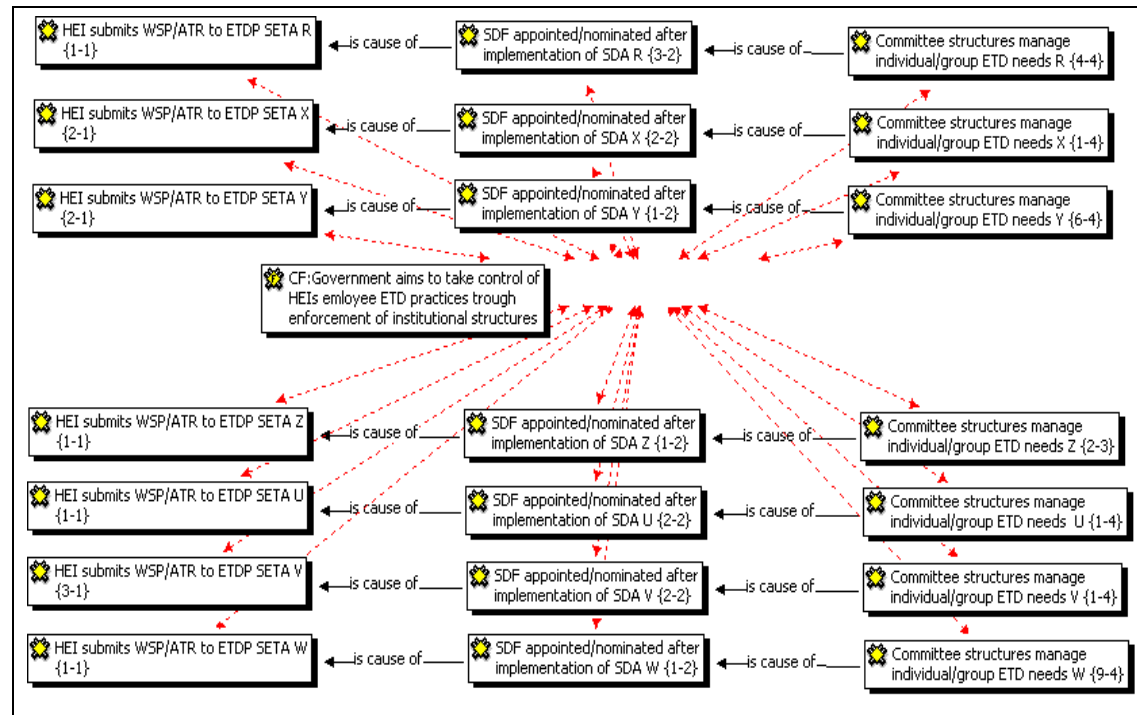
integrative drive. Constant changes – both in the legislative landscape and systems, and in the organisation's internal functioning – mean that the overarching IT system is always playing catch up – and naturally, this comes at great financial cost! (P37: VT2:38, 359-370).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate my conclusion that not only are the development and implementation of an IT system or systems costly but also that they must continuously be changed to accommodate the statutorily required changes to the WSP or ATR.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs, namely that the development of systems to capture HE employee ETD practices is costly. This finding substantiate the conclusion that the costs of implementing and maintaining such systems by implication reduces the actual budget available for ETD practices (refer §4.2.5).

I now present the second of the 13 network displays to illustrate that government aims through the implementation of the SDA to take control of HEIs' employee ETD practices by enforcing institutional structures.

#### 4.3.6.2 Government aims to take control of HEIs' employee ETD practices through enforcement of institutional structures, hence promoting the perception that government mistrusts HEIs' employee ETD practices



**Figure 4.39 Government aims to take control of HEIs' employee ETD practices through enforcement of institutional structures, hence promoting the perception that government mistrusts HEIs' employee ETD practices**

The network display shown in Figure 4.39 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my conclusion that government aims through the implementation of the SDA to take control of HEIs' employee ETD practices by enforcing institutional structures. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that as a result of the implementation of the SDA, HEIs submit their WSP and ATR to the ETDP SETA, that SDFs have been nominated or appointed and committee structures implemented to manage HEIs' ETD practices.

I now present the following quotations selected from each of the research participants to substantiate my conclusion that HEIs submit their WSP and ATR to the ETDP SETA:

*Do you submit your WSP and ATR to the ETDP SETA?* This would include the submission of our WSP and ATR to the SETA (P 1: RD1:1, 34-37).

*Tell me about your responsibilities.* My responsibilities surround the entire skills development process at the University, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting on all staff development matters in the institution to the ETDP SETA (P27: UF1:34, 11-14).

*Tell me about your responsibilities.* My task is to ensure compliance with the skills legislation in terms of submission of WSB and ATR, to recover the skills levies [from the ETDP SETA] (P24: VF1:39, 9-10). In terms of the ETDP SETA we have not just tried to recover on mandatory grounds, we have also tried to claim from discretionary grants and we have tapped into what are the SETA targets (P25: VF2:6, 14-17). Our discretionary funds pay for specific development interventions as per ETDP SETA allocations, for example ABET, learnerships or internships [predominantly support or admin employees] (P34: VT2:26, 43-46).

*Tell me about your responsibilities.* The Work Skills Plan must serve in the Training and Development Committee and subsequently be submitted to the ETDP SETA in the format prescribed by the SETA (P 9: WD1:30, 496-498).

*Tell me about your responsibilities.* Workplace skills plan that needs to be submitted to the ETDPSETA on an annual basis (P12: XD1:16, 73-74). My responsibilities are as the SETA requires that I do the skills development and ensure that the implementation does take place and to submit the reports to the SETA. And also facilitate the needs that they identify to ensure that they do take place (P30: XF2:16, 9-12).

*Tell me about your responsibilities.* Support skills that address sector-wide development areas as identified by the ETDP SETA (P16: YD1:8, 38-39). In terms of the formal side of skills development, it is to prepare the WSP, or Workplace Skills Plan, and also to report on training that takes place (P18: YF1:6, 11-13).

*Tell me about your responsibilities.* When the money comes from the ETDP SETA here it used to go to finance and when I wanted to train people sometimes I would find there was no money. I knew, I would know that money came from, because I submitted the WSP, I submitted the ATR (P20: ZF1:31, 301-305).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the inference that HEIs submit their WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA. This is a sign that HEIs acknowledge subordination to the control mechanism of the government. In addition, I now present quotations that demonstrate that HEIs, in addition to submitting their WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA, have appointed or nominated an SDF (requirement of the SDA). For example:

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X?* I'm the Skills Development Facilitator of the University and my major responsibility is to look at the staff development the ... staff development, human resources development of the staff members and skills development initiative, from the SETA side (P 6: RT1:1, 4-8). *Since when?* Since 2003 (P21: RF1:1, 5-5).



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*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X? and since when?* I have been in this position [Skills Development Facilitator] for five years now. Just short of five years (P27: UF1:1, 4-4). Um, my, the full title of my post is Senior Training Manager and Skills Development Facilitator. So my responsibilities surround the entire skills development process at the University, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation and reporting on all staff development matters in the institution. So, it's provision as well as all the administrative processes surrounding it (P27: UF1:2, 10-15).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X? I am. Since when?* Since I began at the University, which was in 2005 (P24: VF1:1, 4-5). All right. At the moment, Louw, I'm between portfolios so at this point in time actually that question is not totally relevant just to me but what I will do is explain to you how as team leader in HR of training and development, what that role entails (P23: VT1:1, 4-7).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X? Ai yes. Since when?* Since 2003 I have been the SDF (P11: WF1:1, 7-7). First in the acting position '98 to 2003, then permanent since 2003 up till now (P29: XF1:1, 11-12).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X? Yes, since 2001, since it started, actually long* (P18: YF1:1, 7-7).

*Are you the Skills Development Facilitator of X? I qualified as the Skills Development Facilitator last year that is 2006. But I've been doing the job without the qualification for just for the experience. Since when?* This is now my third year (P20: ZF1:1, 7-9).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate my inference that HEIs comply with the prescriptions of the SDA with regard to the appointment or nomination of an SDF. All seven participating SDFs were appointed/nominated after the implementation of the SDA. This is another example that HEIs acknowledge the control mechanism of the government. This also indicates, however, that government mistrusts HEIs' ETP practices. A person should, therefore, be nominated to serve as the link between government and the institution. In addition, I now illustrate that committee structures (the establishment of a Skills Development Committee is a legislative requirement) were also introduced in HEIs after the implementation of the SDA:

The Skills Development Committee (SDC) remains the mechanism for gaining legitimacy for, and assuring the quality of learning and development at institutional level (P 1: RD1:21, 254-256). Each and every department, support department and faculty has got a Human Resources Development Committee with representation from management and unions. Those committees identify collective [training needs] and fund individual training needs in their faculties or departments (P21: RF1:23, 196-200).

Our so-called training committee which is required by the legislation and regulations is not called a training committee, it's called the staff development consultative forum and so, you know, it's just a different approach (P27: UF1:4, 28-41). Our Training and Development Committee assists with the development of the Workplace Skills Plan, that informs all employees on the development of the Workplace Skills Plan, implementation and progress of the Workplace Skills Plan and Report (P 9: WD1:29, 343-352).

At this University our Policy on Staff Training and Development determines that we have to appoint a Training Committee according to the Skills Development Act to

develop a Workplace Skills Plan in support of the University's strategic initiatives and objectives that would provide a blueprint from which co-ordinated and coherent staff development activities in all sectors of the University could proceed (P12: XD1:13, 78-84).

Our Skills Development Training Committee (SDTC) will, on an annual basis, review the targets, costs and any other elements of the Skills Development Policy that need to be updated or aligned with the needs of the University or requirements of legislation (P16: YD1:9, 42-45). In addition, the Skills Development Training Committee of the University will determine the training needs of the University and record these in the yearly WSP, which will also set annual targets of priority training needs of the University (P16: YD1:11, 54-57).

People in HR responsible for training and development and with union representatives as other stakeholders, I must say all, let me say from the two campuses are responsible for sort of drawing up and discussing the policies. I remember there was also some independent body, I just forgot the name, that was hired by the University, who convened all those workshops that we had (P20: ZF1:21, 36-41).

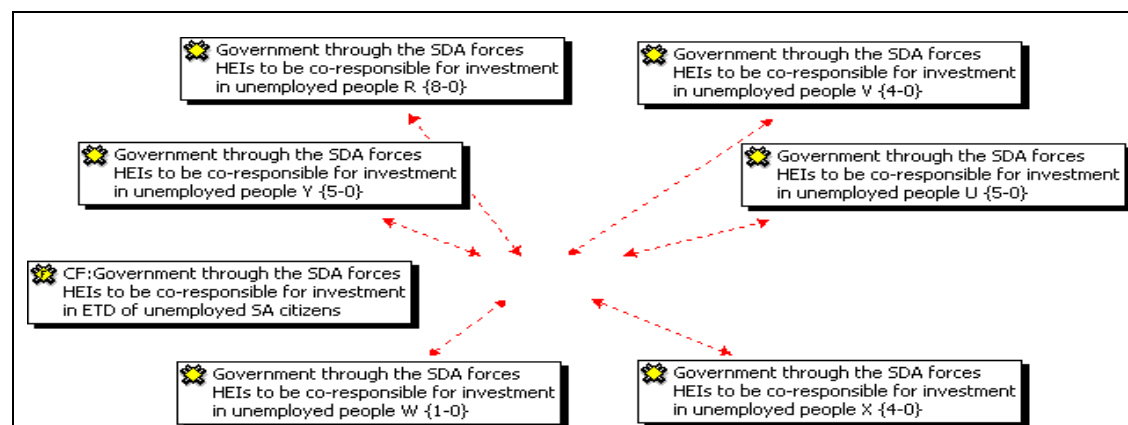
The above-mentioned quotations clearly demonstrate that committee structures were established after the implementation of the SDA.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs, namely that government seems to aim through the implementation of the SDA to take control of HEIs' employee ETD practices by enforcing the establishment of institutional structures. The above-mentioned quotations match my personal understanding that government, with the implementation of the SDA, intends to take control of HEIs' employee ETD practices. Employers are, for example, required to consult with employee representatives on matters dealt with in the SDA (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) (P1:84, 406-407). The SDA furthermore requires the establishment of an institutional Skills Development Committee to serve as a consultative forum regarding the implementing and reporting on workplace skills plans (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) (P1:91, 426-429). In addition, the SDA requires *inter alia* the: "appointment by employers of workplace skills development facilitators" (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) and that employers should consult with employee representatives on matters dealt with in the SDA (Republic of South Africa, 2004:26) (P1: 338, 404-407). The above-mentioned quotations also substantiate the conclusion that HEIs acknowledge subordination to the control mechanism of the government. The enforcement of institutional structures is also an indication that the government seems to mistrust HEIs' employee ETD practices. Against this background, I therefore substantiate my personal opinion that government through the implementation of the SDA, not only aims to govern the ETD

practices of HEIs, but that this is also an indication that government seems to mistrust HEIs' employee ETD practices. I do not believe that government would legislate that HEIs should appoint a specific person to act as the link between HEIs and the relevant SETA and in addition require that HEIs submit their WSP to the SETA if government trusted HEIs' employee ETD practices.

I now present the third of 13 network displays to illustrate that government through the implementation of the SDA compels HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD for unemployed SA citizens.

#### 4.3.6.3 Government through the SDA compels HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD for unemployed SA citizens



**Figure 4.40 Government through the SDA compel HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD for unemployed SA citizens**

The network display shown in Figure 4.40 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X and Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the finding that government through the implementation of the SDA compels HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD for unemployed SA citizens. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that the SDFs view the implementation of the SDA as government's means of expecting HEIs to be co-responsible for investing in the ETD of unemployed SA citizens. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

*We as HE contribute to the development of unemployed South Africans with the 20% levy, why? We now train our research or teaching assistants [students], they are as yet*



unemployed (P 6: RT1:31, 171-174). *So what you are doing is using your internal funds for training the unemployed?* Yes but we can claim it back through the discretionary grant window of the SETA. (P 6: RT1:31, 171-174).

*What does your institution provide to further the development of unemployed South Africans if you consider the 20% levy, that is not rebatable?* Our understanding is that the pool of NSF funds which we contribute to training the unemployed. Based on this understanding we support this objective (P26: UD2:12, 190-198). In fact, how would the NSA and SETAs then derive funds from which to operate at a national and sectoral level if we are not levied? *[question posed by the SDF]. And in terms of what your institution provides with regard to the unemployed?* We have lots of black people resigning from this University every year, because we had done such a good job of developing them and preparing them for working elsewhere. Many of our academics, many black staff come in and go out at a rapid rate. So we are contributing to equity development (P28: UF2:15, 105-115).

*We as HE contribute to the development of unemployed South Africans with the 20% levy, why?* The intention of the White Paper as far as I was concerned was to integrate and to create a skilled nation while at the same time looking at economic factors, political factors, social factors and so on (P24: VF1:49, 412-415). Hence, we have also tried to claim from discretionary grants and we have tapped into what are the SETA targets, what are the national skills development strategy targets that the SETA needs to meet and therefore let's see if we too can help increase the skills pools out there (P25: VF2:8, 15-19).

*We as HE contribute to the development of unemployed South Africans with the 20% levy, why?* I think we all pick up ... to further the skills of all South Africans (P11: WF1:55, 363-364).

*We as HE contribute to the development of unemployed South Africans with the 20% levy, why?* The SDA is about to embrace the national imperatives of unemployment and to uplift the literacy level so that they can apply for jobs that would put them in a better financial position than currently. The academics are already literate, but there are people in the support staff who are not formally accredited, that they get certified or get their papers (P36: XT2:30, 81-85). *What you are saying is that you don't need to support the development of our academics because they are qualified?* *[no response]*

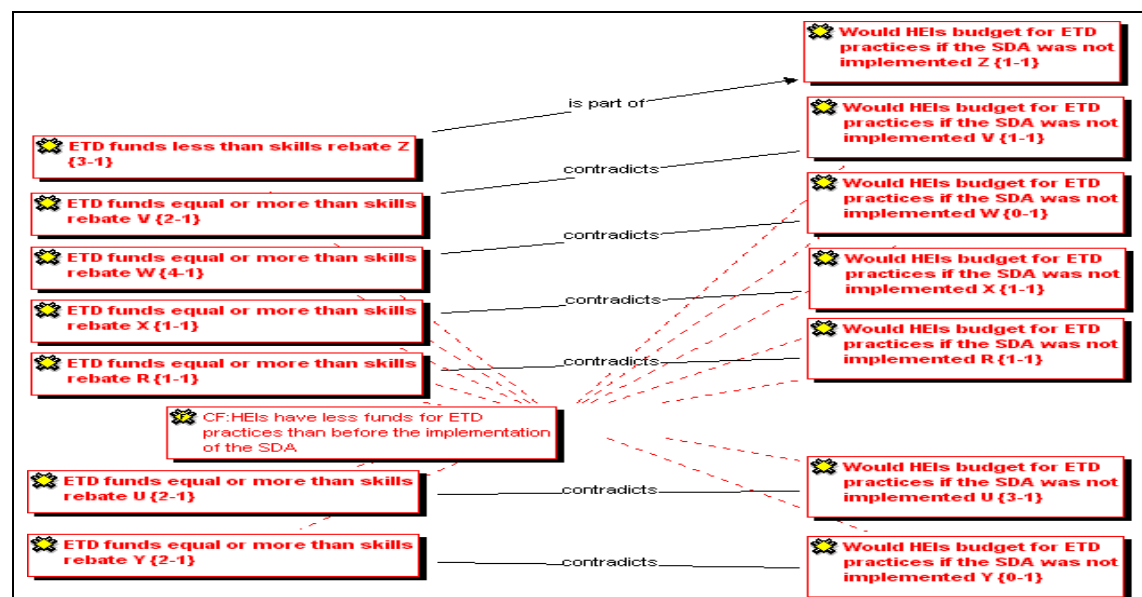
*We as HE contribute to the development of unemployed South Africans with the 20% levy, why?* Then there would be the other leg of it [SDA], which is to contribute to the national and the sector needs. You know, skills are a problem, nationwide, not only in our institution, so... *HE must or shouldn't contribute?* ... We contribute towards a bigger, you know, skills imperative (P19: YF2:81, 8-13). *Why?* To address skills shortages and reduce unemployment, in other words it is from a national skills development perspective (P33: YT1:17, 78-79).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate my inference that HE contributes to the ETD of unemployed South African citizens. During my interaction with the SDFs I felt as if I were the only person who perceived the implementation of the SDA as the government's means to compel HEIs to contribute to the development of unemployed South African citizens. The reason for this feeling was that I could not change our debate from HEIs' contribution to SA's unemployed citizens to the effects of this contribution. I deliberately refrained from confronting the SDFs with my personal opinion in this regard, and instead endeavoured to establish whether they

acknowledged that HEIs contributed to the development of unemployed SA citizens. The reason was that I realised during my discussion that it would be meaningless to ask for the SDFs' opinions as to whether they perceived the 20% levy as the government's means to compel HEIs to contribute to the ETD of unemployed SA citizens, because the levy is a statutory requirement. In fact, I was rather astounded to note the SDFs' support in this regard, as if HEIs ought to pay the above-mentioned 20% levy. Based on the SDFs' acknowledgement that HEIs must, by law, contribute to the development of unemployed SA citizens and that HEIs provide training programmes to certain students (who are not yet employed) who would act as assistants to lecturers, my opinion, therefore, remains that the government seems to compel HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD for unemployed SA citizens.

I now present the fourth of 13 network displays relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. The following network display illustrates that HEIs have less funds for ETD practices than before the implementation of the SDA.

#### 4.3.6.4 HEIs have less funds for ETD practices than before the implementation of the SDA



**Figure 4.41 HEIs have less funds for ETD practices than before the implementation of the SDA**

The network display shown in Figure 4.41 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g.

6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the finding that HEIs have less funds for ETD practices than before the implementation of the SDA. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*™ can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that six of the seven participating HEIs have equal or more funds than what they receive as skills rebate from the ETDP SETA. One HEI (Z) has, however, less funds than the skills rebate available for employee ETD practices. The network display also illustrates, however, that all seven SDFs noted that if the SDA had not been implemented, the funds available for HEIs' ETD practices would have been less than the funds currently available after the implementation of the SDA. In other words, the actual funds available for HEIs' employee ETD practices after the implementation of the SDA amount to more than what they were accustomed to before the implementation of the SDA. I now present selected quotations to substantiate the finding that six of the seven participating HEIs have equal or more funds available for their employee ETD practices than what they were accustomed to before the implementation of the SDA:

*X your funds available for employee development, are they equal to or more than the skills rebate?* We do have our total rebate available to us. In addition we have bursary and conference funds for academics (P21: RF1:46, 317-317).

*X your funds available for employee development, are they equal to or more than the skills rebate?* The mandatory grant is paid to us for our operational expenses, so our expenditure on running of workshops, sending of people on workshops, communication costs here, our printing and stationery, all of that amounts to about the same as the value of our skills development grant, the mandatory grant (P27: UF1:38, 332-341). Then the cost of bursaries for example for further development is well over R15 million per annum. So we get about R3 million in grants and all of that is used for staff development more here at our centre, but all the other strategies, well especially the attainment of qualifications, are over and above that. The University has a central bursary fund which spends, as I say, up to R15 million or more a year, in fact I think it could be 16 or 17 this year (P27: UF1:39, 341-347). *In terms of payroll your ETD funds seems extensive!* Yes, ours are close to 4,6 % of payroll (P27: UF1:30, 353-353).

*X your funds available for employee development, are they equal to or more than the skills rebate?* Our skills development budget is a separate budget, it's like a staff benefit budget. So essentially what we're saying is I do recover our full 1%. However our total training budget or spending, actual spending per annum, has always been a little more than 2% (P23: VT1:13, 204-211).

*X your funds available for employee development, are they equal to or more than the skills rebate?* I checked in most institutions, it is 1% at this [institution] it is 3% that we budget per employee plus the 1% that the University pays to SARS, is separate, it's over and above the 3% that we pay for the Skills Levies Act and when we get back that 50%, it comes back to me in terms of the Skills Development Fund. *In other words your expenditure is more than 4% of operational budget.* Yes, even more (P11: WF1:8, 102-105).



*X your funds available for employee development, are they equal to or more than the skills rebate?* The Staff Development Unit manages the grants obtained from the skills levy according to set criteria (P12: XD1:15, 136-137). With the skills money we will try and take care of those priorities like for instance right now research is the most important priority in the institution. So millions have been put into that. *So it's more than the rebate.* For sure (P31: XT1:14, 49-52).

*X your funds available for employee development, are they equal to or more than the skills rebate?* Five million, for skills development. Much more than our 1% skills levy. When the rebate comes, it offsets part of the budget. We always train for more than we get as a skills rebate (P19: YF2:11, 67-72).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that six of the seven participating HEIs have more funds available for employee development than what they were accustomed to before the implementation of the SDA. One HEI claimed, however, that the funds available for employee development were less than the skills rebate, as follows:

*X your funds available for employee development, are they equal to or more than the skills rebate?* When the money comes from the ETDP SETA here, it goes to finance and when I wanted to train people sometimes I would find there was no money (P20: ZF1:16, 301-306). I would like to know the amount of money that came from the SETA, because I submitted the WSP, I submitted the ATRs and then when I ask for money, people want to go for training and go, there is no money and I would ask why. *But your total fund available for development, isn't that more than the rebate?* I don't know (P20: ZF1:43, 301-306). *However the SDF mentioned* academic staff ... they would organise themselves, I don't know if it is because this is a XXX university, they will organise their courses there, organise it for themselves there (P20: ZF1:5, 167-175).

The previous quotation reveals that funds are available for ETD practices in HEIs, although the funds are decentralised to faculties. It does not, however, reveal whether the amount available for employee ETD practices is more or less than the amount of the levy rebate in that particular HEI. Against the background of the data and the previous quotations presented (that more funds are available than the levy rebate), my personal opinion is that there are grounds to believe that the funds available for staff development in HEIs are greater than the levy rebate that HEIs receive from the ETDP SETA. As previously mentioned, the implementation of the SDA did, however, lead to HEIs' budgeting for employee development practices at a institutional financial level. The following quotations are relevant in this regard:

*Would you have funds for ETD practices available even if the SDA was not implemented?* No, it wouldn't be the situation if this institution didn't rely 100% on skills grants (P32: RT2:27, 210-210).

*Would you have funds for ETD practices available even if the SDA was not implemented?* The payment of the levy raises the operating expenses of institutions whose entire *raison d'être* is in fact education (P26: UD2:7, 168-170). Furthermore, would organisations actually do it if there was no "watchdog" or legislative "push"

mechanisms in place? (P37: UT2:39, 375-378). *You tell me!* I do not believe that a critical issue lies in the wording of the SDA/SDLA or even in the issue of whether it should be 1% over and above any training budgets already in existence. Rather, South Africans and South African organisations still require legislated and mandatory requirements to compel them to implement training and development – if it is not legislated, it will not be done. One can only hope that at some stage, South Africans will start understanding that the system is not there merely for compliance, but that the system is an ideal opportunity for strategic and targeted planning to ensure competitiveness and sustainability in a rapidly changing global marketplace (P37: UT2:40, 387-404).

*Would you have funds for ETD practices available even if the SDA was not implemented?* No, in fact via discretionary grants we are able to provide a wide variety of ETD interventions for our neglected employees of our HEI's admin and support staff (P34: VT2:20, 179-180).

*Would you have funds for ETD practices available even if the SDA was not implemented?* No, even right now that 1% in the institution has stayed, it did not change (P36: XT2:23, 126-127).

*Would you have funds for ETD practices available even if the SDA was not implemented?* I don't believe that more funds would have been available for staff development if the SDA were not implemented. No, not in my case. Because when we budget we do not only focus on the 1%. However, if we never had to pay that 1% I don't see that there would have been an emphasis on redressing past imbalances at all (P35: WT1:20, 111-115).

*Would you have funds for ETD practices available even if the SDA was not implemented?* You know when they come, that was the other thing, when the money comes from the ETDP SETA here, it used to go to finance and when I wanted to train people sometimes I would find there was no money. I know, I would know that money came from, because I submitted the WSP, I submitted the ATRs and then when I ask for money, people want to go for training and go, there is no money (P20: ZF1:16, 301-306).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that at an institutional financial level the amount available for staff development has increased since the implementation of the SDA in at least six of the seven participating HEIs. In other words, these quotations (of the six HEIs) substantiate the finding that funds are internally available to support HEIs' employees ETD needs, but do not include the SDFs' perception that more funds would have been available for HEIs' employee practices from a institutional financial perspective. Only one HEI noted that the 1% levy had increased the operational budget of HEIs: "The payment of the levy raises the operating expenses of institutions whose entire *raison d'être* is in fact education" (P26: UD2:7, 168:170). I had hoped that my interaction with the SDFs (first round of data collection) would result in an understanding that from an institutional macro-financial perspective that the amount of funds available for staff development in fact are less that what could have been available to staff development if the SDA was not implemented, but it did not. I therefore decided to address this issue during my focus

group interaction with the SDFs. During the focus group interaction, one of the SDFs argued as follows:

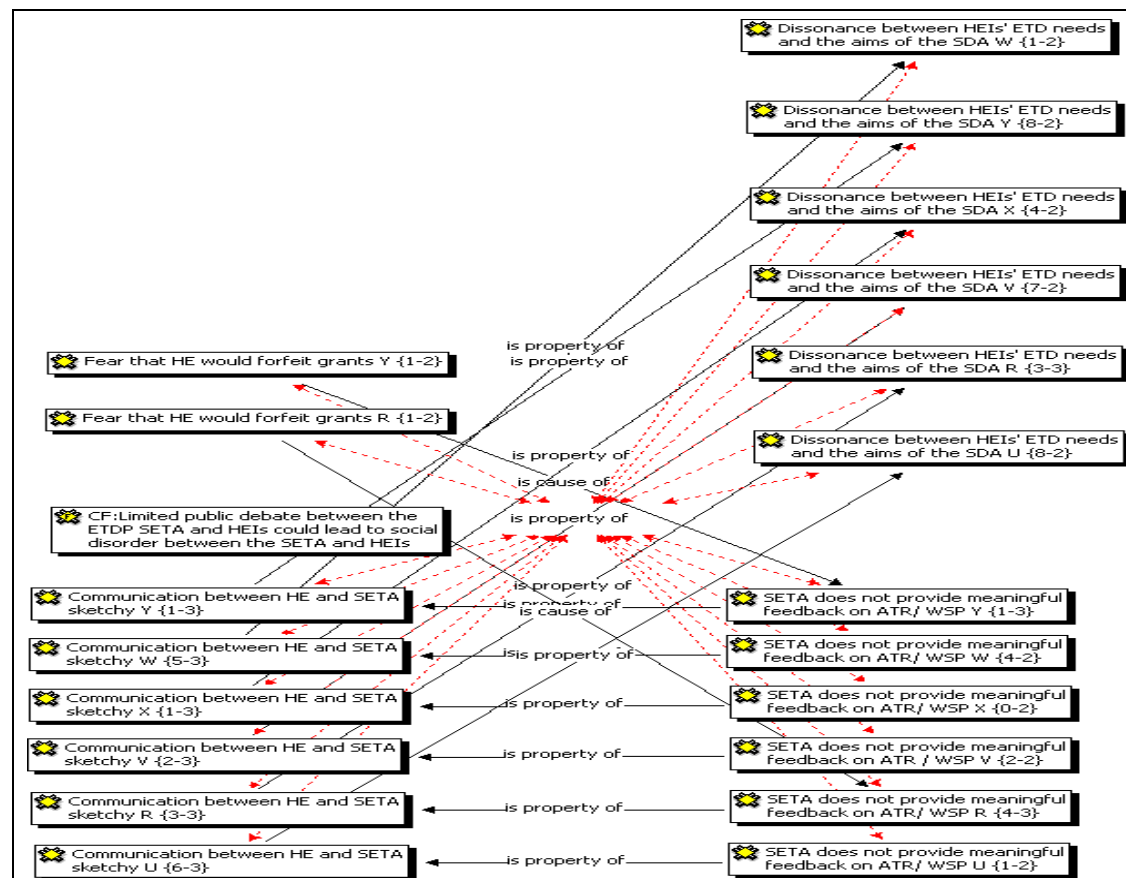
There is no comparison between what we have as budget and what we receive as grants. If you would calculate that, it is more than the 1%. Certainly, the levy come from our operational budget, in other words if we were able to utilise that percentage for internal use, we would have had more. However, most of our projects are funded from the discretionary fund. The discretionary fund is thus most advantageous for HE as long it is addressing the skills targets. *Why?* Well, since our institution traditionally had teaching and research training, we have highlighted admin and support staff as the most neglected groups and that is where the discretionary funds are applied to become better skilled. *But then do you exclude non-designated staff in HEIs?* No, all staff members are catered for under our training and development portfolio. *Do you all concur with this?* All the heads nodded agreement (P 1:16, 192-204).

The postulation of the SDF (acknowledged by all SDFs) made me realise that the SDFs are aware that the funds available for staff development would have been more if the statutory levy had not been implemented.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs, namely that HEIs have less funds for ETD practices than they had before the implementation of the SDA. This finding substantiate my personal conviction that the education and training budget of HEIs has decreased after the implementation of the SDA, because the mandatory grant only equates to 50% of the HEIs' levy amount (P1:773, 599-606). The empirical data analysis, in addition, substantiates the inference that if the statutory levy-grant system had not been implemented, the funds available for HEIs' employee ETD practices would have been more than what is currently available for staff development within HEIs.

I now present the fifth of 13 network displays relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. The following network display illustrates that limited public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to negative social relations between the ETDP SETA and HEIs.

#### 4.3.6.5 Limited public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to social disorder between the ETDP SETA and HEIs



**Figure 4.42 Limited public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to negative social relations between the ETDP SETA and HEIs**

The network display shown in Figure 4.3.1.1 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X and Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the conclusion that the lack of public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to negative social relations between the ETDP SETA and HEIs. The network display illustrates that the dissonance between HEIs' ETD needs and the aims of the SDA is a property of the sketchy communication between HEIs and the SETA. The network display furthermore illustrates that the relatively meaningless feedback from the ETDP SETA is also a property of the sketchy communication between HEIs and the SETA. In addition, the network display illustrates that two of the seven HEIs, based upon the lack of communication and relatively meaningless feedback from the ETDP SETA, fear that they may forfeit their mandatory rebate from the ETDP SETA.

The quotations to substantiate the finding that communication between HEIs and the SETA are sketchy, that HEIs receive relatively meaningless feedback (on the submission of their WSPs or ATRs) and that there is a dissonance between the reasons for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices, has been substantiated above (see Sections 3.3.3.3 and 4.4.4.4). I therefore present the quotations selected from the two universities regarding the fear of losing grants as an additional substantiation of my conviction that the limited public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to negative social relations between the ETDP SETA and HEIs:

Maybe in the future the SETA will evaluate us negatively because you have not trained anyone in these skills [*she referred to the focus of the SDA being predominantly towards designated employees*] (P21: RF1:26, 230-233). We do have our total rebate available to us. In addition we have bursary and conference funds for academics, but if the SETA evaluated our practices against the spirit of the SDA, I wonder if we would receive our mandatory grant in total (P21: RF1:37, 315-317).

Sometimes what we would like to focus on, is not a SETA priority, and with SETAs coming up and setting priorities, because of their sector skills plans and so on, it defeats sometimes the purpose, because their priorities might not be our priorities. Um, and you might find that we want to emphasise a certain type of development direction, which is not the direction that they're taking. When we're suffering and we're not getting people with scarce skills, and then not rebated, that would be a key problem for us (P19: YF2:51, 514-525).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the inference that there is a growing fear in HEIs that mandatory grants may be forfeited. Furthermore, during my interaction with one of the SDFs with regard to the sketchy communication between HEIs and the SETA and the lack of feedback to HEIs after ATR and WSP submission, her view on the lack of communication between HE and the ETDP SETA was that the ETDP SETA should be dissolved. Her comment was as follows:

I think they should dissolve the SETA ... they should give HEIs and all employers the task to spend 1% on the training and development of their own staff. Keep the 1% in their company, still plan and report but keep the funds in the institution according to its own strategic goals, but prove that they spend where, when, how they want to do it (P29: XF1:24, 317-325).

The latter quotation substantiate even further the contention that the lack of public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to social disorder between the ETDP SETA and HEIs. During the focus group discussion, there was consensus that the level of interaction between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to social disorder. The quotation from the focus group discussion is as follows:



The SETA and HEIs by their nature talk about the same thing, it is about human development, but in practice the SETA is in dissonance with us. *Why?* There are things they want to help us with but they don't get to it. *Is it structures or is it communication?* It's about communication, that is why we started with the Skills Development Facilitators Community of Practice. It's now that we will start to debate issues with them (P 1:2, 39-45). Do you experience that HEIs are excluded from the ETDP SETA? The national targets are not for HE, we have seen the OFO codes were national, not for HE (P 1:14, 180-182). In fact the national targets are not for Higher Education, we have seen the OFO codes were national not for HE. *Why do you think it is like that?* In my opinion the SETA is not into supporting the core business of HE institutions at large. The skills funds according to them are specifically for skills initiatives that they will prescribe from a national imperative in a way, but at the same time they expect us to be proactive as well, to come up with our needs. But then they are not into supporting core businesses and therefore institutions should budget for core business training (P 1:21, 180-188). In my opinion the SETA is not into supporting the core business of HE institutions at large (P 1:15, 182-189).

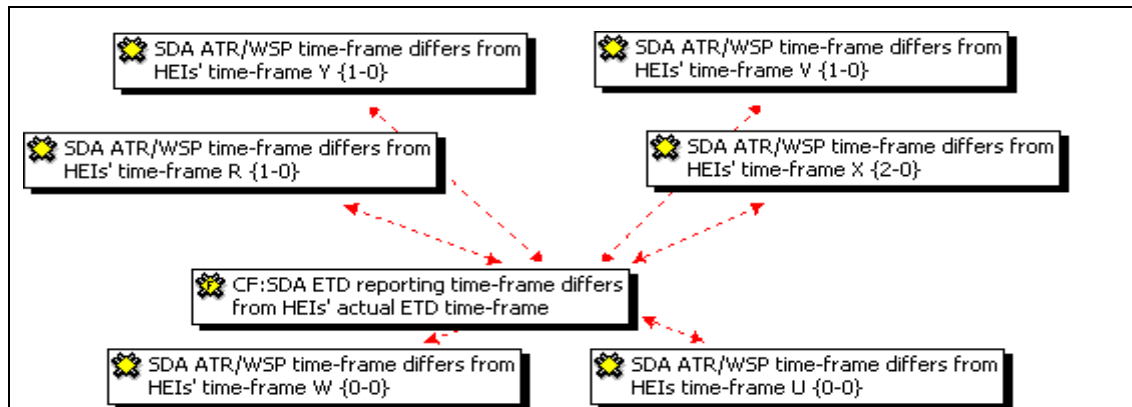
The above-mentioned quotation substantiates my inference about the lack of communication between the ETDP SETA and HEIs.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs, namely that limited public debate between the ETDP SETA and HEIs could lead to negative social relations between the ETDP SETA and HEIs. The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the relatively meaningless feedback from the ETDP SETA and the growing fear of SDFs that HEIs may forfeit grants (based on the lack of communication between HEIs and the ETDP SETA). These findings match the non-empirical data analysis presented in §4.6. I therefore maintain that the lack of public debate with regard to the latter could lead to negative social relations between the ETDP SETA and HEIs.

I now present the sixth of the 13 network displays to illustrate that the SDA's ETD planning and reporting time-frame differs from HEIs' actual ETD time-frame.



#### 4.3.6.6 The SDA ETD reporting time-frame differs from HEIs' actual ETD time-frame



**Figure 4.43 The SDA ETD reporting time-frame differs from HEIs' actual ETD time-frame**

The network display shown in Figure 4.43 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X and Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the inference that the SDA's ETD planning and reporting time-frame differs from HEIs' actual ETD time-frame. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

*Would you comment on the difference between the SDA's and HEIs' employee development time-frame?* It does still remain a challenge in the sense that the year cycles of the University, it differs from the SETA cycle. The SETA talks about March, April - March, whereas for the internal training or the University's year cycle it's from January to December (P 6: RT1:17, 147-151).

*Would you comment on the difference between the SDA's and HEIs' employee development time-frame?* As per the DoE and DoL strategies, an annual needs assessment of all employees should be conducted by University HR: Skills Development and Staff Transformation Unit using the PDP. The idea is that individual employees together with their managers will determine staff development needs. Hence, electronic and manual PDPs will be available for staff development initiatives between June and October of each year. *It's therefore on an annual basis.* Yes (P22: VD1:26, 314-319).

*Would you comment on the difference between the SDA's and HEIs' employee development time-frame?* I don't know what is the reason behind that is because it would be better if it runs according to the academic year (P31: XT1:12, 138-139).

*Would you comment on the difference between the SDA's and HEIs' employee development time-frame?* The difference between the academic year of the SETA and your institution. It does differ and it gives us a lot of problems (P31: XT1:13, 130-132).

*What kind of problems? [no answer].*

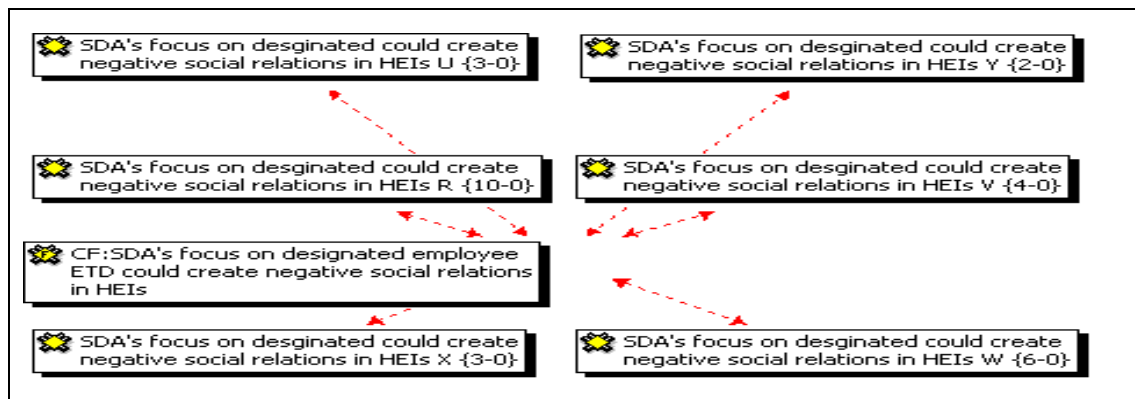
*Would you comment on the difference between the SDA's and HEIs' employee development time-frame? Skills needs in the institution happen on an annual basis. In other words, not the March to April SETA timetable? Head nods in agreement (P18: YF1:5, 13-14).*

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that the SDA's ETD reporting time-frame differs from the HEIs' actual ETD time-frame. Only one of the SDFs, though, elaborated on the problems created by the difference in time-frames. She mentioned that electronic and manual PDPs will be available for staff development initiatives between June and October of each year (P22: VD1:26, 314-319), which indicates that the planning of ETD programmes (determined during the needs analysis phase) are available after the date of WSP and ATR submission. This indicates that the implementation dates of ETD programmes could be different from what was submitted to the ETDP SETA on their WSP and ATR.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs, namely that the SDA ETD reporting time-frame differs from HEIs' actual ETD time-frame. This above-mentioned finding substantiates my conclusion that the SDA ETD reporting time-frame differs from HEIs' actual ETD time-frame (refer §4.2.5). This finding does not, however, provide sufficient data on the problems HEIs encounter in this regard.

I now present the seventh of 13 network displays to illustrate that the SDA's focus on designated employees could create negative social relations in HEIs.

#### 4.3.6.7 The SDA focus on designated employees could create negative social relations in HEIs



**Figure 4.44 The SDA focus on designated employees could create negative social relations in HEIs**

The network display shown in Figure 4.44 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from six of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X and Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the conclusion that the focus on designated employees portrayed in the SDA could create negative social relations in HEIs. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that the SDA focus on designated employees could create negative social relations in HEIs. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

It would be odd to promote one person based on his or race or gender above another just for the sake of equity (P 5: RF2:24, 220-229). [T]his University gives some weight to employment equity candidates (P 5: RF2.txt - 5:25 231-232). Unfortunately, the only thing is what the WSP wants, what it requires, is that there should be a focus on a designated group and it should be distinct in that regard on the WSP (P21: RF1:59, 230-234). I think in these targets white males are excluded simply because they are perceived as previously advantaged. That is why they are excluded (P32: RT2:36, 119-120). In principle it is mainly about prioritisation towards designated groups. Otherwise the SDA would be perceived as discriminating against white males. But then again why did they [DoL] decide on these percentages, why did they not put a small percentage, like for disabled white males, so it means that they did it deliberately (P32: RT2:37, 124-127).

For those previously disadvantaged, we've got, we buy out the time of the academic to enable them to go on sabbatical. So it might be a junior black female staff member who hasn't yet qualified for a sabbatical, so she can't go, but then we pay for a replacement for her for six months. *So what you are telling me is that the focus on designated people hasn't created negative social relations at X?* No, not what I am aware of because we have support structures in place, responsibilities are upheld, even if it is by

someone else. (P27: UF1:48, 298-315). I think it's realistic to foresee that the SETAs will be emphasising things such as equity to a far greater extent. They will only start to look at how many people from designated groups did we train. Now if you simply do not have the equity representation in your institution that is required [sigh] it means that some of our black staff and other disadvantaged groups will have to be professional students (P28: UF2:8, 123-134).

Our intentions behind the implementation of [programmes for designated employees] I don't think we do that [to disadvantage white people] (P25: VF2:11, 38-41). The 1% levy to me is minimal. Perhaps it is not a bad idea to look at budgeting 1% only for designated development, designate being previously disadvantaged if we take the employment equity category (P34: VT2:37, 206-209). *Wouldn't that be seen as discriminatory against white males?* [no answer].

We take in account employment equity people as a feature, previously disadvantaged people and we are looking at succession planning as part of our employment equity strategy. Yes it is broad ... it has to meet all the requirements (P11: WF1:50, 78-81). We have a 2015 agenda for transformation. Part of those objectives ... would be to develop black academics (P11: WF1:52, 140-145). *The focus on disadvantaged employees, do you think that it would create negative employee relations?* [no answer].

*Why do you include strategies in your ETD portfolio to enhance the development of previously disadvantaged employees?* Because the rationale of the Skills Development Act is the upliftment of the people, and is mainly focused on the previously disadvantaged in the lower levels. We all know that, if you look at the priorities at the SETA and the NSDS targets, it's not for people to get Master's and Doctorates. If, if we, if we pump the funds in the Master's and the Doctorates again, the people on the lower levels will not have the opportunities (P29: XF1:26, 265-270). *If it was a white male?* I'm not sure [giggle] (P31: XT1:16, 86-91).

*I note that you emphasise the development of previously disadvantaged employees.* The expenditure of our institution is lopsided in favour of the, the previously disadvantaged, but the thing is, from my perspective, we're already doing that. It's just a different commitment that we have got, uh, now, and the reporting and all that. But, we are doing what we have been doing all along (P19: YF2:22, 178-183).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the conclusion that there are programmes or development strategies that are specifically implemented for designated employees. Based on the above-mentioned interaction I had (as per the quotations presented) there are, however, insufficient grounds to substantiate the conclusion that the focus on the development of designated employees would create negative social relations between the so-called advantaged and disadvantaged HE employee categories. In hindsight, in my face-to-face interviews with the SDFs, I recall a perceived tension between myself and all the SDFs when I asked questions in this regard. I therefore decided to steer away from this topic during my face-to-face interviews with the SDFs. During my focus group interaction with the SDFs, I did mention, though, that I had not come across one of the HEIs that excluded non-designated employees. I present the following quotation selected in this regard:

*I haven't come across in any of your institutions where there is a differentiation between academic, administrative and support staff. Do you concur with my interpretation?* Yes

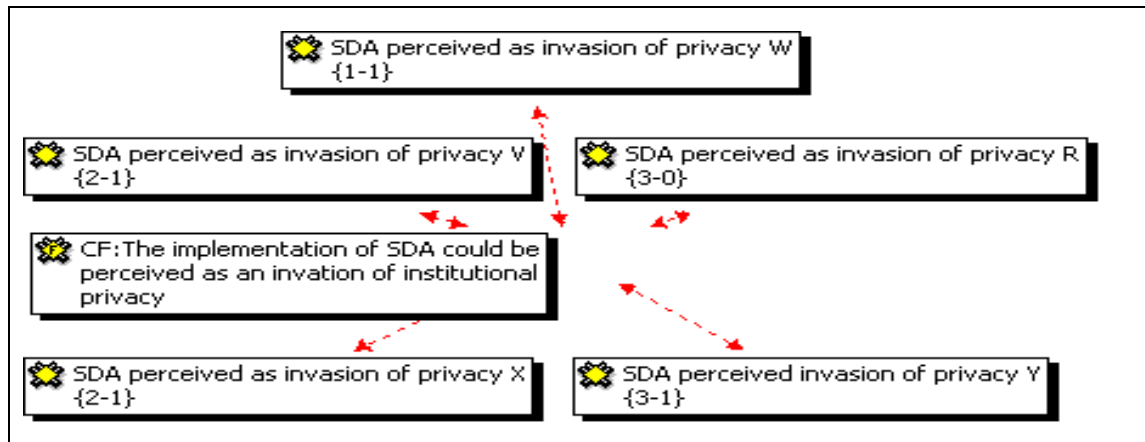
[from all SDFs] (P 1:7, 121-123). *There are people in your institutions who are appointed on the basis of potential, which means that you would open the gates much more for development, hence you don't apply the strict criteria that you traditionally have for staff members.* Everyone concurred (P 1:6, 116-119). *However, would the same rules apply if it was a non-designated staff member who applied for funding?* The skills funds according to the SETA are specifically for skills initiatives that they will prescribe from a national imperative in a way, but at the same time they expect us to be proactive as well, to come up with our needs. The SETA is not into supporting core businesses training and therefore institutions should budget for core business training and leave the 1% for the training of designated employees. Institutions should budget over and above the 1%, should budget for core institution training and development (P 1:15, 182-189). Before the SDA came into place, institutions were budgeting for training, their core business. This is now about designated development. *Why?* It stems from their mandate that they receive from the Department of Labour. They do have their targets derived from the NSDS (P 1:18, 210-214).

I found that the SDFs gave such extensive acknowledgement to the development of designated employees that the SDA actually became a lever that mandated them to promote the development of designated employees. And yet, it is still pretty much lip-service because the only reason why HEIs participate in the SDA-game, is to get back their levies.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs, namely, the focus on designated employees portrayed in the SDA could create negative social relations in HEIs. The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that SDFs gave such extensive acknowledgement to the development of designated employees that the SDA actually became a lever that mandated them to promote the development of designated employees. This finding substantiates my conviction that if the SDFs are not careful, their actions could create negative social relations in HEIs. For example, white males could perceive themselves being excluded from development opportunities within HEIs.

I now present the eighth of the 13 network displays to illustrate that the implementation of the SDA in HEIs could be seen as an invasion of institutional autonomy.

#### 4.3.6.8 The implementation of the SDA could be perceived as an invasion of institutional autonomy



**Figure 4.45 The implementation of the SDA could be perceived as an invasion of institutional autonomy**

The network display shown in Figure 4.45 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from five of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X and Y in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my personal opinion that the implementation of the SDA could be seen as an invasion of institutional autonomy. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that five of the seven participating HEIs viewed the implementation of the SDA as an invasion of institutional autonomy. The following quotations selected from each of the research participants are relevant in this regard:

*R* how will the SETA know that your institution is following the requirements of the SDA?

How are we going to know whether we have achieved those targets or not if from the SETA side they don't monitor that and evaluate that according to our WSPs and ATRs (P21: RF1:52, 307-313). *In other words, at some stage they will come and audit us?* Yes ... as it stands we say stop poking your nose in our business (P32: RT2:38, 147-148). Yes, *I wonder why the SETA is trying to interfere?*

*V* how will the SETA know that your institution is following the requirements of the SDA? Our WSP targets must now match and we must be able to see visible results in your ATR. That's one of the criteria that the SETA say that's one of them ... that your WSP must talk to your ATR. At this point in time I couldn't tell you whether or not it is the case, right? I think though there is somewhat of a move towards bringing it into alignment, because I'm always focused on the issue of and I think that's where to me it is very important as much as it looks ... this part is just as important for me, the authorisation aspect. *Why?* The reason authorisation is important is because a supervisor needs to know this is what my employee is planning to do. I must okay it, my



signature here must mean I have taken it into consideration. *But why must the SETA know about your internal way of managing staff development?* So that they can see if we follow national imperatives (P25: VF2:10, 50-59). I guess that the higher education institution like XX believes that they have always been doing continuous professional development, that there was no reason to now formally institute or instruct managers and employees to actually now take on what we call training and development, and career development. But now we have to report on it ... from the Act's perspective. *We will be vulnerable when we report to them.* We have nothing to hide (P24: VF1:45, 167-171).

*X how will the SETA know that your institution is following the requirements of the SDA?*

I don't think they need to know. They should give HEIs and all employers the task to spend 1% on the training and development of their own staff. Keep the 1% in their company, still plan and report but keep the funds in the institution according to their own strategic goals, but prove that they spend where, when, how they want to do it (P29: XF1:37, 317-322).

*Y how will the SETA know that your institution is following the requirements of the SDA?*

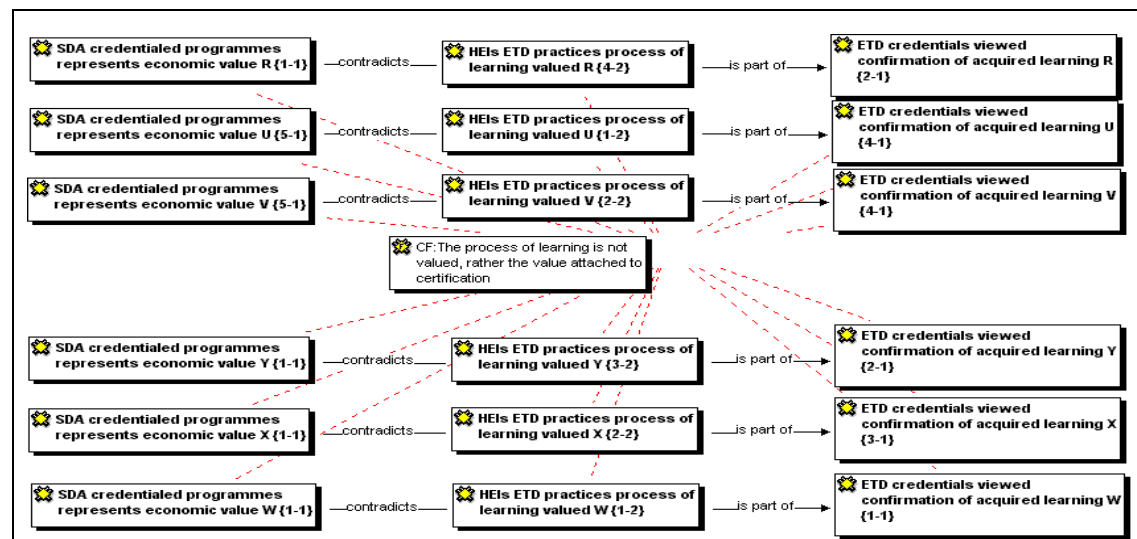
Skills, we, we, we try to centralise skills development, in terms of, um, um, auditing, The SETA will eventually audit us (P19: YF2:85, 258-262).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the inference that SDFs acknowledged that the SETA would evaluate or "audit" (P19: YF2:85, 258-262) the HEIs' ETD practices to evaluate HEIs compliance with regard to the development of designated employees. By implication, the ETDP SETA invades the autonomy of HEIs' ETD practices.

In this section I present the findings (representing the whole group of participants) relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of implementing the SDA in HEIs, namely that the implementation of the SDA could be perceived as an invasion of institutional autonomy. The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the inference that SDFs view the implementation of the aforementioned structures as an invasion of institutional autonomy (P1:761, 422-423).

I now present the ninth of 13 network displays to illustrate that the SDA portrays the view that the process of learning is not valued, instead the value attached to certification.

#### 4.3.6.9 The process of learning is not valued, rather value is attached to certification



**Figure 4.46 HEIs consider the SDA not to focus on the process of learning, rather the value attached to certification**

The network display shown in Figure 4.46 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate the inference that the SDA portrays the view that the process of learning is not valued, instead the value attached to certification. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The aim of this part of my empirical research was to determine whether the value attached to credentialed learning promoted by the SDA is similar to or contradicts the value that HEIs attach to the process of learning. The network display illustrates that the SDA's focus on credentialed programmes representing economic value for the individual contradicts the value that HEIs attach to the process of learning which is essential to ETD practices. The SDA's focus on credentials as a means to achieve individuals' economic prosperity was substantiated by the seven participating SDFs. For example:

[A]ccording to the SETA the reason why they're emphasising accredited courses is that accredited courses provide the individual with a lever to obtain a job at another institution. They actually promote that we get our staff members to go through accredited courses so that they could be recognised at other institutions. In other words, accredited programmes have value for promotion or attaining a better position

(P 6: RT1:39, 103-107). I wonder why the Act is putting a lot of emphasis on investment in credentialled skills development and not knowledge development (P28: UF2.txt - 28:17 47-50). Maybe for lower levels of staff, accredited skills would be applicable for promotion purposes (P28: UF2.txt – 28:18 54-70). The recent ruling of the labour court in the case of the services SETA, who provided, who set up additional requirements to the Act, in this case it was so they would only fund or pay mandatory grants if the employers used accredited providers and gave accredited learning programmes (P28: UF2:19, 118-123). Organisations that are focused on qualifications will look for qualifications. Most other organisations, like Microsoft, like IBM, like PWC, like DeLoitte and Touche do not include higher education, those people focus more on performance and meeting targets, their targets not the credit value of programmes (P24: VF1 24:48, 385-391). The SDA legislates workplace education training and development and it allows employees to gain credits towards a qualification (P34: VT2:33, 4-5). *Why?* In essence I believe that the SDA is to formalise ETD in the workplace so that all employees achieve NQF credits towards qualifications. *Why?* Maybe, to standardise the ETD interventions and programmes of training providers, to provide learning to employees as per the SAQA NQF criteria (P34: VT2:34, 120-123). For designated people, more emphasis is given to furthering their positions in organisations from an economic and quality of life perspective. For this reason the Act highlights credentialled learning as a way to place value on the development that the individual completed (P35: WT1:30, 74-77). *Why?* [no answer]. The SDA is about to embrace the national imperatives of unemployment and to uplift the literacy level of staff so that they can apply for jobs that would put them in a better financial position than currently (P36: XT2:33, 81-83). I think, um, the SDA looks at how can we better the qualifications of people so that they can help themselves (P19: YF2:98, 486-506).

The SDFs perceived the credits or certification that the individual received after successfully completing a learning programme as a confirmation of acquired learning. This is an indication that HEIs do not value credits in terms of economic grains. For example:

Credentials, it is a confirmation that the person has acquired some degree of learning during the intervention and therefore he/she is deemed competent (P32: RT2:11, 64-66). The attainment of formal credentials (or credits) in accordance with the NQF is not critical (P37: UT2:3, 32-36). [The] credit allocation is suitable or necessary (P37: UT2:4, 37-48), the credits might be for the purpose of acquiring the necessary CPD points. The credentials that a person receives after completing a learning intervention and/or qualification is only as good as the depth and meaning of the learning and insights gained in the actual process. It is in the process of learning that an individual assimilates new concepts and insights, and undertakes reflection and self-evaluation. In the absence of high-quality experiential and relevant learning, the attainment of credentials just for the sake of receiving a certificate or commendation, becomes meaningless (P37: UT2:22, 198-204). People who attend training without credentials will not necessarily be less skilled than the person who attends accredited training in terms of competency certificates (P23: VT1:23, 169-180). Most organisations, like Microsoft, like IBM, they don't necessarily take you on because you've got a qualification (P24: VF1:30, 381-392). The credentials that the person receives after completing a programme as well as the process of learning are valuable together with application of learning on the job to improve performance, products and profits for the organisation (P34: VT2:7, 76-78). The process of learning is valuable for change in behaviour and performance improvement, not the certification *per se* (P35: WT1:26, 43-44). The pure root of development is rather benchmarking, networking and not the certification (P29: XF1:34, 161-164). We reward performance, we don't reward attainment of qualifications *per se* (P19: YF2:69, 444-448). The aforementioned perceptions that the SDA focuses on credentials ties in with the publications of various authors. As such, the SDA specifies that providers of workplace learning must be

accredited and the programme outcomes achieved should provide workers with qualifications that are recognised nationally in the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (DoL, SDA No 19420 of 1998) (P2:36 233-237). The organisation that employs highly qualified people will outwit and outperform another company (P1:399 1661-1662).

The above-mentioned quotations substantiate the finding that SDFs HEIs do not value credits in terms of economic gains. I will now present the quotations to substantiate that SDFs value the process of learning in HEIs. For example:

The process is the more valuable, the paper is only the confirmation (P32: RT2:12, 68-69). Learning in itself is a process that cannot be placed in a linear or static box. It is in the process of learning that an individual assimilates new concepts and insights, and undertakes reflection and self-evaluation. In the absence of high-quality experiential and relevant learning, the attainment of credentials just for the sake of receiving a certificate or commendation, becomes meaningless (P37: UT2:21, 197-204). The process of learning is valuable together with application of learning on the job to improve performance (P34: VT2:28, 77-78). We concentrate rather on the process of learning since hopefully it will lead to change in behaviour and performance improvement (P35: WT1:8, 43-44). The process of learning is more valuable than the credentials (P36: XT2:9, 55-57). The process of learning is more important as it addresses the development growth of employees' needs attained through reflection and discussions with peers (P33: YT1:12, 55-57).

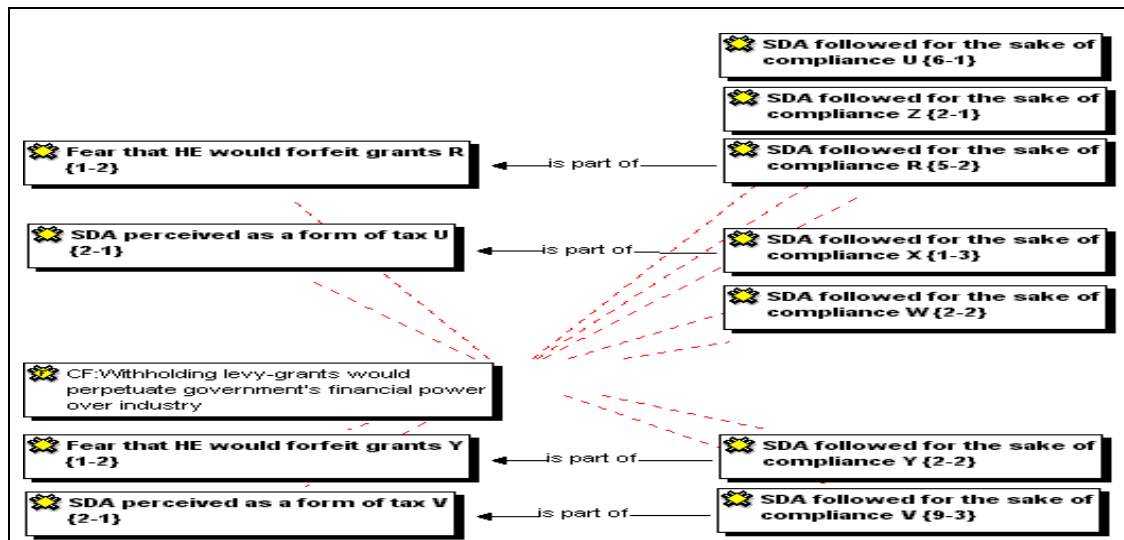
The aforementioned (process of learning as essential to learning) ties in with the views of various authors discussed earlier. For example:

Allen, Blackwell and Gibbs (2003: 66 to 78) note the trend towards the value of the learning process in staff development (P1:555 1122-1123). Ljubljana (1995:68) specifically reports on the staff development practices connected to learning, where learning is acquired from group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery and learning from one another (P1:616, 1079-1082). Social activities (i.e. group discussions, trial and error, reflection, discovery, learning from one another or methods of learning previously referred to as co-operative or active learning) are considered key to the process of learning in HEIs. (P1:617, 1088-1093).

Against this background, I can substantiate that there is a discrepancy or dissonance between HEIs' ETD practices valued for the process of learning and the SDA that values the credentials of a certificate or qualification as a means of furthering the economic prosperity of the individual.

I now present the penultimate network display relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. The following network display illustrates that the withholding the levy grants from HEIs would perpetuate and tighten government's power-grip over HEIs

#### 4.3.6.10 Withholding levy grants would perpetuate government's financial power over industry



**Figure 4.47 Withholding levy grants would perpetuate government's financial power over industry**

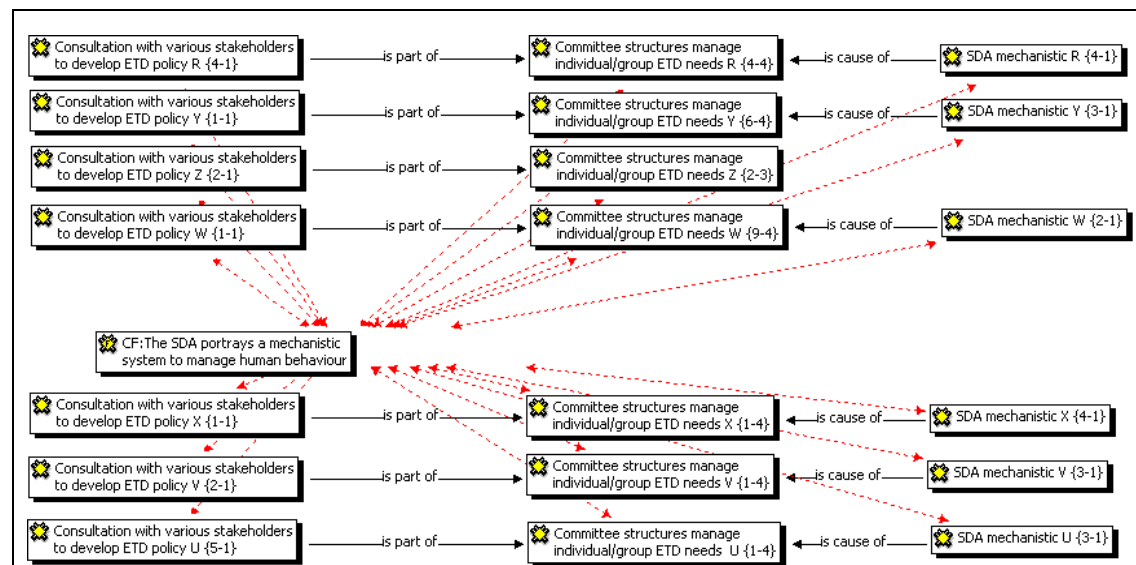
The network display shown in Figure 4.47 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my personal opinion that withholding the levy grants from HEIs would perpetuate and tighten government's power-grip over HEIs. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that all seven of the participating HEIs follow the requirements of the SDA for the sake of compliance to earn levy-grants. The reason that HEIs comply with the requirements of the SDA is illustrated in the network display as part of the quotations of two SDFs (who represent their respective HEI) who perceive the SDA as a form of tax, whereas another two SDFs fear the withholding of mandatory levy grants. The following was substantiated:

- That HEIs follow the requirements of the SDA for the sake of compliance (refer §4.3.3.4).
- That two SDFs consider the implementation of the SDA as a form of taxation (refer §4.3.3.8).
- That two SDFs fear the ETDP SETA may withhold the mandatory levy grants (refer §4.3.1.1 and 4.3.5.5).

The latter points, therefore, substantiate my personal opinion that withholding mandatory levy grants would perpetuate government's power-grip over HEIs.

I now present the last network display relevant to my personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. The following network display illustrates that the implementation of the SDA strengthens a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour in HEIs.

#### 4.3.6.11 The SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour



**Figure 4.48 The SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour**

The network display shown in Figure 4.48 illustrates the number of findings *vis-à-vis* quotations (segments of text coded in *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) selected, as shown in brackets (e.g. 6-1) in each textbox from each of the seven research participants (the letter R, U, V, W, X, Y or Z in the textbox represents an SDF) to substantiate my personal opinion that the effect of the implementation of the SDA is that it strengthens a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour in HEIs. The number of quotations assigned on *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> can be viewed on the compact disk (SDF Voice: Outputs). The network display illustrates that as a result of the SDA being mechanistic, all seven of the participating HEIs consult with various stakeholders to develop ETD policy and manage individual or collective ETD needs via committee structures. The following was substantiated:



- That consultation with various stakeholder HEIs takes place as a consequence of the implementation of the SDA (refer §4.3.1.3).
- That committee structures have managed individual or collective ETD needs in HEIs after the implementation of the SDA (refer §4.3.1.3, 4.3.4.7 and 4.3.1.3).
- That the SDA is perceived as mechanistic towards the management of HEIs' employee ETD practices (refer §4.3.2.8).

The latter bullets substantiate my personal opinion that the implementation of the SDA contributes to a mechanistic management system of human behaviour in HEIs.

In this section I have substantiated my personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs as follows:

- That the development of systems to capture HEIs' employee ETD practices is costly, hence reducing the actual funds available for HEIs' employee ETD practices.
- That the appointment of SDFs and the establishment of consultative forums to plan and approve employee ETD practices are signs that government aims to control HEIs' ETD practices and that government seems to mistrust HEIs' employee ETD practices.
- That government compels HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in ETD towards unemployed SA citizens.
- That the funding available for staff development on a micro-level has increased since the implementation of the SDA. It has, however, decreased when viewed from an institutional macro-financial level.
- That the lack of public debate and communication could result in HEIs perception that the SDA should be followed only to recoup their levy-grant. HEIs could, in addition, create negative social relations amongst its staff members when funds for development opportunities are predominantly offered to designated employees, neglecting the development of white males.
- That the SDA ETD reporting time-frame differs from the HEIs' actual ETD time-frame.
- That the implementation of the SDA could be perceived as an invasion of institutional autonomy.

- That the SDA does not value the process of learning, but rather the value attached to certification.
- That the SDA portrays a mechanistic system for managing human behaviour.
- That the withholding of levy grants would perpetuate government's financial power-grip over HEIs.

## Epilogue

This chapter presents the findings based on the empirical and non-empirical data analysis. The findings of the non-empirical data analysis were presented as the entry point for the empirical data analysis phase of this study. The findings of the non-empirical data analysis were then presented. By following the hermeneutic circle, I could interpret the meaning of what the research participants said. My critical interpretation is therefore a mixture of the research participants' viewpoints and my critical interpretation of our interaction. I do not, however, wish to end this analysis at this point. As a researcher in the critical paradigm, I shall attempt to move beyond the data analysis tendered in this chapter in the following chapter. Consequently, the next chapter attempts to integrate this chapter's findings into one critical voice.

## CHAPTER 5: SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I offer my understanding of the participating SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development in HEIs, based on the data analysis (Chapter 4). Firstly I offer a synoptic overview of the study (§5.2) to briefly sketch the outline of this study. I then examine the data (Chapter 4) against the background of Human Capital Theory and Social Capital Theory (§5.3). I also sketch the implications for research, policy and practice (§5.4). The chapter concludes with a contemplative appraisal of the SDA in relation to the HEIs, including suggestions regarding the way forward (§5.5).

### 5.2 Synoptic overview of the study<sup>90</sup>

My research focused on a single unit of analysis: the participating SDFs' perceptions of the effects of the implementation of the SDA on staff development in HEIs. My study was therefore framed as a critical interpretative approach to:

- determine the nature and rationale of and reasons for staff development;
- determine the nature and rationale of and reasons behind the SDA;
- determine empirically how the SDFs perceive the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs; and
- develop an emancipatory critique of staff development in HEIs against the backdrop of the SDA.

In Chapter 1, I explained the rationale for this study, which evolved from an initially personal to an abiding academic interest in determining the perceptions of the participating Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs) regarding the implementation of the Skills Development Act (SDA) in South African public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In order to locate this study in the context of South African HEIs, a brief overview is given of the rise of the SDA in South Africa and staff development in

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<sup>90</sup> The synoptic overview (§5.2) might seem irrelevant to the significance and implications of this study. It is my personal preference, however, to provide the reader a synoptic overview of this study to demonstrate that each chapter contributed towards my attempt to document the significance and implications of this study that would be offered in this chapter.

HEIs (refer §1.5). In the same chapter I explained my use of terminology and also introduced my research design and methodology as being positioned within a critical interpretivist paradigm. Chapter 1 concluded with my assessment of some of the anticipated constraints of the study and an outline of its macrostructure.

My exploration of the review of the body of scholarship, as reported in Chapter 2, indicates how I reached an understanding of the underlying theoretical basis of the implementation of the SDA and that of staff development in HEIs. Chapter 2 concludes by tabling and comparing the underlying reasons, aims and theoretical underpinning of staff development in HEIs with those of the implementation of the SDA.

In Chapter 3 I provide details of my research design and its theoretical underpinning, motivating my choice of a participatory research methodology (including a description of the various instruments used for data collection) in the critical<sup>91</sup> qualitative research domain. In addition, this chapter contains a full description of the research strategies, participants (SDFs) and support systems as well as my personal role in this study. Then I report on the instrumentation and the data collection process that commenced with semi-structured interviews. I interviewed and gathered relevant documentation from the seven participating SDFs (from seven HEIs in the Gauteng Province). As the volume of unstructured data I had collected called for a more systematic and efficient method of data analysis, I used the software package *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> for the purpose of data analysis. This qualitative data analysis package (*Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup>) served to consolidate the non-empirical and empirical data in two data units, hence facilitating the data analysis. Using *Atlas.ti*<sup>TM</sup> was, therefore, one of the methods I employed to enhance the validity of my study.

In Chapter 4 I present the research findings revealed by an inductive analysis of the research data. Firstly, an account of the non-empirical data analysis is presented (referred to as phase one of data analysis). Six main families emerged which were relevant to understanding the reasons, meaning and theoretical assumptions pertaining to the implementation of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. The main families were (i) the documented opinions about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA; (ii) the documented opinions about the

rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices; (iii) the documented opinions about the challenges facing HEIs with the implementation of the SDA; (iv) personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of implementing the SDA in SA; (v) personal opinion about the rationale for and meaning of HEIs' employee ETD practices; and (vi) personal opinion about the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. Each of these families consisted of various themes substantiating each family, comprising a total of 45 themes. In the second phase of the data analysis process, I presented the empirical data in accordance with the 45 themes, to substantiate the similarities and/or differences between the non-empirical and empirical data. By presenting the data analysis per SDF, I indicated the similarities or differences in opinions among the SDFs. I also indicated where the findings of the data analysis per SDF were not substantive, also indicating where I had discussed a particular theme (issue) during a focus group discussion. The findings of the focus group analysis therefore substantiate the response of the focus group intervention as a collective SDF voice, either to indicate whether a difference of opinion remained or whether consensus was reached about a certain theme.

The aim of this chapter is to convince the reader that I have “uncovered sufficient reliable indications that the knowledge claim is the best of the available alternatives” (Polkinghorne, 1983:259). I will now examine the data in the context of the theoretical framework of this study.

### **5.3 Examining the data in the context of the theoretical framework**

I present in this section my nuanced findings pertaining to the broad questions of this research (refer §5.2). I now present my findings pertaining to the first broad question of this research: the nature and rationale of and reasons for staff development in HEIs.

#### **5.3.1 The nature and rationale of and reasons for staff development in HEIs**

The findings substantiate that the nature and rationale of and reasons for staff development in HEIs are to further the individual's knowledge and skills so as to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of higher education towards providing a quality service (refer §4.3.1.1, Figure 4.8). Staff development practices are therefore

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<sup>91</sup> Critical refers to researchers who are concerned about social inequalities and who are aimed at positive social change (Carspecken, 1996: 3).



aimed at enhancing an employee's task-specific knowledge and skills (refer §4.3.2.4, Figure 4.14). To this end, HEIs have implemented employee performance management systems as means of capturing the ETD needs of employees (refer §4.3.2.4, Figure 4.14). The funding of ETD practices is, in fact, approved when it is perceived as benefiting the HEI. Two SDFs (of the seven participants in the group) argued, however, that their respective HEI supported their employee ETD practices even when these were not perceived as being to the benefit the HEIs (refer Figure 2.14). With the possible exception of this last conclusion, the data analysis clearly substantiates the argument that the rationale of and reasons for HEIs' employee practices are to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the individual towards satisfying institutional needs (primarily to benefit the HEI). In other words, it seems that the reason why HEIs support (pay *vis-à-vis* invest) employee ETD practices is so that they could reap the assumed economic benefit of the ETD investment. I contend that the rationale for HEIs' employee ETD practices is firmly embedded in the core logic of Human Capital Theory, postulated by authors such as Livingstone (2002:1); MacIntyre (2002:1); Baptiste (2001:185); Shaik (2001:21) and Field (2004:12) (refer Chapter 2, §2.5). The line of thought in Human Capital Theory is that employees (in this case HEIs' employees) are regarded as a resource to be combined with other resources (ETD, capital and technology), which could be used as productive activities for the economic benefit of HEIs (Harrison and Kessels, 2004:21 and 88; Reid *et al.*, 2004:3; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11). Baptiste (2001:187) contends that the economic orientation to humans implicitly demonstrates how humans have become torn away from self-preservation only to be viewed mechanistically as part of a much larger chain of production. Another fact contributing to the notion that HEIs consider their employees as mere resources (as previously contended) is that the term "Human Resource(s) Development" seems to be gaining greater popularity in HEIs. Two of the seven participating HEIs do in fact refer to their employee ETD practices as Human Resource(s) Development (refer §4.3.4.2).

Considering, however, that only one of the seven participating SDFs explicitly mentioned that the rationale of and reason for staff development (*vis-à-vis* HEIs' ETD practices) were for economic gain, whereas the other six SDFs emphasised quality service, this tends to cast in the shade the underlying theoretical intent of HEIs' employee ETD practices in terms of Human Capital Theory. The SDFs did in fact stress that the nature of HEIs' employee ETD practices is self-determined and promoted by supporting continuous learning (refer §4.3.1.1, Figure 4.8 and §4.3.2.4, Chapter 5



Figure 4.14) which in turn leads to continuous education improvement. In other words, HEIs' support for continuous learning (emphasis on continuous learning) is perceived as the action that precedes performance management.

The context of HEIs' ETD practices can thus be positioned in the contemporary ambit of Human Capital Theory, which has close ties with the theory of Social Capital, on the basis of the following: that the rationale for HEIs' ETD practices is portrayed as an imperative to enhance quality service (not necessarily for economic gain only); that the nature of ETD practices is self-driven (self-motivated) (§4.3.2.1, Figure 4.11); that ETD practices are perceived as of value in the HEI's process of learning (§4.3.2.6, Figure 4.16) (not just as an act of continuous learning); that the majority of learning falls within the informal development category (§4.3.5.1, Figure 4.35); and that employee ETD needs are determined during interaction with someone else (during the performance management discussion) (refer §4.3.2.4, Figure 4.14).

The contemporary view of Human Capital Theory holds that investment in ETD, for example, is not necessarily a yardstick for economic growth. Instead, ETD enhances people's ability to cope with change, to think independently and to apply changing technologies in an organisational context as they deem fit (Baptiste, 2001:187). In addition, social capital is perceived to be the essential key to human capital since it is the interaction and relationships (especially of trust and tolerance) that endure (i.e. through the process of learning) and enable people to build communities, to commit themselves to one another (Field, 2003:1-2) and to share with one another (Fukuyama, 1996; 1999: passim), that subsequently trigger the individual to act (Crossley, 2006:286; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11,12 and 18; Collier, 2003:20; Gabby *et al.*, 2001:6; Lin, 1999:32). In other words, the primary value of ETD is recognised in its process of interaction and learning, not in the merits of attaining certification (a certificate, diploma or degree). I contend that Human Capital Theory, as the underlying conceptual rationale for HEIs' employee ETD practices, is overshadowed by the nature of HEIs' employee ETD practices, which seems to be leaning towards the theory of Social Capital for the following reasons:

- The implementation of performance management (refer quotations presented in §4.3.2.4, Figure 4.14): all seven of the participating SDFs corroborate, for example, the finding that interaction between employees and their senior colleagues is aimed at reflecting and jointly determining employees' ETD

needs. The data (§4.3.1.1 and §4.3.2.4) also substantiate the finding that performance management is not implemented to meet management's interests unilaterally, but that it is a process, instead, of engagement intended to enhance a culture of learning in HEIs.

- HEIs value the process of development. The results of the data analysis (§4.3.2.6, Figure 4.16) confirm the finding that HEIs (SDFs) value **the process of learning** as being of key importance to employee learning and development, and not, necessarily, the certification that the person receives after the successful completion of a programme (§4.3.4.3, Figure 4.30). One SDF, in fact, stated this eloquently:

Learning in itself is a process that cannot be placed in a linear or static box. The credentials that a person receives after completing a learning intervention and/or qualification are only as good as the depth and meaning of the learning and insights gained in the actual process. It is in the process of learning that an individual assimilates new concepts and insights, and undertakes reflection and self-evaluation. In the absence of high-quality experiential and relevant learning, the attainment of credentials just for the sake of receiving a certificate or commendation, becomes meaningless (P37: UT2:21, 197-204).

- Informal development is considered the most appropriate method of learning in HEIs (predominantly for an academic employee) (§4.3.2.6, Figure 4.16 and 4.18). As such, informal development (pursued by the majority of HEIs' employees) tends to pursue learning through a process of interaction and reflection (i.e. round-table debates, networking, mentoring or coaching) by and among individuals as a means of generating the knowledge that is key to HEIs' employee development.

In this section I have explained my findings with regard to the nature and rationale of reasons for staff development in HEIs. I will now, in the following section, discuss my nuanced findings of the nature and rationale behind the implementation of the SDA.

### 5.3.2 The nature and rationale behind the implementation of the SDA

The participating SDFs perceive the rationale for the implementation of the SDA as the government's strategy first and foremost to redress the past imbalances caused by ETD practices/legislation during apartheid (refer §4.3.1.2, Figure 4.9). The SDFs perceive redress, however, as two different but interrelated remedies. One is that the development of designated employees in HEIs should be prioritised (refer §4.3.1.2, Figure 4.9). The other is that HEIs should invest in providing credentialled education,

training and development (ETD) programmes for designated employees (refer §4.3.1.2, Figure 4.9) (with the emphasis on credentialled ETD programmes). Secondly, the SDFs perceive the implementation of the SDA from a structural point of view – that the government, by implementing various structures inside and external to HEIs (e.g. the ETDP SETA) intends to govern HEIs' staff development practices (refer §4.3.1.2, Figure 4.9 and §4.3.1.3, Figure 4.10) with the aim of achieving the government's agenda of redress. The participating SDFs perceive government's agenda, however, as not ending with governing the HEIs' staff development context, but also as making HEIs become co-responsible for investment in the development of unemployed SA citizens.

I contend that the theory of Human Capital is, once again, the underlying conceptual rationale for the implementation of the SDA, and I do so for the following reasons:

- The participating SDFs in the seven HEIs perceive the SDA as labour oriented, driven from a labour imperative associated with manual and/or tangible skills, such as artisan skills and practical manual skills (refer §4.3.4.5, Figure 4.32). One SDF, in fact, stated this eloquently:

*Why is it called the Skills Development Act?* (Laughs) because it's labour driven and labour was talking from the background where people from designated groups needed skills like artisan skills (P32: RT2:10, 55-60).

The message conveyed by the above-mentioned SDF is that the SDA focuses predominantly on enhancing the individual's capacity for acquiring tangible skills associated with labour in the production chain, thus indicating its close reliance on Human Capital Theory, but not on the intangible skills that accrue with interaction (referred to as Social Capital – Chapter 2, §2.5.2).

- HEIs should invest in providing credentialled education, training and development (ETD) programmes for their employees. This is the core logic of Human Capital Theory. Livingstone (1997:9) argues: "Human Capital [Theory] equates workers' knowledge levels with their levels of formal schooling ... [to] estimate individual economic returns on learning". Lin (1999:29) postulates that the proponents of Human Capital Theory portray the value of investment in education as an ideology for influencing the masses to internalise the values of this theory. Lin (1999:29) argues that Human Capital Theory is a capitalist scheme embedded in society, where the dominant class calls for investment to be made in human beings to capture the surplus value

generated. Lin (1999:29), therefore, asserts that Human Capital Theory is based on "exploitative social relations between two classes". This implies that the government perceives HEIs' employees as mere resources to be combined with other resources (investment in ETD) which could then be utilised as productive activities for the economic benefit of South Africa.

- The exploitative characteristic of government is already visible in HEIs (in the context of Lin's (1999:29) postulation) as regards the appointment of SDFs, the implementation of committee structures, the submission of WSPs or ATRs to the ETDP SETA and HEIs' payment of a 1% payroll levy. In all seven participating HEIs, an SDF was either appointed or nominated after the implementation of the SDA (refer §4.3.1.3, Figure 4.10); all seven HEIs submit their WSPs or ATRs to the ETDP SETA (refer §4.3.1.3, Figure 4.10); all seven HEIs established committee structures (as consultation mechanisms regarding ETD practices in HEIs) after the implementation of the SDA (refer §4.3.1.3, Figure 4.10); and lastly HEIs submit their WSPs and ATRs to the ETDP SETA with the aim of recouping their mandatory levy grant rebate which is equal to 50% of the 1% levy amount (1% of payroll) (Republic of South Africa, 1999:8; Republic of South Africa, 2004:1). In addition, the fact that 20% of HEIs' levy amount is forwarded to the National Skills Fund, by implication compels HEIs to be co-responsible for investment in the development of unemployed SA citizens (Republic of South Africa, 1999:8).

The rationale for and aim of staff development in HEIs (see §5.3.1) seems to have close ties with the theory of Social Capital. The contradiction, in this regard, is that government's epistemological view of staff development in HE in South Africa is that it is best understood within the conceptual parameters of Human Capital Theory (where employees are seen as mere replaceable cogs in the institutional machinery).

In this section I have explained my findings of the nature and rationale behind the implementation of the SDA. I will now, in the following section, present my nuanced findings pertaining to how the participating SDF's perceive the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs.

### 5.3.3 How do the SDFs perceive the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs?

The participating SDFs perceive HEIs' ETD needs as differing from national imperatives (refer §4.3.3.2, Figure 4.21). The perceived dissonance relates to the broader aim of HEIs' employee ETD needs and the aims of the SDA. As such, the participating SDFs view the HEIs' employee ETD needs as dealing with the development of all employees towards meeting institutional needs, whereas the SDA deals solely with the development of designated employees. One SDF stated the effect of the dissonance as follows:

"I feel a certain sense of disquiet, even anxiety, about the dissonance between the skills emphasis of the DoL [Department of Labour], basically dictating ... standards for which we are held accountable. *Are you referring to the National Skills Development Strategy?* Yes. They are not interested in our development strategies (P28: UF2:7, 76-89)."

The dissonance between institutional and national ETD needs relates to a difference in rationale (explained in §5.3.1 and §5.3.2). The difficulties that SDFs therefore experience with integrating the requirements of the SDA in the HEIs' employee ETD programme context are as follows:

- The implementation of Learnerships is problematic. Only three HEIs have introduced Learnerships since the implementation of the SDA. As such, these Learnerships have only been introduced on a small scale (refer §4.3.3.5, Figure 4.24) and these Learnerships are either not regarded as focusing on HEIs' core functions (an artisan or a security Learnership is not part of the core business of an HEI), nor as falling under the core function of the ETDP SETA (SDFs encounter challenges with working across SETAs) (refer §4.3.3.5, Figure 4.24). The development and implementation of a teaching Learnership (core to the academic function of HEIs) are also considered problematic, since the minimum job requirement for an academic is based on the attainment of a certain formal qualification and not, for example, as some kind of endorsement on an existing teaching qualification (refer §4.3.3.5, Figure 4.24).
- The accreditation of short courses (HEIs' internally developed courses) is problematic. The SDFs' contention is that internal courses are not based on unit standards, as intended by the SDA. HEIs are inherently accustomed to

developing and presenting education programmes which are approved by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), a subcommittee of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The SDFs perceive, however, that the provision of HEIs' internal short courses under the umbrella of the CHE (since the quality assurance of short courses is a delegated function to HEIs) conflicts with the SDA's intention to present courses aligned to the unit standards of the National Qualifications Framework. The HEQC does not usually seem to recognise short courses developed on the basis of unit standards (refer §4.3.3.1, Figure 4.20). This implies that HEIs, as providers of education, should for their internal staff development practice have courses accredited with the education and training quality authorities (ETQAs) *vis-à-vis* SETAs and this creates further conflict.

In addition to the aforementioned dissonance that SDFs perceive, there are various other problems in the structural, technical and communicative domain, which hinder the implementation of the SDA as follows:

- The development of systems to capture HEIs' employee ETD practices is costly. In addition to the cost of developing these systems, there is the high cost of the ongoing maintenance of systems (based on regulatory changes) (refer §4.3.6.1, Figure 4.38).
- The planning and reporting time frame set in the SDA differs from the HEIs' actual ETD time frame (refer §4.3.6.6, Figure 4.4.3).
- Informal development is considered the most appropriate category of learning in HEIs. This finding concurs with the postulations of authors such as Knight *et al.* (2006:313), Steyn (2004:217), Cowan *et al.* (2004:448) and Wexley (2002:2). Informal learning, as determined in this study, is the least recorded (refer §4.3.5.1, Figure 4.3.5) category of learning in HEIs. Since informal development is not structured learning, not easily planned and takes place in faculties and departments or voluntarily by HEIs' employees, it is understandable that this form of development is not easily recorded, hence there is little or no reflection of it in HEIs' WSPs and ATRs. The inability to capture the informal development practices of HEIs could lead to HEIs' forfeiting their levy grant, based on the principle that all ETD practices should be planned and recorded to earn a levy grant, although HEIs find it almost impossible to record informal development.



- HEIs do not receive support and guidance from the ETDP SETA (refer §4.3.3.6, Figure 4.25) in respect of completing the ETDP SETA's WSP and ATR templates. The ETDP SETA does not offer meaningful feedback to HEIs regarding their submitted WSPs and ATRs (refer §4.3.3.6, Figure 4.25). The ETDP SETA structures furthermore do not support HEIs (i.e. there is a lack of skills advisers dedicated to HEIs in each of the nine SA provinces) (refer §4.3.3.3, Figure 4.22). In August 2008 there was one skills adviser for each province, advising on matters ranging from Early Childhood Development to political parties, labour organisations, trade unions, libraries and higher education. This finding matches the postulation of the authors Strydom (2004:292) and Van Niekerk (2004:111) that staff development in HEIs is being hampered by the lack of support and guidance from government through the ETDP SETA.
- The terminology in the SDA and the explanations offered by government officials are contradictory and confusing (refer §4.3.4.2, Figure 4.29).

The aforementioned dissonance and difficulties SDFs encounter with the integration of the SDA have the effect that HEIs submit their Workplace Skills Plans and Annual Training Reports solely to obtain grants (refer §4.3.3.4, Figure 4.23). This finding is in accordance with Le Grange's postulation (2004:1) that the general trend in HEIs is to recover as rebates their levy payments. HEIs do want to promote the aims of the SDA in their employee ETD practices (refer §4.3.1.2, Figure 4.9) but cannot promote it fully owing to the aforementioned difficulties that HEIs encounter. The SDFs state that in addition, HEIs fear that they may forfeit their mandatory levy rebate (refer §4.3.6.10, Figure 4.47).

In this section I have explained my findings pertaining to how the participating SDFs perceive the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. In the following section I provide an emancipatory critique of staff development in HEIs against the backdrop of the SDA.

#### **5.3.4 An emancipatory critique of staff development in HEIs against the backdrop of the SDA**

Staff development in HEIs is one of their long-standing traditions, dating back to long before the implementation of the SDA (Fraser, 2005:158; Webb, 1996b:1). The

nature of staff development is perceived as self-determined to address both the needs and interests of employees and institutions towards achieving the broader educational goal of HEIs (Brew, 1995b:4 and 91; Webb, 1996a:2; Le Grange (2004:91). The individual's (staff member's) motivation for attaining knowledge and skills is viewed as pivotal to the efficiency and effectiveness of HEIs' educational objectives, and the means of acquiring knowledge and skills is vested in the process of learning (Knight *et al.*, 2006:320; Kapp and Frick, 2006:4; Burt, 2005:11 and 93; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11). It is therefore understandable why the term "development" overshadows the term "training" in HEIs (Nisbit *et al.*, 1979:50; Jalling, 1979:218; Denton, 1995:30). The underlying conceptual rationale for HEIs' employee ETD practices has, therefore, close ties with Social Capital Theory (explained in § 5.3.1).

By contrast, the implementation of the SDA has close ties with the theory of Human Capital (explained in § 5.3.2). It is my conviction that the implementation of structures to manage HEIs' employee ETD practices as a consequence of the implementation of the SDA (refer § 4.3.1.3, Figure 4.10) changes the humanistic self-determined learning tradition in HEIs to a mechanistic approach to training. HEIs' employees are therefore being viewed as mere replaceable cogs in the institutional machinery, and hence being trained to pursue institutionally prescribed performance standards. This approach could hamper academic freedom. This contradicts the nature of HEIs' quest to generate knowledge (to push forward the frontiers of knowledge *vis-à-vis* standards and not to be subordinated to standards). The growing use of the terminology "human resource(s) development" for referring to staff development in HEIs is a sign that some HEIs consider their employees as mere resources that should only be managed to the benefit of the particular HEI. In this regard, it seems that HEIs would do well to understand the concept of Human Capital Theory before they use Human Resource(s) Development as an umbrella term for their employee ETD practices.

In recent years the implementation of the SDA has, however, brought staff development *vis-à-vis* skills development to the fore, leading to the introduction of structures to view holistically the budget for and quality assurance of such staff development. This is an indication that the nature of staff development in HEIs is steadily moving towards managing staff development mechanistically, which has close ties with the theory of Human Capital (refer §5.3.2). As regards skills development budgeting, however, the SDFs argue that if the SDA had not been

implemented, the skills funds available in HEIs would have been less than the amount currently available (refer §4.3.6.4, Figure 4.41). The funds that are available at the present juncture for HEIs' employee ETD practices are in fact less than the funds previously available, especially if viewed from a macro-institutional perspective. By implication this places HEIs in a weaker financial position for fulfilling their educational obligation to the South African community.

After the implementation of the SDA, the HEIs' budget for staff development to demonstrate their compliance with the SDA (refer §4.3.3.4, Figure 4.23) is a sign that the nature of staff development is steadily moving towards the core logic of Human Capital Theory – that investment in ETD would lead to the economic prosperity of the individual, organisation and country at large (Livingstone, 1997:9; Lin, 1999:29). By implication, staff development is positioned as a capitalist scheme for the economic benefit of HEIs, rather than as a function to enable the acquisition of intangible skills which accrue with interaction (referred to as Social Capital – Chapter 2, §2.5.2). In HEIs the intangible skills are predominantly attained by means of their informal development methodology (Knight *et al.*, 2006:320; Kapp and Frick, 2006:4; Burt, 2005:11 and 93; Steyn, 2004:217; Svendsen *et al.*, 2004:11; Cowan *et al.*, 2004:448).

The stance of the SDA that attention (prioritisation) should be given to the development of designated employees (refer §4.3.1.3, Figure 4.9), brings into dispute the fact that HEIs wish to promote equality in their employee ETD practices. The SDFs perceived an inequality regarding certain employees' access to development opportunities. ETD opportunities for support staff are, for example, more restricted than those for academic staff (§4.3.2.2, Figure 4.12), in terms of funding and attendance of congresses and conferences (P 4: RD4:2, 4-13). The participating SDFs also claim that preference will be given to academic staff who are upgrading their qualifications in their fields of study (P16: YD1:19, 148-150) and pursuing their career paths. In this regard, it seems fair to ask the question how HEIs can claim that staff development is available to all staff (§4.3.2.3, Figure 4.13) if SDFs perceive this inequality between academic and support staff regarding access to development opportunities?

Although HEIs support redress, HEIs do not exclude the development of non-designated employees (refer §4.3.4.1, Figure 4.28). The stance of the SDA, however,

namely that the development of designated employees (refer §4.3.1.3, Figure 4.9) should be prioritised, could lead to negative social relations in HEIs. Strict measures by the ETDP SETA to promote redress should be implemented discreetly as this would, by implication, compel HEIs to make rules to accelerate redress and this could lead (as has been echoed by the SDFs participating in this study, refer §4.3.4.6. Figure 4.34) to negative social relations in HEIs. The implementation of rules in this regard would also lead to increasingly positioning staff development in the epistemological ambit of Human Capital Theory, namely that humans should be managed mechanistically toward achieving the aims of someone else (government in this case), thus depriving employees as humans of their free will.

The academics' need to upgrade their qualifications is funded generally from a benefit perspective (study at the particular HEI may be free of charge or subject to the payment of a nominal fee). For support staff, financial support for obtaining formal qualifications is apparently restricted to the benefit of studying at the particular HEI, and only in exceptional cases is funding granted to pursue studies elsewhere. By contrast, academics' attainment of formal qualifications is considered a work-related skill. It is generally accepted that it is the employer's responsibility to fund work-related skills development, whereas the individual is responsible for paying for the attainment of formal education qualification(s) (Johanson *et al.*, 2004:27; Flanagan *et al.*, 1998:10; Hlavna, 1992:3). Because HEIs consider the attainment of formal education qualifications as a work-related skill (academia), it calls into question the prevailing rationale that the cost of formal education should be borne by the individual. Perhaps specific to HEIs, it is not the individual but the HEI that should support academic staff to attain formal qualifications. Similarly, the SDA's notion that credentialled skills should be promoted in South Africa, including formal education, brings into dispute the prevailing rationale of who should pay for the cost of formal education. It seems, however, that the notion that the individual should bear the cost of formal higher education should not apply to academic employees, since their qualifications are perceived as the skill of generating knowledge – a core function of HEIs.

In this section I have given my nuanced findings pertaining to the fourth and last broad question of this study: to develop an emancipatory critique of staff development in HEIs against the backdrop of the SDA. In the next section I provide some details of the implications for research, policy and practice.

## 5.4 The implications for research, policy and practice

The findings of the data analysis in Section 4.3.2.4 seem to suggest that HEIs do not readily measure the return on investment in and of their employee ETD practices (refer §4.3.4.4, Figure 4.31). Instead, they tend to value the process of learning as the key to learning (refer §4.3.5.3, Figure 4.37). By contrast, the SDA promotes the notion that HEIs should invest in ETD as a means of achieving economic gain (refer §5.3.2). Research should, therefore, be undertaken to determine whether the SDA does achieve its assumed goal. At present, the available research indicates that a vast number of variables would have to be considered to determine whether investment in ETD would lead to economic prosperity. Since the 1970s average incomes have stagnated, employment rates have declined and graduate under-employment, under-utilisation and even unemployment have increased despite the fact that school enrolment rates continued to rise. As a result, it is not clear whether educated people are necessarily more productive or wealthier than uneducated people (Carnoy *et al.*, 2005:4; Livingstone, 2002:1; Baptise, 2001:195; Quiggin, 2000:130; Livingstone, 1997:9) (P1:818, 1643-1646).

In section 5.3.4, I contended (based on the SDFs perceptions) that more funds for skills development have been available for ETD practices in HEIs since the implementation of the SDA. From a macro financial (institutional) perspective, less funds are, however, available for ETD purposes because the payment of a payroll levy significantly decreases the available operational budget. There are rumours circulating at present (2008) (refer §4.3.3.7) that HEIs should not be obliged to pay this levy. In the context of funding for Skills Development in HEIs, the following issues, in particular, require further scientific investigation:

- It should be determined whether HEIs should pay any levy at all. HEIs are considered (semi-) governmental institutions (state-subsidised), similar to the Department of Education, which is exempted from paying a levy, so why should HEIs pay a levy? Since HEIs are state-subsidised for up to 50% of their operational costs, I contend that they should be accountable for at least the payment of a 1% levy on the 50% of their operational costs earned by HEIs as a third stream of income.

- It should be determined whether the submission of a WSP and ATR to the SETA is worthwhile (especially as regards the mandatory levy grant). HEIs earn a rebate on the levy grant following the submission of the WSP and ATR. The latter not only have to be compiled according to prescribed criteria, but also have to be signed off by a nominated labour representative on the institutional skills development committee. The SDFs' perception is that union members use the signing or not signing of the WSP and ATR as a bargaining tool. The question to be researched is what the reasons for and consequences of this are for HEIs.

One of the core reasons why SDFs find it difficult to integrate the SDA in their respective HEIs' staff development context is the provision of internally developed short courses which are currently quality assured by the Committee on Higher Education (CHE). The SDA promotes the provision of unit-standard-based (credentialled) programmes that are aligned to the NQF, and provided by SETA-registered providers. The unit-standard-based programmes aligned to the NQF fall under the auspices of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), whereas the latest norms and standards for educator training are determined by the Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF), overseen by the Department of Education (DoE). By contrast, government's strategy of skills upgrading and redress (via the SDA) falls under the auspices of the Department of Labour (DoL). A research project investigating the possible improvement of the alignment between the above-mentioned bodies and minimising bureaucracy should be undertaken, otherwise the problems that the SDFs encounter (stated above) with the implementation of the SDA will not be resolved for a long time yet. A research project of this kind would be difficult, however, since it would entail obtaining support from research participants spread across SAQA, the DoE, the DoL and the HE sector.

I propose that a step towards the alignment of HEIs' employee ETD practices and the requirements of the SDA (monitored by the ETDP SETA), could be to establish a community of practice among SDFs at HEIs. Such a community of practice should include members of the ETDP SETA, since achieving the goals of one party<sup>92</sup> may have negative consequences for the other party (Field, 2004:71). This implies that

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<sup>92</sup> Unionisation can be seen as an organised mechanism to protect the interests of the members of a certain group of people (Field, 2004:6). Field furthermore argues that unionisation does, to a certain extent, protect against a decline in Social Capital.



the consequences of investment in interaction (a core principle of Social Capital Theory), in order to protect the interests of a certain stakeholder grouping (for example the HEIs), may be detrimental to or in conflict with the aims of another party (for example the ETDP SETA) which still believes that it should be responsible for monitoring the transformation of staff development in HEIs' as workplaces (refer Chapter 2, §2.2.2.1). Public debate could lead to the ETDP SETA acknowledging the relevance of certain learning interventions that may specifically apply to HEIs. The decision to abandon or amend the SDA, based on the mismatch that HEIs' SDFs experience between the intention of the SDA and that of staff development in HEIs, could, however, only be made at government level, not at a collaborative SETA and HEI level. Nevertheless, although the consequences of investment in interaction could be viewed as the collaborative protection of certain interests (which might be in conflict with the interests of another party) (Field, 2004:6), the value of such interaction to the individuals of a certain stakeholder grouping is indisputable (Crossley, 2005:284; Grootaert and Van Basteleur, 2002:9; Coleman, 1994:312).

In conclusion, there is a dearth of literature on staff development in the specific context of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. The majority of outputs, although usually based on research undertaken, report on HEIs' staff development practices on a programme/intervention level and not necessarily on staff development itself, especially in the context of the influence of an Act (such as the SDA) as seen from the perspective of the Higher Education sector. I believe that research should be undertaken on the nature of staff development in HEIs especially in the context of the influence of an Act (such as the SDA) as viewed from the perspective of the Higher Education sector.

In this section I have made suggestions on what should be researched and I also proposed a possible way forward. In the next section I provide my contemplated appraisal of the SDA in relation to HEIs.

## **5.5 A contemplated appraisal of the SDA in relation to HEIs**

Against the background of the rationale for the implementation of the SDA (refer §5.3.2) and against the backdrop of the overall findings of (a) my review of the body of scholarship, as well as (b) the empirical part of my research, I am obliged to

conclude that the SDA is largely inappropriate for HEIs in South Africa at the present juncture. I base my conclusion on the following:

- First and foremost, it is clear that Human Capital Theory is the underlying rationale for the SDA, driven initially by organised labour and then by the government, compelling HEIs to invest in credentialled skills development based on the assumption that the investment will lead to the prosperity of the investor and the country at large: the core logic of Human Capital Theory. Government with the implementation of various structures (i.e. skills committee) and templates (i.e. WSP and ATR) seems to compel HEIs to consider their employees as mere cogs in a production line.
- The semantic value of the term “skills” as perceived in the SDA, refers mainly to manual, tangible, taught skills. Even the name of the Skills Development Act privileges the above-mentioned notion of “skills”, *per se*. By contrast, Social Capital Theory underlies and proverbially provides the epistemological drive behind HEIs' staff development practices. HEIs' core function of education, as expounded by its academics (the majority employee category), does in fact apply informal development as a means of generating knowledge but to break standards, not to be subordinated to standards. The SDA could, therefore, at most be applicable to the support staff members who are inclined to work toward reaching certain standards of performance and to academic staff members who need to acquire certain practical skills (i.e. in administration or Information Technology). The SDA does not apply to the cognitive thought and knowledge-generating purposes of proper academic endeavour (Blackmore *et al.*, 2006: 384; Blackwell *et al.*, 2003:5). Generating cognitive thought and knowledge is the outcome of interaction, networking, relationships of trust, and is consequently embedded in the core logic of Social Capital Theory.
- The participating SDFs use the term “all” – referring to designated and non-designated employees – as the common denominator in all seven of the HEIs in the research study. If HEIs follow the government's prescriptions regarding the development of designated employees, they might have to discriminate against non-designated employees. This means that HEIs would have to exclude non-designated employees from contributing to the effectiveness and efficiency of HEIs. Due to the nature of their core business, HEIs will struggle

with the implementation of the SDA because there are top achievers from all cultures and races in HEIs. Favouring the skills development of one top achiever over that of another could make the SDA irrelevant to HEIs and would simply restrict academic freedom even further.

- SDFs do not necessarily have a mandate to change the deeply entrenched context of staff development in HEIs. As the implementation of governing structures in HEI does not encourage dialogue about the SDA, the SDA is merely tolerated. As a participant-observer, I have to record my observation that I do not see (at the present juncture) any urgency among HEIs to oppose the implementation of the SDA. This calls into question whether HEIs are merely following the path of least resistance, or whether they are simply tired of confrontation?

I will now conclude this report with a critical reflection on the whole research project.

## **5.6 A critical reflection on the research project: co-operation, limitations and contributions**

An attempt was made throughout this study to describe my critical consciousness by questioning myself not only on "how my own (and the participants') life experience(s) influence research", but also on "how research feeds back into my own (and the participants') life experience(s)" (Wilkinson, 1988: 494). My self-reflection on the co-operation of SDFs, limitations and contributions of this study, as encouraged by critical interpretivism as my chosen epistemological paradigm (refer Chapter 3, §Section 3.2.1), is discussed to some extent in this section, with more concrete interpretations offered in §5.7 below.

### **5.6.1 The lack of co-operation from some respondents**

One of the limitations of this study was the lack of participation and co-operation by one of the seven participating SDFs. Although a concerted effort was made to contact the SDF, even by the SDF's senior colleague, this was to no avail. Another limitation of the study is that in certain themes (noted), I did not manage to delve deeply enough (from a meta-theoretical point of view) to gain an understanding of what may be underpinning a particular problem or challenge which the participating

SDFs have encountered with the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. As previously explained, I specifically did not intend to confront the SDFs openly with my own perceived (pre-determined) views on the implementation of the SDA. I tried, instead, through open debates about the context of staff development and the context of the implementation of the SDA, to critique what the SDFs have said, thus gaining an understanding of the effects of the implementation of the SDA.

## **5.7 Limitations of the research**

The problem of the non-participation and lack of co-operation by one of the SDFs affected the validation of the SDFs' responses, even though this study was never intended to be positivistic in any way. Another limitation of this research is that the participant group consisted of all the universities in Gauteng, thereby excluding universities in the other provinces of SA. Unfortunately, as explained above, the constraints of costs and the time needed to gather information from all the universities made a larger sample simply impractical. Lastly, no inputs was obtained from those employees in HEIs that provide staff development programmes within HEIs, only SDFs (refer §3.4.2).

## **5.8 Contributions of this study**

This chapter concludes with a note on the contribution of this study to the understanding of the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. This study makes two major contributions (refer §5.8.1 and §5.8.2) to the debate on the conceptualisation of staff development in HEIs in the context of the implementation of the SDA, specifically as regards the challenges that HEIs encounter, and consequently the effects that these challenges have on staff development in HEIs. Lastly, this is a critical interpretive research study on skills development in HEIs *per se*.

### **5.8.1 Contribution towards an understanding of staff development in HEIs in the context of the implementation of the SDA**

I have endeavoured to steer the debate towards not only the aim, reasons and theoretical basis of staff development in HEIs but also towards the effects of the implementation of the SDA. This indicates that staff development in HEIs and the

implementation of the SDA should not be taken for granted, since there is more to both than meets the eye. As pointed out in earlier chapters, staff development in HEIs has to adapt to the implementation of the SDA and the effects it has on HEIs. This study brings to the fore the underlying reasons why HEIs encounter problems with the integration of the SDA in the staff development ambit of HEIs (refer §5.3.3). In addition, the study also indicates a path which could be followed to bring about a better understanding of HEIs' employee ETD needs in the context of the requirements of the SDA (refer §5.4). Some warnings should, however, be heeded. There is a danger, as Muller (2000:114) points out, that critical theory researchers may expect the world to change because of the strengths of their "critical insights" but people are not always open to change. SDFs in HEIs could, therefore, reject the critical insights of this study as they may not want to confront the challenges associated with the implementation of the SDA. HEIs should, nevertheless, take cognisance of their SDFs' perceptions of the underlying aim, reasons and theoretical basis of staff development in HEIs and the aims of the implementation of the SDA.

#### **5.8.2 Contribution based on the critical interpretative approach followed**

As explained in Chapter 2, this is the first study undertaken in South Africa to determine the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs, and it moreover takes a critical interpretive approach (refer §5.3.3 and §5.3.4). This is based on the epistemological and pragmatic considerations of the aim of the study, not on an *a priori* decision to reject certain methodologies because of their epistemological grounds. I have, therefore, followed a critical interpretive approach, critically interpreting the implementation of the SDA in a wider socio-political and economic context with the research participants (refer §3.3).

#### **5.9 Conclusion**

The aim of this last chapter was to integrate the information contained in the previous chapters with the findings of the research. This was accomplished by comparing the empirical data with the non-empirical data (review of the body of scholarship) regarding the reasons, aims and theoretical explanations of the implementation of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. Aspects of the match and mismatch between the reasons, aims and theoretical explanations of the implementation of the SDA and staff development in HEIs were explored. Critical theory allowed the



researcher to search for the underlying reasons for the problems that HEIs encounter with the implementation of the SDA. On the surface, the nature and aims of the SDA and staff development seem similar, but detailed examination shows that there is a mismatch between them. Critical theory allowed the researcher to search for this mismatch, which is shown to be based on a fundamental difference between the aims, reasons and theoretical foundation of the SDA and those of staff development in HEIs. This is exacerbated by the limited interaction between the ETDP SETA and HEIs. It is proposed that the way forward should be, as Habermas would have suggested: one where role-players should share their perceptions and be open to the challenges that they face, including that of informal development. It is, therefore, proposed that a community of practice should be established where SDFs and members of the ETDP SETA could deliberate on skills development issues. If such a community of practice is not established, HEIs could become “armies” of resistance that would defeat policy reforms or remould them to suit their own interests or circumstances. Politicians, policy makers, training providers, workers and employers are all inextricably interlinked by virtue of the SDA, and yet each operates with different and sometimes conflicting goals and ideologies. They furthermore fail to achieve their goals because of entrenched political interests.

The study has, however, certain limitations, specifically regarding the lack of participation of some of the SDFs and also regarding my inability to delve deeper into certain questions posed, in order to bring the underlying theoretical explanations to the fore. I did, however, manage to reflect on other issues, such as the perceptions of the SDFs regarding the effects of the implementation of the SDA in HEIs. In addition, I suggested certain themes which should be further researched (§5.4).



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## Addendum A

## Informed consent forms

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>I am conducting research on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act on public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. As part of my study I am investigating various aspects of the HEIs skills development system. The aim of the study is to identify generic trends that could be shared with other researchers. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in a semi-structured interview focusing on various aspects of skills development will be sincerely appreciated.</p> <p><b>Please note that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your participation in this research is entirely <i>voluntary</i>; you are free to choose to participate or not to participate.</li> <li>You may decide to stop the interview at any time, since there is <i>no penalty</i> for withdrawing or refusing to participate.</li> <li>All information will be treated with the utmost <i>confidentiality</i>.</li> <li>If you agree to participate you need to <i>sign</i> this form as proof of your acceptance.</li> </ul> <p>I understand the aim, procedures, risks and benefits of participating in this project and I <u>FIROZA PATE</u> (name and surname) consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr L S Botha.</p> <p>I understand these conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.</p> <p>Participant: <u>[Signature]</u></p> <p>Date: <u>21/05/07</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>I am conducting research on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act on public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. As part of my study I am investigating various aspects of the HEIs skills development system. The aim of the study is to identify generic trends that could be shared with other researchers. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in a semi-structured interview focusing on various aspects of skills development will be sincerely appreciated.</p> <p><b>Please note that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your participation in this research is entirely <i>voluntary</i>; you are free to choose to participate or not to participate.</li> <li>You may decide to stop the interview at any time, since there is <i>no penalty</i> for withdrawing or refusing to participate.</li> <li>All information will be treated with the utmost <i>confidentiality</i>.</li> <li>If you agree to participate you need to <i>sign</i> this form as proof of your acceptance.</li> </ul> <p>I understand the aim, procedures, risks and benefits of participating in this project and I <u>Dr. Mawane K. George</u> (name and surname) consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr L S Botha.</p> <p>I understand these conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.</p> <p>Participant: <u>[Signature]</u></p> <p>Date: <u>30/5/07</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>I am conducting research on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act on public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. As part of my study I am investigating various aspects of the HEIs skills development system. The aim of the study is to identify generic trends that could be shared with other researchers. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in a semi-structured interview focusing on various aspects of skills development will be sincerely appreciated.</p> <p><b>Please note that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your participation in this research is entirely <i>voluntary</i>; you are free to choose to participate or not to participate.</li> <li>You may decide to stop the interview at any time, since there is <i>no penalty</i> for withdrawing or refusing to participate.</li> <li>All information will be treated with the utmost <i>confidentiality</i>.</li> <li>If you agree to participate you need to <i>sign</i> this form as proof of your acceptance.</li> </ul> <p>I understand the aim, procedures, risks and benefits of participating in this project and I <u>TD MOKOENA</u> (name and surname) consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr L S Botha.</p> <p>I understand these conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.</p> <p>Participant: <u>TD MOKOENA</u> <u>[Signature]</u></p> <p>Date: <u>29/5/07</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFORMED CONSENT FORM</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>I am conducting research on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act on public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. As part of my study I am investigating various aspects of the HEIs skills development system. The aim of the study is to identify generic trends that could be shared with other researchers. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in a semi-structured interview focusing on various aspects of skills development will be sincerely appreciated.</p> <p><b>Please note that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your participation in this research is entirely <i>voluntary</i>; you are free to choose to participate or not to participate.</li> <li>You may decide to stop the interview at any time, since there is <i>no penalty</i> for withdrawing or refusing to participate.</li> <li>All information will be treated with the utmost <i>confidentiality</i>.</li> <li>If you agree to participate you need to <i>sign</i> this form as proof of your acceptance.</li> </ul> <p>I understand the aim, procedures, risks and benefits of participating in this project and I <u>PATIENCE TERFO</u> (name and surname) consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr L S Botha.</p> <p>I understand these conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.</p> <p>Participant: <u>P Terfo</u> <u>[Signature]</u></p> <p>Date: <u>22 June 2007</u></p>



## University of Pretoria etd – Botha, L (2009)

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Colleague

I am conducting research on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act on public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. As part of my study I am investigating various aspects of the HEIs skills development system. The aim of the study is to identify generic trends that could be shared with other researchers. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in a semi-structured interview focusing on various aspects of skills development will be sincerely appreciated.

**Please note that:**

- Your participation in this research is entirely *voluntary*; you are free to choose to participate or not to participate.
- You may decide to stop the interview at any time, since there is *no penalty* for withdrawing or refusing to participate.
- All information will be treated with the utmost *confidentiality*.
- If you agree to participate you need to *sign* this form as proof of your acceptance.

I understand the aim, procedures, risks and benefits of participating in this project and I Grace Motsamai (name and surname) consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr L S Botha.

I understand these conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.

Participant: Grace Motsamai 

Date: 22 June 2007

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### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Colleague

I am conducting research on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act on public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. As part of my study I am investigating various aspects of the HEIs skills development system. The aim of the study is to identify generic trends that could be shared with other researchers. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in a semi-structured interview focusing on various aspects of skills development will be sincerely appreciated.

**Please note that:**

- Your participation in this research is entirely *voluntary*; you are free to choose to participate or not to participate.
- You may decide to stop the interview at any time, since there is *no penalty* for withdrawing or refusing to participate.
- All information will be treated with the utmost *confidentiality*.
- If you agree to participate you need to *sign* this form as proof of your acceptance.

I understand the aim, procedures, risks and benefits of participating in this project and I LINDINE C. RAOGBE (name and surname) consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr L S Botha.

I understand these conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.

Participant: 

Date: 30 May 2007

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Colleague

I am conducting research on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act on public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. As part of my study I am investigating various aspects of the HEIs skills development system. The aim of the study is to identify generic trends that could be shared with other researchers. I would like to invite you to participate in this research. Your participation in a semi-structured interview focusing on various aspects of skills development will be sincerely appreciated.

**Please note that:**

- Your participation in this research is entirely *voluntary*; you are free to choose to participate or not to participate.
- You may decide to stop the interview at any time, since there is *no penalty* for withdrawing or refusing to participate.
- All information will be treated with the utmost *confidentiality*.
- If you agree to participate you need to *sign* this form as proof of your acceptance.

I understand the aim, procedures, risks and benefits of participating in this project and I COCKIE ROVENDEL (name and surname) consent to participate in the research conducted by Mr L S Botha.



I understand these conditions and accept to participate in this study voluntarily.

Participant: 

Date: 15/06/2007

## Addendum B

### Consent to record interviews

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSENT FOR RECORDING</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>As part of the study of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act upon staff development within public Higher Education institutions of South Africa, the semi-structured interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will help the researcher to analyse what was said during the interviews. All the recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. Nobody but the researcher will have access to these tapes.</p> <p>Your signature below is an indication that you understand the above conditions and consent to audio recordings.</p> <p>Participant: <u>P. Teffo</u> </p> <p>Date: <u>22 June 2007</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSENT FOR RECORDING</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>As part of the study of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act upon staff development within public Higher Education institutions of South Africa, the semi-structured interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will help the researcher to analyse what was said during the interviews. All the recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. Nobody but the researcher will have access to these tapes.</p> <p>Your signature below is an indication that you understand the above conditions and consent to audio recordings.</p> <p>Participant: <u>T.D. Mokoena</u> </p> <p>Date: <u>29/5/7</u></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSENT FOR RECORDING</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>As part of the study of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act upon staff development within public Higher Education institutions of South Africa, the semi-structured interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will help the researcher to analyse what was said during the interviews. All the recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. Nobody but the researcher will have access to these tapes.</p> <p>Your signature below is an indication that you understand the above conditions and consent to audio recordings.</p> <p>Participant: <u>F. Patel</u></p> <p>Date: <u>21/05/07</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONSENT FOR RECORDING</b></p> <p>Dear Colleague</p> <p>As part of the study of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act upon staff development within public Higher Education institutions of South Africa, the semi-structured interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will help the researcher to analyse what was said during the interviews. All the recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. Nobody but the researcher will have access to these tapes.</p> <p>Your signature below is an indication that you understand the above conditions and consent to audio recordings.</p> <p>Participant: <u>Dr. M.J. George</u></p> <p>Date: <u>20/5/07</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>



University of Pretoria etd – Botha, L (2009)**CONSENT FOR RECORDING**

Dear Colleague

As part of the study of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act upon staff development within public Higher Education institutions of South Africa, the semi-structured interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will help the researcher to analyse what was said during the interviews. All the recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. Nobody but the researcher will have access to these tapes.

Your signature below is an indication that you understand the above conditions and consent to audio recordings.

Participant: RhondaDate: 30 May 2007**CONSENT FOR RECORDING**

Dear Colleague

As part of the study of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act upon staff development within public Higher Education institutions of South Africa, the semi-structured interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will help the researcher to analyse what was said during the interviews. All the recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. Nobody but the researcher will have access to these tapes.

Your signature below is an indication that you understand the above conditions and consent to audio recordings.

Participant: Grace MobsamaiDate: 22 June 2007**CONSENT FOR RECORDING**

Dear Colleague

As part of the study of the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act upon staff development within public Higher Education institutions of South Africa, the semi-structured interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will help the researcher to analyse what was said during the interviews. All the recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study. Nobody but the researcher will have access to these tapes.

Your signature below is an indication that you understand the above conditions and consent to audio recordings.

Participant: RhondaDate: 15/06/2007

## **Addendum C**

### **Particulars of reference group members**

Prof Elsie Greyling  
Po Box 119, Hekpoort 1790  
Hartebeestfontein,  
Hekpoort 1790.  
014 576 2351  
Department of Human Resources  
University of Johannesburg  
011 559 3113

Prof Nico Sauer  
Department of Mathematics  
University of Pretoria  
012 343 6997  
012 420 3558



## **Addendum D**

### **Personal value orientation**

I believe that the implementation of the SDA has drawn attention to staff development as a mainstream strategic agenda of institutions of Higher Education.

Staff development opportunities enhance personal- growth and capabilities. As such, the primary goal of HEIs employee education, training and development (staff development) is to enhance institutional effectiveness towards quality service delivery. The outcome of staff development opportunities determines HEIs performance. However, the process of learning, remain key to human development and not the actual credit value attached to the learning process. Therefore, I believe that a conscious effort should be made to create and enhance a learning environment conducive to learning. In addition, the staff development environment of HEIs should also allow redress, but not to the deficit of HEIs quest for quality service delivery. Against this background I stand to argue that the Skills Development Act, if properly communicated to HEIs and supported by it's structures would be beneficial to HEIs and ultimately SA, of which I am a proud citizen.

I believe it is a good idea to plan and budget development opportunities for all employees, in addition also to have specific strategies aimed at redress. Furthermore, these strategies could be shared with the government. However, I believe that penalising institutions on the grounds of inadequate performance towards certain national targets without allowing HEIs to explain why such targets cannot be met, seems to have close ties with a communist ideology that would be detrimental to our democratic society.

## Addendum E

### Ethical considerations: Confirmation at face-to-face meeting with SDF

1. Introduction	Confirmation = √
1.1 Note that the aim of the inquiry is to determine the effects of the implementation of the SDA on HEIs. To this end, the aim of our interview would be to gain an understanding of the meaning of staff development within your institution as well as to identify the unique critical features of staff development within your HEI. Confirm the blessing of particular Human Resources Director.	
1.2 Stress that, in accordance to the ethical proceedings of scholarly research, written consent from the SDF is required. Please complete the consent form to participate in this research as well as the consent form that our interview may be audio recorded.	
1.3 Note that the name of the SDF and institution will not be used. The information that will be shared will be kept strictly confidential (only for research purposes).	
1.4 Note that when you feel offended or uncomfortable about answering certain question(s), it remains your prerogative to withhold information or explain why that particular question cannot be answered.	
1.5 Note that you as SDF represent the institution – in other words you will answer the question(s) in terms of how your particular HEI views staff development and skills development. The aim of the inquiry is not to tap into your views in this regard.	
1.6 Note: I prepared a semi-structured questionnaire that I intentionally did not forward to you before our interview. The reason for not forwarding the questionnaire to you before our meeting is to ensure that you do not prepare answers beforehand.	

**Addendum F**

<Date>

Prof <person>

Director: Department of Human Resources  
**UNIVERSITY**

Dear Professor <person>

**Request for consent for Mr Louw Botha to discuss Skills Development matters with your institution's Skills Development Facilitator for a PhD research project**

My intention to do a research project on the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act in Higher Education Institutions (HEI), was discussed at the HEI Human Resources Directors' Forum, held in May 2005 at Stellenbosch. The research project was later registered (PhD Organisational Behaviour, University of Pretoria), and is at the stage of the empirical research. To obtain data for this empirical research, please would you grant approval so that I can discuss, with your institution's Skills Development Facilitator, some matters relating to staff development and the implementation of the Skills Development Act in your institution. I wish to invite the seven Skills Development Facilitators of the HEI in Gauteng to take part in this research.

The stated aim of this research is to determine the effects of the implementation of the Skills Development Act (SDA) within the HE. The purpose of this study is to determine the underlying intent of the SDA, and then to determine whether such intent coincides with or differs from the prevailing view of staff development in HEIs. All the information shared and the data obtained from interviews will be kept strictly confidential. Where information may have to be used to demonstrate a point of interest, the source of information and the identity of person providing the information will not be disclosed.

Participants will be asked to participate in a one-hour semi-structured personal interview and a one-hour semi-structured telephone interview. The SDF may also be invited to participate in a focus group with some of his/her colleagues. The interview and/or the focus group meeting will be held at a time and place convenient to the participants. The participation of the SDFs in this research is entirely *voluntary*; they are free to choose whether or not they will participate. They are free to stop the interview at any time, since there is *no penalty* for withdrawing or refusing to participate. All information will be treated with the strictest *confidentiality*, and if your institution's SDF agrees to participate, the SDF should please *sign* a form as proof of consent.

**Potential benefits**

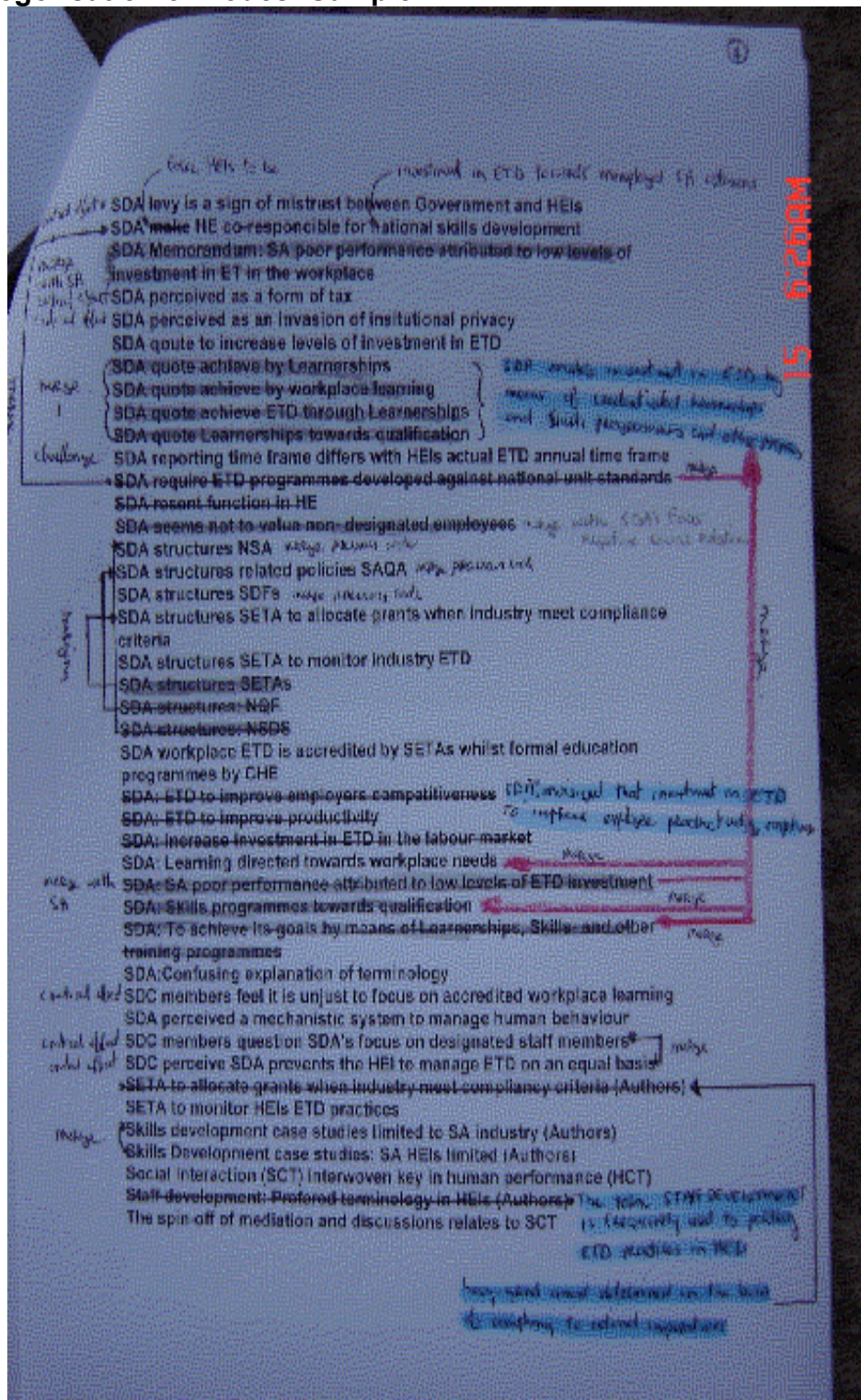
Although there may not be a direct benefit from participating in this research, the results may well prove enlightening. For this reason, you and the SDF will receive a copy of the final report. If you have any questions about this project, you are welcome to contact the researcher on 012-420- 4038 or 083 583 1316 or [louw.botha@up.ac.za](mailto:louw.botha@up.ac.za) Your consent would be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Louw Botha (Mr)

## Addendum G

## Categorisation of Codes: Sample







## Addendum H

Editorial proof:

I, the undersigned Mrs Gillian Frances Allen de Jager, certify that I have edited the English of this PhD thesis, completing the final version on 21 November 2008.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. de Jager'.

Mrs Gillian Frances Allen de Jager  
Member of the South African Translators' Institute (Membership No. 1000373)  
BA (Nursing), University of Pretoria;  
BA (Hons)(Psych.) Unisa; BA (Hons)(Eng.) *cum laude*, Unisa  
Sworn translator of the High Court of South Africa, Reg. No. 28353/97  
*Ex Officio* Commissioner of Oaths