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VALUE CONFLICTS IMPLICIT IN THE EDUCATIONAL ROLES, TASKS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER IN SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The presented dissertation focusses on a particular occupational grouping, namely the training and development specialists employed by large organisations that exist specifically as profit-making enterprises. It examines the functions of a corporate training department and the related roles which trainers adopt in the conception and execution of their training tasks.

The argument of the dissertation is that the training process is essentially a management process. The use of the term 'management' does not imply co-ordination of the work efforts of other people as in the standard definition of management, but rather the management of the range of meanings that the corporation provides to employees to persuade them that their most significant life experience exists within the corporation or an extended form of the corporation.

Training and development practitioners are positioned and equipped to make resources available for the construction of such meanings. Absolute demands for productivity, efficiency and effectiveness are re-located in different discourses, which provide different kinds of potential meanings for the formation of a work identity. The aims and conclusions of the study are directed towards a historical understanding of the consciousness and agency of training and development practitioners that allow them to internalize the conflicts which they experience in their work to make possible for them the reconciliation of the contradiction posed by John Ruskin in the nineteenth century:

> Observe you are put to a stern choice in this matter. You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both. Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them, and make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, and their arms strike curves like compasses, you must inhumanize them. All the energy of their spirits must be given to make cogs and compasses of themselves... On the other hand, if you will make a man of the working creature, you cannot make a tool. Let him but begin to imagine, to think, to try to do anything worth doing; and the engine-tuned precision is lost at once. Out come all his roughness, all his dullness, all his incapability; shame upon shame, failure upon failure, pause after pause: but out comes the whole majesty of him also...
>
> John Ruskin: *The Stones of Venice*

PRELIMINARY NOTE ON

LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

The reader should be aware of the conventions which have been adopted in this study:

1. The writer uses the pronoun of her own gender grouping throughout the text. All quotations have been left unchanged so that they reflect the pronoun preferences of the authors concerned.

2. The terms 'corporation', 'enterprise' and 'firm' are used fairly interchangeably. 'Corporation' is used most frequently and in conjunction with the terms 'employer' and 'employee' as these signal that the notion of 'incorporation' as the social process under discussion pertains to *individuals*, rather than to the collectivity signified by the terms 'management' and 'workers'.

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Chapter 1

THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a conceptual map for the research study as a whole. It sets out the immediate contexts in which the study is located by briefly stating the biographical track of the researcher that provided the initial impetus for making 'personal discomfort' the focus of a research study. Both the reader and the researcher need to be alerted to the danger of bias and distortion implicit in such an undertaking. The second point of origin lies in the theoretical presuppositions that provide the basis for the study.

Training offered by business corporations to its employees constitutes the largest portion of non-formal adult education provisioning in most countries, in terms of numbers and financial resources, yet the general opinion of this activity, not least as articulated by the training practitioners themselves, is on the whole negative. Whilst it is understandable that those who hold anti-capitalist world views and those who deify education on moral grounds should negate corporate training as 'ideological inculcation', 'habituation to subordination' or 'behaviourist technicism', such explanations do not account for the negative views of those whose interests are served in various ways by corporate training. Perhaps more significant is that in spite of these negative views, companies are allocating more rather than less resources to training. What is clear is that corporate training's perfunctory treatment in the literature on the labour process and on adult education, belies the complexity of its function and processes.

The purpose of this research study, which will be elaborated upon in section three, is not to 'rescue' training from its metaphorical dilemma, but to answer in broad terms the question: Why is it that everybody in the corporation knows that training doesn't 'work', yet they continue to support it as 'a good thing'? The theoretical resources and procedures

utilised to achieve this aim will be discussed in section four, followed by an outline of the method and organization of the study.

2. THE ORIGINS AND PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE STUDY

2.1 Origins in practice.

After six years as a teacher at a government high school for girls, an occupational choice very much in line with a family tradition where 'to be of service' was highly valued, I ventured into the 'business environment' to encounter the learning world of corporate employees. The official title of 'trainer' seemed to me to be no different from the previous title of 'teacher' and for a while I identified the major difference between the two occupations as the absence of the endless marking of scripts.

A growing feeling of 'discomfort' with technical and developmental curricula based on behavioural objectives and the fact that training seemed to be regarded as the panacea for all organisational ailments, led to the beginnings of an understanding that the organisational world of work differed markedly from the fairly insulated 'life world' of a middle-class high school in the southern suburbs of Cape Town and indeed with many aspects of my taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching, learning and life in general.

Solace was not to be found in the major occupational journals that focussed on the latest training technologies and took for granted a congruence between organisational and individual goals. What presented itself as a puzzling contradiction was stated in every corporate 'mission statement' in a way that made organisational goals synonomous with personal goals, as if this was a natural phenomenon not to be questioned or challenged. Once it became clear that the training provided by the corporation has the express task of increasing the 'fit' between employees and organisation', a curiosity about whether corporate trainers were aware of the ideological dimensions of their training practices and whether indeed they would question this ideological function if such an

awareness should be explicit, became another issue in the gradually developing question regarding the 'meanings' of the training task.

It was heartening occasionally to find similar feelings of discomfort declared in the literature of the field, especially as attendance of a few meetings of the most popular professional organisation, the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM), did not provide a forum for mentioning or discussing the 'felt' conflict.

> Two well-known practitioners recently reported severe value conflicts in their own professional lives. Harrison reported that he frequently found himself in conflict between individuals's need for personal growth and development and the organization's need for more efficient and effective use of its resources. Pages reported that he had stopped working directly for organizations, preferring to help individuals destroy imprisoning organization structures. (Huse, 1980:141-2)

The idiosyncratic nature of the biographical discussion so far is intentional, as it needs to reflect the unexpected and unmapped manner in which contradictions pose themselves. The consideration of a more extended research study was prompted by the gradual formulation of a hypothesis regarding the nature of the management processes which the trainer is asked to undertake in the corporation, but two problems remained: lack of an analytical framework and a vocabulary that would transcend the limitations of the researcher as biographer, and lack of independent data that would shed light on the validity and potential for generalisation contained in the hypothesis that the primary function of corporate training is not to promote the acquisition of technical job skills, neither is it the direct ideological inculcation of the values of 'free enterprise' or the moral preparation of loyal and obedient employees, although it may contribute to all of these areas. Its function is to sustain the 'myth' of career mobility for *all* employees, based on meritocratic principles rather than seniority or years of service, that is created in the corporate mission statement. It achieves this function by continually posing 'mobility' as a possibility, whilst simultaneously acting as a regulatory mechanism.

(Before concluding this biographical section it should also be mentioned that, during the research period, the researcher was promoted to training

manager and later to the newly created position of regional personnel manager. She left the employ of the commercial corporation that provided the initial experience of the corporate world and now works in a university department where she teaches a course on 'workplace learning' that attracts trainers from industrial and commercial corporations or smaller firms, industry training boards, community organisations and trade unions.)

2.2 Theoretical presuppositions

The theoretical presuppositions that serve as a basis of argument, are already indicated in the working hypothesis outlined in the previous section. As these presuppositions provide the direction for the definition of the aims of the study and for the formulation of appropriate analytical frameworks and methods, they deserve fuller treatment.

The major presuppositions are that:

2.2.1 work and employment in large corporations are central to the lives of a large proportion of the population of advanced and developing industrial societies;

2.2.2 the corporation attempts to provide 'meaning' to the lives and work of employees in 'self actualisation' terms rather than pure economic terms;

2.2.3 the training and development function is an integral part of corporate life and the roles and activities of the training and development practitioner present adequate scope for research study;

2.2.4 the material presented can be explored and analysed in ways that allow a range of social meanings to be defined;

2.2.5 the most effective explanatory framework will be found at the intersection between an historical-structural exploration of the patterns of institutionalisation that gave rise to training as a

corporate practice, and current prescriptions for such practice as a component of general managerial control strategies;

2.2.6 training occupies the terrain where labour and educational concerns overlap, with artisanal training providing most of the technical skills;

2.2.7 the problems of subjectivity implicit in a research study lodged within an autobiographical context can be partly overcome by the adoption of appropriate conceptual frameworks, deriving from recognised intellectual traditions;

2.2.8 although the data derived from interviews and questionnaires refer to local conceptualisations, the hypotheses and assumptions do not refer specifically to the South African context but to the common condition of all training and development practitioners who work in a corporate environment.

These particular presuppositions necessitate an approach that views training as a contextualised activity that cannot be divorced from the corporation as the dominant social institution within monopoly capitalism. Just as formal teaching cannot be explored without giving an account of schooling as a societal institution, corporate training needs to give an account of itself that promotes an awareness of its own historicity, both as a managerial control mechanism and as the construct of a particular occupational grouping that competes with other occupational groupings to achieve a 'niche' in the corporate power structure. Such an approach denudes training of its supposed functional neutrality and reveals its political embeddedness and agency.

On the other hand, recognition of training's connection to the broader field of non-formal education locates its purposes and procedures within the educational realm, where they compete for legitimacy with a range of other institutionalised educational practices. It is this link with education and the body of knowledge supplied by education that cannot be appropriated directly by other managerial factions as a means of intra-managerial competition, that strengthens training's claim to specialist

status within the corporation. At the same time the framing of training as an educational activity leads to a questioning of its philosophical rationalé and a contestation of its practices within the general field of non-formal adult education.

By adopting alternative conceptual frameworks from the fields of labour process and education that locate corporate training within a distinctive and often contradictory historical perspective, and by cross-referencing between the two frameworks, the narrow focus of biographical interpretation can be overcome. Problems of subjectivity obviously remain, but in a sense no researcher can escape her own membership in society and the use of her own common-sense reasoning as an ongoing resource.

3. THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of the study are:

3.1 to analyse the nature and meaning of the training and development function as it is found in the modern corporation;

3.2 to show how training and development practitioners construct 'meanings' which enable them to deal with the conflicting demands of the tasks required of them;

3.3 to test, explore and extend the theory of adult pedagogy and by implication, adult learning in a particular non-formal educational setting;

3.4 to make a contribution to the sociological understanding of corporate training practice.

The four aims are interrelated and interdependent as they derive from a single rationale that is directly concerned with educational practice. Technical definitions of training construct a deficit model of learning that poses the practice as flat or one-dimensional and turns both the learners

and the trainers into robot-like caricatures reminiscent of a production-line process devoid of human intent and knowledgability. As one of the major sites of educational provisioning other than schooling, a phenomenon increasingly recognised by the state, the employers and the labour movement, corporate training deserves critical treatment. Trainers as cultural workers are firstly contributors to the labour process and secondly, constitute particular kinds of workers who, by implication, provide meaning-making mechanisms to themselves and others to pose incorporation as the alternative to habituation. The corporation inserts itself into the lives of its employees in ways that go far beyond the economic reciprocity of the cash nexus. An employment relationship characterised by the two parties pursuing their own economic self-interest, poses a fundamental opposition of interest as the basic tenet and depersonalises employment relations by turning them into market relations based on pure economic exchanges. It is now recognised that both parties share a common interest in the survival and growth of the enterprise (Burawoy, 1979:114), that finds its concrete co-ordination in practices of collective bargaining where workers are represented as a class in opposition to capital.

At the same time corporations are increasingly recognising that denial of any moral content to the employment relationship provides a fragile basis for managerial legitimacy and the internalisation of a work ethic (Hill, 1981:22). Recognition of a moral basis other than economic self-interest, does not imply that labour, and therefore the people who labour, are viewed as anything other than a commodity in the workplace and in the labour market, but neither does mere recognition ensure moral involvement with the corporation. Concrete co-ordination of common moral interest requires ideological mechanisms that attempt to reconstitute collective class consciousness as an individual consciousness that interpellates individual employees as members of the corporate family in a way that draws on traditional family relations of loyalty and subordination (a social relation so admired by the West in Japanese corporations), but simultaneously introduces the competitive individualism of the external labour market into the corporation. Patterns of internal mobility that promise increased material and status benefits for individuals become concrete manifestations of the benefit of a

shared moral interest, and social conflict is constituted as a conflict between individuals who compete against each other for access to mobility routes. This process characterises the internal relations of both managers and lower level employees and it is here that corporate training is seen to play a crucial role. Just as the institution of schooling must attempt to resolve the contradiction between work or the demands of the market economy and education as the development of human capacities (Morphet, 1983), at a preparatory stage, corporate training must attempt to resolve this same contradiction within the world of work. It is thus important to view corporate training in educational terms as it is this frame that distinguishes it from other institutional arrangements that provide incentives for individual ideological incorporation.

The first aim of the research study is to grasp as fully as is possible how corporate training has developed to its current form and what effect this form has on its function so that the nature and meaning of the training activity becomes clear. In order to achieve this aim, training must be situated within the general personnel, or as it is now called, the human resource function. Personnel is generally recognised as a managerial specialism that is in the ascendancy, but its battle to shake off historical perceptions of welfare paternalism from which it derives its existence, needs to be brought into focus. It is these welfare roots that provide the function with a potential for ambiguity that is now mostly utilised by training as a sub-component of the personnel function. Corporate training must also be situated within the wider societal activity of skill formation so that its political import, particularly in the South African context of 'apartheid' capitalism, can be recognised. These two routes merge in public and private statements about training's stated task and its capacity to meet the delivery demands of various actor groupings in the corporation. Structural constraints and possibilities posed by training's location and formal executive authority within the corporation must be considered, as they direct the form that training takes and therefore, by implication, its function and meaning.

Assuming that the first aim can be reasonably achieved, it becomes possible to introduce the trainers as educational agents who draw on the discursive traditions provided by a variety of education discourses to

legitimate their practice and to provide direction to their endeavours. It is here that the second aim conflates into the third. The discursive traditions embodied in the third aim provide the interpretative frameworks that are utilised to reach a conclusion that is not specific to corporate trainers as 'teachers', although it emerges from examination of their contextualised practice. The dilemma in which corporate trainers find themselves in respect of the relationship between the educator and the production of knowledge, is shared by the wider field of adult education that is similarly characterised by professional insecurity and institutional marginality (Brookfield, 1988:319). It is for this reason that the second and third aims have been seperately stated. It is hoped that an exploration of the complexity and contradictory nature of educational practice in a focussed social setting will not only test current understandings of teaching and learning but also, contribute to the debate in critically useful ways.

The fourth aim is an acknowledgement of the study's indebtedness to both the sociology of work and the sociology of occupations for providing analytical frameworks which make it possible to pose alternative arguments for the interpretation of the 'meaning of work' that go beyond the managerial-psychologistic interpretations (Watson, 1980:34), so popular in the field of human resource management. The aim therefore reflects an acknowledgement of the importance of sociological interpretations that have the capacity to intervene between individualistic and holistic explanations of perceived social realities and provide a third explanation that shows how social dispositions and action arise at the interplay between two sets of common sense explanations. In order to repay such indebtedness the study wishes to contribute to an increased understanding of the 'incorporation' process by working at the interface between private 'personal troubles of milieu' and the organisation of many such milieux into 'public issues' that are socially and historically located (Mills, 1970,:14-15).

4. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the preceding sections the origins and aims of the study have been described. It has already been indicated that the study will draw on alternative interpretative frameworks for analytical and explanatory reference. Such a statement, however, masks the problem of finding a vocabulary that gives voice to the argument within and through a multitude of 'other' voices. The cultural relativism of the last decades of post-modernist discourse attacks the totality of grand narratives, challenges the systematic privileging of particular versions of Western civilisation and attempts to establish different grounds for the production and organisation of knowledge. A relativistic awareneress therefore precludes easy appropriation of a single frame of reference and necessitates a conceptual and linguistic self-consciousness that is succintly captured by Wexler when he says that 'a truly post-modern story is simultaneously an exposition and a deconstruction of itself' (1992:6).

Bowers (1987:46) uses the term 'conceptual map' to describe the interpretative framework that actors use to bring order and meaning to the external world. He refers to the influence of vocabulary and conceptual categories (termed 'discourse') on what issues are perceived as problematic, what questions are appropiate to ask, and what solutions are considered acceptable. This point is reinforced by Giroux, from a cultural studies perspective, when he argues that, by making language constitutive of the conditions for producing meanings, new forms of knowledge become possible.

> Knowledge and power are reconceptualised in this context by reasserting not merely the indeterminacy of language but also the historical and social construction of knowledge itself. In this case, the cultural studies strategy of interrogation points to an evaluation of the disciplines within which intellectual knowledge is configured. Holding these disciplines to be constructed under historically specific circumstances leads to a discovery that as these conditions have been surpassed the legitimacy of dominant forms of knowledge are in doubt. Therefore efforts to preserve the distinctions between natural, social and human sciences and between the 'arts' can be viewed as exemplars of the politics and historicity of the academic disciplines. (1992:201)

Waugh is more conservative in her exposition of the post-modern 'mood'.

> To argue at a theoretical level that all assertions are the fictions of incommensurable language games is to deny the fact that most people do, indeed, continue to invest in 'truth effects'. If we continue to invest in 'grand narratives', such narratives can be said to exist. Grand narratives can be seen to be ways of formulating fundamental human needs and their 'grandness' is a measure of the urgency and intensity of the need. They are unlikely, therefore, to die, though they may need to be profoundly transformed . (1992:9)

It is Rorty who puts the 'language game' into a philosophical and practical perspective by distinguishing between an ironic and common sense approach to the 'final vocabulary' that we use to justify our actions, beliefs and lives.

> I shall define an 'ironist' as someone who fulfills three conditions: (1) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered; (2) she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts; (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. Ironists who are inclined to philosophize see the choice between vocabularies as made neither within a neutral and universal metavocabulary nor by an attempt to fight one's way past appearances to the real, but simply by playing the new off against the old ...
>
> The opposite of irony is common sense. For that is the watchword of those who unselfconsciously describe everything important in terms of the final vocabulary to which they and those around them are habituated. To be commonsensical is to take for granted that statements formulated in that final vocabulary suffice to describe and judge the beliefs, actions and lives of those who employ alternative final vocabularies. (1989:73-74)

The problem of outlining a theoretical framework that forms the basis of the study proper, lies in the need to draw on the final vocabularies of already constituted discursive traditions whilst at the same time signalling that the vocabulary used is constructed by partially adopting and partially modifying the vocabulary of the writers one has read and the conversations one has had. The 'making' of a provisional 'final vocabulary' is by its very nature an untidy process. Ready-made conceptual frameworks do not present themselves at opportune moments

to solve the 'puzzles' encountered in the data. It is the data itself and the researcher's 'gut' instinct at work while gathering and scrutinising the data, that pose the analytical questions, often without a vocabulary available that can explain why certain comments or issues stand out amongst others. What emerges in the final version of the written account is a redescription of many other redescriptions. The 'voice' of the argument has a ring of rationality that obscures the often confusing conceptual leaps and back-tracks of the 'logic-in-use' that precedes the 'reconstructed logic' (Kaplan discussed in Cuff *et al*,1984:191), presented for public scrutiny in the final version. In this process slippage between discourses becomes inevitable and yet an uncritical eclecticism results in a 'mish mash' that precludes internal coherence in the argument as a whole. Oppositional discourses lose their interpretative power if they are simply drawn upon when it suits the moment and the argument therefore has to give a self-conscious account of its rationale that acknowledges shifts in the grounds of analysis and interpretation.

In this instance, the writer feels most able to articulate an argument in her 'home language', namely in the field of adult education, but the field is characterised by the need to synthesise a theoretical rationale for pedagogical practice that incorporates a wide range of often oppositional sets of practices, and therefore does not hold sufficient explanatory power to deal with the contingencies of context-specific investigation. It is for this reason that the corporation as an institutionalised site of practice and the trainer role as a particular construction of 'adult educator' require frames of reference that draw on disciplines that deal specifically with industrial and commercial 'work'. Here there are two choices. The field of human resource management gives an account of itself that positions it squarely within orthodox management discourse. This discourse tends to represent management as a set of functionally necessary tasks, roles and processes that are 'naturally' present in all forms of joint activity in order to co-ordinate the efficient and effective achievement of objectives whose origins and legitimacy are taken for granted (Knights and Willmot, 1986:1). Whilst such a framework is useful for understanding how the field views its own agency, what it poses as management problems and what resources it utilises to solve those problems, it does not explicitly acknowledge the 'felt' conflict that initially prompted the study. It also

provides no way of understanding why personnel and training is considered to be 'part of management' and yet continually complain that they do not have 'management commitment'. This lack of explanatory power brings the second choice into focus.

The 'labour process' debate concentrates on the means applied by management to control labour. It is grounded in a Marxian conception of a fundamental conflict of interest between capital and labour, but takes Braverman's distinction between labour and labour power (1974:54), as its starting point, and investigates the influence of the social context within which labour is performed on management's ability to extract surplus value. Clearly then a framework that presupposes 'conflict' and investigates the processes of management in their historical-political context has more appeal in terms of its explanatory power than the first one, but is is when labour process theory acknowledges the interactionist perspective on the study of occupations, attributed to Everett Hughes and the Chicago School and influenced by Durkheim's concern with occupations as the basis of 'moral order', that this framework yields an analytical perspective that ceases to see management as 'omniscient, omnipotent and monolithic' (Thompson and McHugh, 1990:156). Labour process theory now recognises that there are conflicts within management constituted by contending interest groups and that management control strategies are best understood as outcomes of the ideologies developed by occupational groupings who compete with other 'professions' to determine and occupy key positions within the global function of capital (Armstrong, 1986). Such a framework allows us to see personnel management as an occupational grouping that is involved in its own struggle for managerial status and power and that draws on its own origins and history to claim monopoly of its practices.

Training as a sub-specialism within the broader 'human resource' function, operates at the interface between its historical development as part of the personnel function and its claim to specialist educational knowledge and expertise required for its 'teaching' task. It is here that the discursive traditions of the field of adult education come into play, as it is under the social relations of the teacher-learner interaction *in* the training room that training occupies its own 'space'. The capacity to

succeed or fail in its allotted task rests upon the terms and conditions that define and frame the educational event.

Overlaps between the sociological and educational frames are clearly inevitable and indeed vital, but they inform the enquiry from different vantage points and allow for a distinction between the macro-and micro-dimensions of the process of 'managing meanings'. The way in which the evidence is viewed and the emphasis it is given will differ in the two frames. Both frames provide socio-historical perspectives, but in the sociological framework it is the development of the personnel specialism within a general version of shift in managerial control strategies that receives attention, while the notion of trainer 'role shift' as a response to different organisational problems becomes the key conceptual device for a dynamic exploration of the trainer role. Different theories of adult learning and therefore of teaching, make new sets of vocabulary available for discursive justification and the shift in conceptualisations of the trainer role can be viewed as consistent with the trajectory of theoretical discourse within the general field of adult education. In a sense it is these new sets of vocabulary that continually provide corporate trainers with 'new' grounds for their claim to professional expertise that can only be appropriated through special training and qualifications.

Running through both these frames are the voices of the trainers themselves and the argument is 'made' from the vantage point provided by the overlap between historically-located structural conditions and actor representations of their 'realities'.

5. THE METHOD AND ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Method

Two key problems must be addressed in a consideration of methodological issues. The first problem was stated at the beginning of this chapter. The study's biographical origins give it certain advantages in the sense that validation of the findings are immediate and personal. At the same time it has to be recognised that another researcher may make different

interpretations of the same data and therefore come to different conclusions. This is a risk inherent in all qualitative social research and one that can only be overcome by building a process of 'checks and balances' into the research procedure. The second problem is to proceed methodologically in such a manner that the data provided by interviews and questionnaires, become part of the problem rather than part of the solution. It has already been mentioned that it was the data itself that posed interesting 'puzzles', so that although a working hypothesis was outlined in section two, the data gathering process was by no means as directed and purposeful as the questions outlined in appendices A and B might suggest. It would have been difficult, at the start of the process, to provide a rationale for why those particular questions were posed. In retrospect it is possible to argue the merits of each question, but during the interviews the researcher was guided by the flow of the conversation, so that certain questions no longer seemed significant and others emerged. As a result new 'puzzles' constructed themselves and others disappeared.

Four measures were taken to overcome both these problems. The first was to declare the biographical locatedness and to state as fully as possible the presuppositions, frameworks and procedures through which the data will be considered. The assumption here is that if both the researcher and the reader are aware of the situation, they can use this knowledge independently and collectively, to exert critical pressure on each step of the analytical process.

The second measure was to contextualise the 'case' of corporate training historically, through a focus on the struggles of the occupational grouping for self-legitimation of their practice, in order to convince their employers and, in certain instances, the labour movement they they make an important contribution. In this way both the researcher and the interviewees cease to be individual voices, but become representative of the nuances and 'differences' that are often masked by a common discourse.

The third measure was to collect the data that provided actor interpretations of corporate training, in two stages so that the conclusions

reached after the first set of interpretations could be tested and re-evaluated. It also provided the opportunity for new questions to be posed.

The fourth measure was to employ two alternative interpretative frameworks, namely sociology and education. Both orthodox and radical theories of managerial control are identified and utilised to provide alternative interpretative frameworks of the macro-structural conditions, while different perspectives on adult education inform the micro-social processes in the training room.

Justification for these measures can be found in current literature on qualitative social research, where arguments about structuralist and interpretative accounts of social action, or positivist and interactionist research methodologies have raged for some time. The epistemological foundations of scientific inquiry, deriving from natural science methodology where 'testing' leads to deductive causal explanations in absolute terms, have been extended by Popper's argument for falsification or refutation as the test of any scientific hypothesis, Kuhn's focus on the scientist as a member of a particular 'scientific community' and Polyani's notion of 'tacit knowledge', amongst others. The 'demise' of positivism and the emergence of relativism (Philips, 1987), should perhaps rather be viewed as a growing awareness of the historicity of science, but it also gave rise to new arguments for naturalistic modes of inquiry, usually associated with symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and enthonomethodology in sociology and with ethnography in anthropology.

What has emerged is a more generalised claim to 'scientific' work that stresses an ongoing and explicit relationship between empirical observation and the generation of conceptual categories and hypotheses so that grounded theory emerges during the research process itself (Cuff *et al* 1984; Strauss, 1987), as well as a respect for both the research 'subjects' and the researcher as active and knowledgable 'variables' in the hermeneutic process of 'making meaning' (Denzin, 1971; Giddens, 1984; Ely, 1991). New methodologies have become available that allow for contextualised empirical observation of day-to-day patterns of institutionalised practice. 'Participant observation' is prone to problems of typicality or representativeness, replicability, influences from other

sources that have not been investigated and the reliability of the observer's analysis, but it also promotes flexibility and immediacy. Surveys and questionnaires, on the other hand enable the collection of a wide range of information in a relatively short period that allows patterns to emerge, but they provide no measure of the quality and intensity of the response and responses may be simplified or misconstrued in order to detect regularities (Wilson: Open University, 1979). Depth interviews (Jones, 1985), follow a loosely structured pattern that provides opportunity for detailed exploration, but its supposed 'non-directive' format requires the establishment of 'rapport' between interviewer and interviewee in order to minimise selective interpretation by both parties.

The notion of 'triangulation' (Cuff *et al*, 1984; Fielding *et al*, 1986) reminiscent of Weber's attempts to achieve both generalisations about societal 'laws' and interpretative understandings of cultural action, has been adopted to overcome the analytical dilemma of playing off one vantage point or set of methodologies against another. Such a multiple strategy-approach may include triangulation of a number of elements: data, in time and space and by using a number of data sources; investigator, where more than one person examines the same situation; theory, where competing theories are used for alternative interpretations; and methodology, either as 'within-method' or 'between-method' variants (Fielding *et al*, 1986:25).

> The term 'triangulation' derives from surveying. Knowing a single landmark only locates one somewhere along the line in a direction from the landmark, whereas with two landmarks one can take bearings on both and locate oneself at their intersection. (:23)

Triangulation *per se* does not necessarily overcome the danger of researcher bias, or increase the reliability or validity of the information-gathering and interpretative processes. The argument here is that by choosing at least one method that is suitable for exploring the structural aspects of the problem and at least one method that can capture the essential elements of its meaning for those involved, a process that 'describe[s] the detail of the foreground against the design of the 'background' (:35) and transcends the dualism between positivist or interpretative stances, can be achieved. In the final instance, the accuracy

of any method comes from its systematic application and any theory that is derived from haphazard procedure, stands little chance of withstanding public scrutiny.

> Triangulation puts the researcher in a frame of mind to regard his or her own material critically, to test it, to identify its weaknesses, to identify where to test further doing something different. The role of triangulation is to increase the researcher's confidence so that findings may be better imparted to the audience and to lessen recourse to the assertion of privileged insight. (:24-25)

It is the hope of this research study that the triangulation measures outlined earlier will succeed in validating the research process and its modes of inquiry, but at the same time make the argument accessible from different vantage points. The purpose of the study is, in the final instance, to provide corporate trainers, and above all the researcher herself, with frameworks of understanding that transcend the 'personal problem'. If these frameworks are not recognisable to the 'subjects' of research or do not relate to the 'actuality' of the experience of those involved, the study will have failed in its purpose.

5.2 The data

The data can be grouped in three categories:

5.2.1 Primary and secondary documents that reveal the historical trajectory. They include reports on meetings held by the Institute for Personnel Management in Britain, and newspaper clippings that record the public speeches made in South Africa by Mrs Isobel White during the 1940s and 1950s, as well as addresses delivered to the personnel profession.

5.2.2 Random examples of public statements made by leading South African corporations, that outline the 'vision and mission' of each particular workplace to employees, to share holders and to clients.

5.2.3 Impressions conveyed by the 22 corporate trainers who were either interviewed or responded to questionnaires about workplace perceptions of training, about their organisational location and

formal decision-making authorities, about their main job accountabilities, their work histories, their occupational likes and dislikes, their work problems and their views of the status and mobility opportunities open to them. (See appendices A and B.)

The data-gathering process was as accidental as it was planned. Many of the initial interviews were conducted in the Eastern Cape, to avoid the continuation of 'old' conversations, but a few training acquaintances and ex-colleagues also volunteered to be interviewed and suggested other trainers who could be contacted. This proved extremely helpful as response to a questionnaire received in the mail is notoriously poor. The interview sample as a whole included corporate trainers from Cape Town, Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria. The gender groupings were equally represented and the training experience ranged from 9 months to 15 years. All race groups were included although 80% of the trainers were 'white', a distribution that accurately reflects the current conditions. 50% of the interviewees work in head office training departments and 50% work in regional or divisional training departments.

It should further be mentioned that the researcher's position at a university department of adult education allowed her, over a period of two years, to test and explore many of the patterns or clusters identified in the original interview and questionnaire responses, with students on the courses that she teaches and with participants in shorter workshops conducted for a range of companies. Observations made on these occasions, while not presented as part of the data proper, frequently informed and even transformed the analysis and interpretations offered in the study.

5.3 The sequence of the study

The study will proceed in five phases. It begins with a review of the literature that provides the intellectual resources for the study. The review will outline the 'ways of thinking' that can be traced in the literature that takes the study of industrial and commercial work as its central focus and concentrates on the work of management from different perspectives. A second point of departure will be to review the literature

of adult education and to show how the field has developed to its current theoretical position.

The second phase will locate corporate training in a historical context. It will trace the institutionalisation of the formal personnel function, of which training is a sub-set, in the modern corporation. The literature draws a distinction between the origins of British and American Personnel management, the two countries where personnel practice developed in its primary form. In the United States personnel departments were apparently created to implement the prescriptions for increasing productivity and morale that emanated from the applied social sciences, while in Britain the origin of personnel is traced to factory welfare work. The British path will be followed as personnel practice entered South Africa through the colonial connection.

The purpose of this phase is to separate the development of personnel from the development of management generally and to show how personnel developed a particular capacity for role ambiguity that was consistent with its corporate function, although it will be shown that current 'strategic human resource management' practices have conflated many of the tensions traditionally held in the role.

In the third phase the focus of investigation will shift from the general personnel function to training and development as a particular corporate sub-specialism. The function of training will be located within the macro-political context of skill formation and will be investigated through an exploration of actor perceptions of training that will be analysed in relation to its portrayal in public corporate mission statements. Conclusions about training's function, as related to its form and resultant capacity, will be reached.

In the fourth phase the practice of training as it occurs in the training room will be examined. The role identity of trainers as educational agents will be explored in three ways: as it is prescribed by the current ideology of the 'learning organisation'; as it is understood and articulated by the trainers themselves; and, as it derives from the theoretical resources available in the general field of adult education. This micro-analysis will

be linked to the preceding macro-analysis in order to show how contextual explanations and actor interpretations find their inter-connection.

The study will be drawn to conclusion by re-visiting the original aims and by evaluating the significance and value of the interpretations offered in the light of current policy developments in South Africa.

Chapter 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

2. LITERATURE ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

3. LITERATURE OF THE MANAGEMENT OF WORK

3.1 The labour process debate

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4. THE LITERATURE OF ADULT EDUCATION

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Chapter 2

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to locate the study in terms of the literature of the relevant fields of inquiry. The first area that will be briefly discussed derives from the sociology of knowledge, particularly as it intersects with the world of work. As the question of the 'meaning of work' is the central question that constructs the study as a whole, this framework is crucial to an understanding of the relationship between individual consciousness, agency and institutional forms of work.

The literature on the management of work will be discussed from two vantage points. The first frame will be provided by the labour process debate that is located within a wider sociology of work. The second frame will emerge from an exploration of the analytical and prescriptive orthodoxy that informs general management practice. Any depiction of management is clearly relative to the perspective that organises its representation and, while these two perspectives could be typified as being representative of the 'left' and the 'right' of the theoretical spectrum or, to use sociologically correct terms, as representing 'conflict' and 'consensus' models of society, the purpose of providing both perspectives is that each model's explanatory power finds its analytical counter position in the other. The data that will be presented in succeeding chapters requires a commentary from within the orthodoxy and a triangular analytical vantage point from without.

In the final section the literature of the field of adult education will be discussed to show how the field articulates both conflict and consensus perspectives in educational terms and provides a range of theoretical resources for trainers as 'adult educators'.

2. LITERATURE ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

A permanent theme in social theory concerns the relationship between society and the individual. The dialectical relationship between societal processes that shape the individual, and individual actions that create, reproduce and transform society, has absorbed the attention of all the foundational theorists in the field, with each forging a new 'language' to reflect their particular orientation. Marx's emphasis on historical materialism, Weber's concern with understanding macro-structures and processes at the level of social action and meaning, and Durkheim's approach of 'considering all social facts as things', remain the base of current contributions in the social science disciplines.

The sociology of knowledge perspective developed in the early 1960s is what Karabel *et al* call 'a rather esoteric sub-discipline' (1977:51) of general sociology. It derived its initial status from ethnomethodological and phenomenological approaches that were in themselves considered to be marginal, and took as its territory the analysis of the social construction of reality and therefore 'with everything that passes for "knowledge" in society' (Berger & Luckman, 1967:26).

As a critique of structural functionalism that tried to 'get behind the backs' of the social actors whose conduct it seeked to understand (Giddens, 1979:2), the sociology of knowledge approach studies social actors as 'selves' who work in relation with others to create common meanings. Schutz's phenomenological emphasis on the 'common sense' that all socialised beings possess is generally acknowledged as an important influence on Garfinkel's ethnomethodological approach, focussing on the methods or orderly activities through which societal members produce and organise shared meanings (Cuff *et al*, 1984:153, 159). The attention that is paid to micro-level interactions and the study of local sub-cultures rather than to larger social structures, has, however, constituted a major critique of this form of social action theory.

This research study has been strongly influenced by Berger's earlier work on the effect of sociology of occupations on the relationship between work and identity formation that led to his later work on the sociological

analysis of consciousness in terms of the institutional order of modern society. For the sake of clarity the concepts derived from these works that have informed this study will be briefly discussed.

Berger (1964) poses the question of the 'meaning' of work as a particularly modern problem which is related to specific structural and ideological developments in modern Western history - namely the extreme intensification of the division of labour occasioned by the on-going Industrial Revolution and the secularisation of the concept of vocation. Work is seen not only as a means of livelihood, but also as a source of self-identification that provides the individual with a profile that is stable and consistent, and so recognised by others and self.

Constant changes in the social organisation of work - brought about by the assembly-line principle being applied not only to the manufacturing process but also to numerous white-collar occupations - has brought the question of 'meaning' into sharp focus, much more so than in situations where the worker related to the work process until the final product emerged. Drawing on the work of Max Weber he argues that, especially through the agency of Protestantism, the medieval concept of religious vocation was transformed into the modern concept of secular work as a vocation, requiring the individual's highest religious and ethical commitments. Seen together, the structural and ideological developments present a paradoxical situation. The structural aspect makes it unlikely that the individual will be able to find realisation in her work and forces her to look for 'self-realisation' elsewhere, resulting in identity confirmation in the so-called 'private' sphere outside of work.

In a later work, Berger (1974) returns to this theme and attends to the 'consciousness' of modernity or modernisation brought about by technologically produced economic growth and its institutional concomitants. He presents a fascinating argument for the development of a modern consciousness, by drawing a distinction between the organisation of knowledge and the cognitive style of a particular consciousness (:20). He argues that the modern phenomena of technological production and bureaucracy are carriers, or social bases, for specific structures of consciousness. Institutions of technological

production and bureaucracy, together and seperately, are seen as primary carriers of modernisation, while institutions of mass education and mass communication are seen as secondary carriers. Any diffusion of structures of consciousness can be carried over from their original institutional carriers to other contexts (:22). What is carried over are not specific items of knowledge but the general cognitive style that pertains to that type of knowledge. Structures of 'work' consciousness are therefore carried over to the public and private spheres and vice versa. Categories deriving from the world of work and from large organisations may be oppositional or complementary. The essence of the argument is that the 'world of work' occupies a dominant position in the social life of any society, so that forms of knowledge organisation and cognitive styles are transferred to the symbolic universe as a whole. Identity or 'the manner in which individuals define themselves' (:73) in a particular social context, is therefore constituted by dichotomous 'clusters of consciousness' (:42) from disparate spheres of life.

> Everyday life in just about every one of its sectors is ongoingly bombarded, not only with material objects and processes derived from technological production but with clusters of consciousness originating with the latter. Thus many of the above-named themes serve as contributions to an overarching symbolic universe peculiar to modernity. It is especially important to understand this, since the majority of the population is never directly in technological production. For better or for worse, it is not necessary to be engaged in technological work in order to think technologically. (1974:42)

Early sociology of knowledge perspectives, however, ignored the problems of structure, history and power and viewed knowledge or social action as unconstrained by these forces. The determined, organised, structured character of the societal pattern was not taken into account and the emphasis fell on the organic process through which individuals are socially constituted. The work of neo-Marxist conflict theorists such as Althusser (1971) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) introduced an historical-structural critique of action theory and argued that social processes and organisation are the result of structural organisation. The historical material reality of class structure determines the conditions under which social actors construct social meanings to reproduce a social division of labour. The education system is a crucial mechanism for the reproduction

of social consciousness and is itself a reflection of capitalist class hegemony.

Both these approaches to theories of social action had a marked influence on the sociology of education of the 1950s, which, as a branch of sociology that attempted to make the study of education a scientific endeavour, drew mainly on consensual elements of the prevailing orthodoxy of structural functionalism. The rise of the welfare state as a principle of citizenship that would counteract class stratification and the economic theory of human capital that brought millions of students into higher education renewed interest in education as an area of long-term investment for the future that would offer opportunities for mobility to individuals (Karabel *et al*, 1977:2-3, 10-12, 35). The technological functionalism of this era was countered by the conflict theorists who stressed the role of education in maintaining a system of structured social inequality and led to a 'new' approach to the sociology of education.

This interpretative approach, that also draws on the sociology of knowledge perspectives provided by Berger and Luckmann, focuses on the 'black box' (Karabel *et al*, 1977:32) of schooling. Young calls attention to 'certain fundamental features of the educators' worlds which are taken for granted, such as what counts as educational knowledge, and how it is made available' (1971:2). The organisation of knowledge in the school curriculum, as the carrier of structural authority that reflects and perpetuates dominant cultural values, is also a major theme in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1971, 1973) and Basil Bernstein (1971). Apple (1979), drawing on the work of Raymond Williams and Antonio Gramsci, views schools as 'agents of cultural and ideological hegemony' (1979:6) with a selective tradition of passing of the dominant culture as the tradition. A more recent development in the field is the exploration of 'resistance' by teachers and students against the socially reproductive structure of education. Possibilities for reclaiming new forms of knowledge to challenge the conditions through which historical structures of domination and subjugation are maintained are examined in, amongst others, the work of Giroux and Aronowitz (1991) and Giroux (1992). Wexler addresses questions of identity formation in post-structuralist terms and argues that what students are doing in high school can be described as

'becoming somebody' and that 'kids came to school with histories of value and with different repertoires of social and culutural resources that they could use to create the value of the subject, self or identity' (1992:7).

Returning to the ideas of Schutz, as well as Berger and Luckman, Bowers develops an approach to education that fosters communicative competence. He calls attention to what he calls the 'educational implications of the relativising of traditional forms of cultural authority that appears as an essential characteristic of modernization, with its emphasis on individualism, equality and, critical inquiry' and distinguishes between 'the "moves" in the language game of socialisation that empower the individual and the "moves" that limit thought to the world of taken for granted belief' (1986:vii-ix).

Giddens' theory of structuration (1979, 1984, 1990) moves the investigation away from formal education systems and places the post-modern debate about a plurality of heterogeneous claims to knowledge in a wider global time-space context. He investigates the 'discontinuities' of modernity and the institutional processes of modernisation (1990:1-53) and argues against the traditionally established dualisms in social theory, namely the dualism of individual and society or subject and object, and the dualism between conscious or unconscious modes of cognition. In an earlier work he introduces the notion of the duality of structure:

> By the duality of structure, I mean the essential recursiveness of social life, as constituted in social pratices. Structure enters simultaneously into the constitution of the agent and social practices, and "exists" in the generating moments of its constitution. (1979:5).

The sociology of knowledge perspective can therefore be seen to continue to be of significance, although not under the conditions that were originally posed or suggested.

3. LITERATURE OF THE MANAGEMENT OF WORK

3.1 The labour process debate

As mentioned in the previous chapter, labour process theory, drawing generally on Marx's interpretation of the labour process, has received renewed attention in the last twenty years since the publication of Harry Braverman's (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. It been concerned mainly with the progressive erosion of workers' skills through various mechanisms of management co-ordination and control based on Fordist systems of mass production that find their ideological justification in F.W. Taylor's 'scientific management' (Hill, 1981; Knights and Willmott, 1986; Thompson, 1989). The main characteristic of these types of analyses has been an emphasis on the institutionalisation of the separation of mental and manual labour that gave rise to the introduction of management as a distinctive and pervasive capitalist process. Subsequent interpretations of the relations between capitalism, work design and control have examined different features of this process. The humanistic ideology of 'human relations' and its variations that have displaced or moderated direct methods of supervision as a response to labour market conditions, has received consistent attention. Other contributions suggest that different forms of management control have evolved over time as each preceding form is neutralised by the characteristic form of resistance that it generates within the workforce (Armstrong, 1986; Rose, 1988; Thompson and McHugh, 1990).

A major break in the trajectory of 'Bravermania' (Thompson, 1989:2) was spearheaded by Burawoy's (1979, 1985) exploration of the notion of active 'consent' rather than 'passive' compliance generated at the point of production through the game of 'making out'.

> During my ten-month stint as a miscellaneous machine operator, from June 1974 to April 1975, Harry Braverman published his path-breaking *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. At the time it failed to speak to my experiences on the shopfloor, to get at what work meant to me and my fellow operators. We were constructing a shopfloor life of our own that took for granted what Braverman bemoaned: the separation of conception and execution. Our jobs may have had little skill in Braverman's sense, but they involved ingenuity enough. They absorbed our attention and sometimes

> even left us with too much autonomy. Uncertainty could be as nerve-racking as it was seductive. Objectification of work, if that was what we were experiencing, is very much a subjective process - it cannot be reduced to some inexorable laws of capitalism. We participated in and strategized our own subordination. We were active accomplices in our own exploitation. That, and not the destruction of subjectivity, was what was so remarkable. (1985:10)

Burawoy expanded the conception of production beyond its purely formal moment to include the ideological and political processes of production and thus ruptured views of an inexorable unfolding of capitalist rationality acting on a passive workforce (Joyce, 1987:6). His work moved the debate to an exploration of the consciousness and agency of both capital and labour based on an understanding that, in practice, interests are not given but are defined, organised and interpreted through interaction and struggle (Knights and Willmott, 1986:5). General and unilinear analyses have been replaced by case-by-case contingency analysis (Thompson, 1989:3), that takes account of different dimensions of control present in particular firms, the importance of specific sectoral economic contexts and their mediating effects on factors such as gender and labour markets. Management itself is seen as a potential terrain of compromise and consensus or conflict and contestation. Armstrong's (1986) analysis of the 'cases' of accountancy and personnel management derives from the argument that Taylorism should be considered as one *possible* management control strategy that arose as 'the expression of the "ideology of engineering" at the moment when American mechanical engineers as a group, experienced an abrupt transition from independence to subordination within developing industrial hierarchies' (:23). This version counters the conceptualisation of Taylorism as a natural solution to the problem of work intensification under the increased stress of competition in a time of economic depression, that is usually offered by functionalist explanations. The role of inter-professional competition between managerial specialisms within the global function of management provides an alternative account for the generation of new control strategies that counteracts the notion of managerial rationality either in terms of its own logic or as a reaction to strategies of worker resistance.

Thompson notes that the current thesis of 'flexible specialisation' as the characterising feature of post-Fordist manufacturing systems, marks a

return to the development of general versions of capitalist work organisation that 'challenges the ideas of de-skilling and bureaucratic control, even to the point of asserting the return of the craft worker' (1989:3), a point also taken up by Rose (1988). This *alternative* paradigm has been widely adopted by radical and liberal intellectuals and by management and the labour movement as posing the possibility of 'strategic accommodation' (Mathews, 1989) of the interests of all stakeholders in the labour process, despite the risk of core-periphery segmentation.

> The 'post-Fordist' hypothesis on which these new positions are based is the nearest thing we have to a paradigm which can link widespread changes in forms of production to changes in class relations, state forms and individual identities. It thus pursues the far-reaching scope of explanation and connection between disparate phenomena that has previously been expected of Marxist political economy. (Rustin, 1989:56)

Such universalism is put into a perspective by Clegg when he argues that the 'modernist mix' of Fordism and bureaucracy has exhausted all areas of rationalisation and that the concept of 'post-modern' organisation, that appropriates the post-modern feature of 'de-differentiation', has been adopted to accommodate an understanding of some aspects of post-war Japanese work organisation, as well as to draw a distinction between the production systems of less and more advanced industrial societies. He cautions that 'no necessity attaches to the contours that any possible postmodernism might take' and that ideal-types of Fordism or post-Fordism 'pre-judge the contexts that will shape, and be shaped by, these tendencies (1992:160).

It is Thompson's observation that 'the breadth of Braverman's analysis ensures that it raises most of the major themes necessary to the debate: the impact of science and technology on skills; managerial strategies of control; relations between production and society; and the changing class and occupational structure' (1989:7) that explains why the labour process debate has succeeded in, perhaps its greatest achievement. It has brought together industrial sociology and psychology, management and organisation theory, and industrial relations on reasonably common terrain. An inter-disciplinary framework that is characterised by different

emphases on how work *is* or *should* be co-ordinated and different views on which aspects of the process should be taken-for-granted and which should be problematised, has provided a base for more detailed examination of the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the labour process.

3.2 Orthodox management theory

The writing of Peter Drucker, one of the leading and most influential management theorists, is perhaps the best illustration of the views of management 'from within'. He is also one of the few contributors who provides a historically contextualised, though paradoxical, account of management as practice.

Management is depicted as a specific form of work that distinguishes capitalist societies from their antecedents. The function of profit (of which productivity is a concomitant requirement) rather than power is seen as the 'distinctive criterion and the organizing principle' (1988:18). Planning, organising, leading and controlling remain the four basic operations of management work, with the addition of self development and employee development (:20-21). The two main entrepreneurial functions of any profit-making organisation, namely marketing and innovation, leads to the fulfilment of the business enterprise's specific mission of economic performance for the 'sake of society' (:40), and its purpose, which is 'to create a customer' (:56). (Many of the current contributions to the orthodox management debate (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Kanter, 1985; Peters and Austin, 1986), similarly concentrate on aspects of entrepreneurship and innovation.)

> Every one of our institutions today exists to contribute outside of itself, to supply and satisfy nonmembers. Business exists to supply goods and services to customers and economic surplus to society, rather than to supply jobs to workers and managers, or even dividends to shareholders. Jobs and dividends are necessary means but not ends ...
>
> To discharge its job, to produce economic goods and services, the business enterprise has to have impacts on people, on communities and on society. It has to have power and authority over people, for example, employees, whose own ends and purposes are not defined by and within the enterprise. It has to have impact on the

> community as a neighbour, as the source of jobs and tax revenue but also of waste products and pollutants. And, increasingly, in our pluralist society of organizations, it has to add to its fundamental concern for the quantities of life (economic goods and services) a concern for the quality of life, for the human and social environment of modern man and modern community. (Drucker, 1988:40-41)

The totalising impact of the business enterprise on all aspects of societal life is clear, not only in terms of consumerism but also in the realm of the psyche of the individual and the collectivity or community. Its authority and power becomes a taken-for-granted pre-requisite for its task of contributing towards the 'social good', with the profit motive relativised in societal rather than enterprise-specific terms. What is also recognised is that the enterprise cannot automatically assume congruence with its objectives by its employees and it is here that the presence and effort of management becomes optimal.

'Scientific management' is acknowledged as the basic approach to the management of large-scale enterprises, but again Drucker is at pains to stress the social rather than the profit objectives of the systematic study of work. F. W. Taylor, depicted in the literature as a controversial and even crankish figure (Rose, 1988), is described as a benign 'saviour'.

> What led Taylor to his work and provided his motivation throughout was first the desire to free the worker from the burden of heavy toil, destructive of body and soul. And then it was the hope to make it possible to give the labourer a decent livelihood through increasing the productivity of work. (Drucker, 1988:29)

Subsequent application of 'human relations principles' is seen as prompted by an understanding of the need to 'balance formal structure with policies that give "soul" to an organisation' (:32), without altering the basic features of production management.

> Organizing work according to its own logic is only the first step. The second and far more important one is making work suitable for human beings - and their logic is *radically different* from the logic of work. Making the worker achieving implies consideration of the human being as an organism having *peculiar* physiological and psychological properties, abilities and limitations. It implies consideration of the human resource - as persons and not as things, and as having - unlike any other resource - personality, citizenship, control over whether they work, how much and how well, and thus

> *requiring* responsibility, motivation, participation, satisfaction, incentives and rewards, leadership, status and function.
>
> Management, and management alone, can satisfy these requirements. For workers, whether machine tenders or executive vice-presidents, must be satisfied through their achievement in work and job - that is *within* the enterprise; and management is the activating organ of the enterprise. (emphasis added) (:39)

Leavitt *et al* identify four phases in managerial strategy which they depcit as 'overlapping waves of ideas' (1988:269). Scientific management and participative management are described as the foundational disciplines with information technology, or management science, and pathfinding (clear mission statements) and organisation culture dépicted as more sophisticaed and progressive versions of the former.

Orthodox management theory itself contains no implicit assumption of a 'passive' workforce but rather an assumption of an 'irrational' workforce that must be guided in their efforts towards productivity through a mixture of financial and status incentives and sound managerial practices. Failure to make workers productive is depicted as the failure of managers to effectively organise, motivate and reward their subordinates. Management is characterised as a functional, rational and universal phenomenon, and 'conflict' between management and workers is depicted as a natural phenomenon that arises 'the moment a society adopts even the most rudimentary division of labour' (Drucker, 1988:177), for which there is no resolution. Worker resistance is posed as resistance to the 'imposition on the worker's life of the clock that forces him or her to come to work at a given hour' (:181). The necessity of work that has to be done on schedule and in a pre-arranged sequence, makes it impossible to remove this restriction.

The point that emerges here is that orthodox management theory does not negate the notion of 'conflict' but conceptualises conflict as arising out of the 'peculiarities' of human nature rather than on any other grounds. Any wider notion of conflict is depicted as a conflict that arises naturally in bureaucratic institutions where workers are subject to rules and regulations. The examples of 'conflict' quoted in various works often refer to strikes in public institutions such as schools and hospitals as indicative of conflict between workers and the public interests that are served by

such institutions. Conflict should therefore not be seen as particular to profit-making enterprises. Bureaucracy is a 'natural phenomenon' that characterises all aspects of modern society and conflict in the workplace is a universal feature of bureaucracy.

There is general acknowledgement that a mechanism for the representation of workers in their dealings with management is needed. The trade union is portrayed as having limited scope to restrain the power of management. It fulfils the important function of guaranteeing observance of the employment contract.

Drucker bemoans the fact that the trade union movement is experiencing a crisis, deriving from the 'class war' between manual workers and knowledge workers who, although not necessarily representing high skill or higher education, are perceived as having higher status in the hierarchy of occupations. He argues that 'any able and ambitious youngster can stay in school - and may go on to a graduate degree' (1988:163), and that, as a result, young workers who in previous times may have aspired to union leadership as a career, now move into the professional and managerial ranks and thus create a vacuum in the union which is filled by 'weak leaders' and present problems to management.

The interesting point about this depiction of the trade union movement is that it is seen as the appropriate vehicle to manage the interests of 'manual' workers, with the implication that their interests are not the interests of management. The interests of 'knowledge' workers are, however, seen as compatible with those of management. The procedural necessity of the trade union is recognised as being in the self-interest of management, but its oppositional position in historical class terms is displaced and reconstituted as a status conflict between 'manual' and 'knowledge' workers that arises from the 'new' division of labour.

> Increasingly, also, the power that needs to be constrained, is not that of the bosses or the capitalists but of the educated managerial middle class of knowledge workers. They are not greatly interested in profits, but they are interested in power. (:164-165)

The assumption that modern technical systems depend increasingly on the rapid processing of information rather than on sheer mechanical power, calls into existence a 'knowledge class' that requires continuous learning opportunities and scope for advancement and greater lateral communication than the traditional hierarchical patterns can provide.

Strategic human resource management and an increasing emphasis on the management of transformational change (Beckhard, 1992) a well as on strategies for flexible responsiveness that stimulates 'niche' marketing (McKinlay *et al*, 1992) have become key features in current debates.

The greatest achievement of orthodox management literature as characterised above can be found in its capacity to conflate paradoxical features of the employment relationship. The provision of goods as commodities and the provision of goods stemming from a belief in common human values are posed as synonymous. Commodity markets thus become a normative model for all spheres of societal relations. Technical innovation and entrepreneurship are posed as the *sine qua non* for progress and a concomitant rise in living standards. The social relations of advanced industrialised countries become the vision of less industrialised countries, regardless of correspondence with production and political systems. Above all the role of management is seen as imperative to the success of the overall societal enterprise. The bulk of the literature focuses on prescriptions to improve managerial effectiveness, frequently illustrated by descriptions of 'cases' of successful enterprises or practices. The re-organisation of work and strategies for increasing employee participation and motivation, emerge as the focus of organisation theorists and industrial psychologists and sociologists who study forms of work and working from a management perspective.

Whilst this perspective avoids the analytical pitfall that characterises many radical analyses, namely that of reducing bureaucracy and efficiency to specific class interests (Thompson and McHugh, 1990:366), it errs in the reverse by presenting particular forms of bureaucracy as a functional inevitability that must carry the burden of any perceived 'conflict'. The profit motive acquires a similar inevitability and capitalist socio-technical systems appear as so uncontestably rational and socially advantageous

that alternative theorisations or practices are either deemed inconceivable or inappropriate.

4. THE LITERATURE OF ADULT EDUCATION

Rustin puts critical pressure on the current focus on education and adult education that illuminates the well-documented and ideological and market links between the political, economic and educational spheres (Althusser, 1971; Apple, 1979).

> ... the world of flexible specialisation is the world as seen from the point of view of some of its beneficiaries - themselves 'flexible specialists' such as researchers, communicators, information professionals and designers, whose specific capabilities involve the handling and processing of information. (1989:63)

The possessors of Bourdieu's (1973) 'cultural capital' are thus posed as being proverbially in the pound seats of post-Fordist rhetoric in an era of increased emphasis on schools, tertiary institutions, research laboratories and the media as the means of 'mental' or 'cultural' production and reproduction or resistance. The positive emphasis given to individualism, modernisation and consumption provides an explanatory framework for the divergent trends that are found in the adult education literature. The emphasis on the voluntary and non-formal nature of the educational endeavour provides both its justification and its practical conditions of work.

4.1 Adult education in the United States and Britain

The theorisation of adult education as a distinct academic field shares its theoretical foundations with the general field of education and has similarly been influenced by liberal, progressivist, humanist, radical and behaviourist representations of the educational task.

Brookfield, in his cross-cultural analysis of graduate adult education theory and practice in the United States and Great Britain, views graduate adult education as reflecting dominant political ideologies and prevailing cultural norms of the societies in which such programmes are

located. He argues that that three prevailing traditions in the field as a whole are reflected in curricular terms.

> America has a largely consensual, liberal, democratic tradition with no real polarities of opinion or divisions across the field regarding what should be the proper outcomes of adult education. In Britain, by way of contrast, there is a real and fierce debate over the connection between adult education and collective political action. Those who view adult education in terms of individual cultural enhancement, and those who see it as contributing to the collective advancement of oppressed groups, possess fundamentally unresolvable beliefs about the proper function of adult educators. (1988:283)

When each of these traditions are situated within the cultural-political context of the countries from which they emanate it becomes possible to see how the American culture of pragmatism and individualism within a liberal-democratic framework reflects 'an overwhelming acceptance of the capitalist ethic as the normal and natural mode of economic arrangement, with the values of free enterprise and entrepreneurial activity accepted almost as unchallenged givens' (:286).

> ... the finding that adults design, conduct and evaluate their own learning in an independent manner free of institutional control is a perfect enhancement to the American ethos of rugged individualism. (Brookfield, 1988:282)

Britain, on the other hand, is a society of opposing political ideologies, which lends itself to a consideration of widely diverging ideological interpretations. The distribution of power on a macro-societal level locates conflicting class interests at the heart of the debate. The adult education tradition is a reflection of these class interests with liberal adult education emphasising the development of individual qualities of 'intellectual discrimination, aesthetic appreciation and moral reasoning' (:298), while the radical tradition is 'inextricably bound up with the emergence of working class movements, collective organisations and structural forms such as trade unions, worker education and the Labour Party' (:282).

These three traditions, as outlined by Brookfield, provide markers for assessing the literature emanating from the field as a whole. A de-politicised notion of self-directed learning (Brookfield, 1985, 1987;

Knowles, 1978, 1984; Mezirow, 1981, 1984) emerges from the American context; an equally decontextualised notion of 'personhood' (Dewey, 1966; Peters, 1966; Paterson, 1979) has long dominated the liberal tradition in both countries; while the influence of Gramsci and Freire can be traced in the work of more radical theorists (Thompson, 1980; Lovett, 1983; Youngman, 1986), who see the purpose of adult education as contesting the ruling hegemony and assisting the oppressed in a process of collective action towards societal transformation.

The field as a whole can be described as a contested site, with claims to a distinctive body of knowledge and pedagogical practice being attacked as manifestations of the same middle-class values that dominate the education system as a whole. Such claims, it is argued, should rather be understood as attempts to combat the marginality of adult education and establish a professional identity for adult education practitioners.

Keddie, for instance, arguing from a British perspective, maintains that adult education's claim to a person-centred pedagogy based on the needs and interests of its students is an ideological claim. Adult education is seen as remarkably similar to primary school education in that they both reject the traditional high status of subject-centred higher education and therefore find themselves at the margins of the traditional education structure, where the competitive edge of individual achievement is blurred. Expressions of individuality occur within socially defined limits so that 'the notion of individuality as a desirable personality goal is not universal, but is culture specific and tend to be found in those cultures where high status is obtained by competitive individual achievement' (1980:54), and where leisure is socially sanctioned as an appropriate area of individual expression outside the restrictions of the workplace. Adult education provision becomes more readily available and appropriate for certain social groups. The individualism of adult education and the tendency of the curriculum to reflect middle-class life-styles that is itself a reflection of the socio-cultural locatedness of the providers, is thus offered as an explanation of why working-class adults tend not to utilise the educational opportunities offered to them and why adult education rather attracts students who find confirmation of their established notions of the nature and purposes of education.

The vocational orientation of adult education work, that is not emphasised in any of the perspectives outlined above, is gaining increasing prominence. Global market conditions that increase economic competitiveness and the emphasis placed on skill formation by post-Fordist methods of work organisation have resulted in what is being called 'the new vocationalism'. In industrialised countries representation of business interests at educational policy level has led to a reorientation in educational thinking, with renewed emphasis on basic skills acquisition.

A study on 'Developmental Strategy in Adult Basic Education' conducted by the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Cape Town for the Independent Development Trust, indicates that there has been a significant shift in the emphasis and purpose given to adult literacy and basic education within the industrialised countries since the early 1980s. Surveys done in the United States and Britain suggest that the functional literacy levels of workers are much lower than had been assumed, resulting in an interpretation of the economic crisis as a 'skills' crisis rather than a 'market' crisis. The high levels of unemployment that characterises the present global economic climate, make it unlikely that basic skills training will enable these adult education 'students' to obtain jobs, but the political significance, for the state, industry leaders and education providers, of adopting skills development as the dominant policy framework for education, is obvious.

> Adult literacy initiatives that talk the language of skills development are able to draw support while other ways of approaching literacy work remain marginal. In the USA workplace literacy draws considerable support while other forms continue to draw support but to a lesser degree. Federal funding is earmarked, in small amounts, for such initiatives as literacy programmes directed specifically at the homeless.
>
> In the UK ALBSU [Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit] treats vocationally-orientated literacy as the leading edge of its work while continuing to support and develop other forms, such as non-vocational ESL [English Second Language] work. Through its stress on 'basic skills', which it defines as 'the ability to read, write and speak in English and use of mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general', ALBSU is able to motivate the support of state and industry leaders. (1992:29)

The impact of the 'new vocationalism' on educational policy and funding issues introduces a new type of 'consumerism' into adult education initiatives. The effect of such trends on debates about the philosophical purposes of adult education may serve to bring radical and functional versions in closer proximity, but the political agenda will no doubt be a key element in the debate. What is clear is that adult education can no longer be seen as a supposedly neutral activity that serves essentially humanist-democratic purposes. The notion of accountablity, that accounts for the appeal of behaviourist approaches to learning and teaching (Elias and Merriam, 1980:90) to both educational planners and providers, is already evident in the curricular details of the National Vocational Qualfications (NVQ) system in Britain (Field, 1991). Competency frameworks are favoured to give new credibility to a range of educational practices, deemed to promote greater equality of opportunity. The other side of the coin is that these same practices can be viewed as increasing stratification in population distribution.

4.2 Adult education in South Africa

The literature on adult education in South Africa is remarkable for its historical paucity rather than for its representation. As in other countries the notion of education as a continuing process arises out of perceptions about the inadequacy of formal educational provision. In South Africa the impact of racial segregation accounts for a particularly 'skewed' picture, with an historical account of adult education emerging that testifies to the struggle against the apartheid government's systematic exclusion of black people from educational opportunities.

Voluntary adult education provision for urban black people is portrayed in Bird's (1980) account of the adult night school movement on the Witwatersrand from 1920 to 1980, and Wilson's (1991) study of the work of the Cape Non-European Night Schools Association from 1945 to 1967. Hartshorne (1987) documents private sector involvement in education from 1960 to 1986 as initially motivated by the requirement to convert the country's economy from one that was primarily agricultural to an industrial system. State versions of provisioning refer to the re-training of

ex-soldiers under the Central Organisation of Technical Training (COTT) system, established during the Second World War. This training continued until 1948 and at one stage included coloured ex-volunteers at Ottery in the Cape and black ex-volunteers at Milner Park in the building trade (HSRC/NTB, 1989:21).

The post-apartheid reconstruction process has placed new emphasis on non-formal continuing education as a mechanism for linking different forms of educational provision and for offering basic education to adults that will incorporate the so-called 'lost generation', increase skill levels in the workplace and promote self-employment and small-scale entrepreneurship to alleviate high levels of unemployment. The National Policy Investigation (NEPI), conducted as a project of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) from 1990 to 1992, include research reports that deal specifically with aspects of adult education, adult basic education and human resources development.

Recent entry by COSATU into the 'vocational skills training' debate and various state proposals on education have sparked off a range of publications that investigate the possibilities and dangers of current and envisaged policies for human resource development and attempt to pose viable alternatives. (Fanaroff, 1990; Bird, 1990, 1992; Kraak, 1992a, 1992b).

The question posed by Morphet and Millar (1981) about the particular role of continuing education captures perhaps most succintly the burden placed on the notion of continuing education for adults and emphasis found in the literature on adult education in the South African context.

> The question which confronts the theory of continuing education is: has continuing education the potential for genuinely opening up the channels of mobility; of overcoming the historical inheritance of inequality, and of producing an effective system of interlinked provision which will contribute towards the formation of an open society? (in Millar et al (eds), 1991:31)

What is clear is that the role and function of adult and continuing education in South Africa will increasingly feature at the centre rather than at the margins of educational debate. More and more providers are

entering the field and pressure is mounting for standardised professional education and training that will regulate the field. Access to opportunities for advancement, state funding at various levels and tri-partite structures of accountability are key issues in emerging policy discussions.

Chapter 3

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF PERSONNEL IN THE CORPORATION: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the evolution of the formal corporate personnel function - of which training is a related but subordinated activity - will be investigated through a commentary on public statements and policy documents deriving from the developing personnel grouping. It will be argued that the institutionalisation of personnel and training in the business firm should be understood as the institutionalisation of *ambiguity*. Ambiguity is required for enactment of the 'go-between' role that personnel has traditionally occupied. Regulation of the employment relationship involves management of the inherent tensions and conflicts between the dictates and contraints of the market, managerial control demands and the needs and aspirations of employees. The role is largely underwritten by procedural authority, derived from delegation of direct managerial authority and sustained by claims to professional and specialised expertise in 'human relations' and 'labour relations'. As personnel activity stretches across the traditional boundaries between management and workers and, in organisational design terms, between line and staff authorities, role enactment is continually contested through questions about organisational loyalties: 'Whose side are you on?' and exhortations to: 'Leave the business of people management to line managers'.

A focus on the specific historical bases of the development of personnel and training as a management function permits a structural analysis that recognises the contradictory sources of influence over personnel and training activity. At the same time it provides an example of the emergence of division of labour within management itself. Occupational self interest and inter-professional competition for monopoly over control practices are central features of the development of managerial ideology

and practice, but the argument here is that the specialist personnel management's mediational role within the firm requires, more than any other area of management activity, ambiguity as a necessary condition for role enactment.

The current shift from personnel management to strategic human resource management, (to be discussed in section 4) provides a partial escape from ambiguity, but only for the 'select few' and only because the inherent tensions are re-located at a lower organisational level.

2. RADICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT, HUMAN RELATIONS AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

To get beyond conventional perspectives it is perhaps useful to preface investigation into the development of personnel by a brief discussion on radical interpretations given to the political economy of 'people management' strategies in the South African context. This frame rejects the notion of a humanitarian evolution in management strategy and thus provides an analytical corrective to the version of development that is utilised by the personnel grouping to promote their interests.

Most writers on the topic analyse control relations from a broadly Marxist framework and emphasise control of the means and methods of production as the dominant power relation within profit-making organisations (for a fuller discussion see Thompson and McHugh, 1990:146-150). South African contributions proceed along similar lines but emphasise the racial dimension of labour regulation.

Bozzoli describes three different South African managerial ideological structures in terms of the particular contradictions and needs of the capitalist mode of production. Managers are seen as crucial in the 'processes of prolitarianisation and sub-ordination of black labour' (1977:9) during the era of primitive accumulation revolving around the mining industry between the years 1886 and 1910. Militaristic, hierarchical and openly exploitative ways characterised the managerial

function and ideology. Once the capitalist mode of production had been established in South Africa, management shifted its focus to the optimal utilization of a subservient, migrant and cheap labour force which gave rise to the South African version of scientific management in the 1910's and 1920's. The diversification and growth of national industry and the concomitant rise of an organised black working class required the development of 'liberal' managerial strategies.

> These three ideological forms exist separately, but it should be pointed out that they are separated less by chronological factors than by structural ones. They do not 'evolve' from one another; the idea of 'evolution' of managerial ideas from crude and unrefined ones to subtle, refined ones is itself ideological. What evolution does exist rests more in the evolving strategies of labour, and management's consequent responses to them, than in any inherent tendency within capital to 'progress'. In particular it should be noted that 'personnel management' was not an 'advance' and an 'improvement' upon 'scientific management', nor did it follow chronologically. The two strategies evolve and are still evolving together. That they co-exist and are even to some extent expressed by the same ideologists in different contexts, is an indication, not of their inseparability, but of the variety of interest-structures which capital possess in complex social formations such as the South African one. (1977:41)

Webster disagrees with Bozzoli's differentiation between scientific management and personnel management as two distinct managerial strategies, although he agrees with her conclusion that there is no chronological connection between the two. He returns to Braverman's original thesis when he argues that personnel management did not evolve chronologically out of scientific management but that it should be seen as a 'development of the same principles in the human field'. (1985:87)

Fullager, in his historical overview of organisational behaviour in South Africa, sees the major goal of the human relations approach as the building of a co-operative and compliant workforce so that management-labour conflict could be eliminated, (see also Chisholm 1983). He argues that this approach emphasises 'cultural' rather than individual differences and that this can be attributed to the fact that the apartheid structure of South African society encourages industrial psychologists to construct theories of black and white behaviour which ignore social-political determinants. The human relations tradition in South Africa can

therefore be seen as a form of 'cultural Taylorism' which perpetuates racial and ethnic stereotypes and sees increased performance as resulting from cultural understanding (Fullager in Barling (ed), 1983:15-16. See also Webster, 1976).

Fullager distinguishes between the human relations approach and a second humanistic approach termed human resource management, which he sees as based on the self-actualisation assumptions of Maslow to foster the controlled participation of employees in organisational decision-making.

The South African trend towards human resource management is viewed as being stimulated by many of the same pressures that initiated human relations. In addition it had become increasingly necessary to train Black, Indian and Coloured skilled labour in response to the shortage of skilled labour caused to a large extent by statutory racial discrimination and job reservation practices. The growth of the labour movement and its demands for greater participation and involvement in collective bargaining issues such as wages, salaries, pensions and conditions of work, increased the emphasis on the area of industrial relations. Within this context the human resources management approach was posed as a unitary approach where industrial relations was seen as the prerogative of personnel and line management. A controlled form of participative management was introduced, with interaction existing solely between management and the individual worker or small works committees which could hardly be seen as representative of the interests of labour. (See also Torres, 1991). Human resources management is thus based on the understanding that the goals of the individual and those of the organisation are compatible and that self-actualisation is necessary for organisational effectiveness. In summary Fullager states:

> Humanistic approaches then, ignore the concept of zero-sum conflict, and perceive the organization as being capable of satisfying all the individuals' needs through the work situation. (1983:21)

What these writers have in common is a critique of the 'rationality' of management strategies as an evolving and cohesive time-space

chronology. They retain antagonistic social relations as the starting point and emphasise the choice of managerial strategy as governed by variations in the stability of labour and product markets, as well as in response to collective worker resistance and pressure. In line with others in the general field of labour process theory, (for instance Burawoy's argument for the transition in forms of work organisation - 1979, 1985), there is an acknowledgement of the 'gradual historical tendency towards more consensual, integrative strategies' (Thompson and McHugh, 1990:152). What should be noted as absent from these arguments, for the purposes of this study, is a separation between the development of personnel management as a specialist function and the development of different forms of managerial control. Such a separation cannot be sustained indefinitely and the study will have to recognise and give an account of intersecting points. Tracing this route is, however, not only historically interesting but crucial to an understanding of personnel agency at an ideological and practical level.

3. THE PERSONNEL FUNCTION IN FORMATION

3.1 The early beginnings: constructing the identity of a practice

It is generally acknowledged that modern management techniques were developed primarily in America before spreading more slowly to Britain. South Africa's commonwealth status until the early 1960's, however, posits a mediated British version of American trends as the dominant shaping influence on local formulations of personnel theory and practice. Key occupational spokespersons, such as Mrs Isobel White and others who immigrated to South Africa from Britain, brought with them a legacy of occupational development that formed the basis of South African practice.

The historical development of the personnel occupation in Britian is best is reflected by the major name changes of the professional association of personnel practitioners in Britain: from the formation of the Welfare Workers Association in 1913, to the Institute of Labour Management in 1931, to the Institute of Personnel Management in 1946. If we make the assumption that ideas are created or advanced by interest groups to

articulate and further the interests of that particular grouping, then such name changes, rather than viewed as occurring as a matter of course within an *ad hoc* development pattern, can be understood as constitutive of intentional strategy on the part of the interest group under discussion.

Niven (1967) and Watson (1977) offer comprehensive accounts of the development of personnel management in Britain. Niven restricts herself to a fairly chronological description of the development of British personnel practice from 1913 to 1963, while Watson analyses the 'fundamental tensions and contradictions that underlie capitalist society' and uses this framework to 'examine the ways in which personnel specialists play a part in maintaining a particular societal "mode of integration" by helping to cope with these fundamental strains' (1977:34). Both writers locate the emergence of personnel in the welfare movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and identify the efforts of the first industrial entrepeneurs, state intervention during the two World Wars and the emergence of the social sciences as dominant influences that shaped both the ideological form and practical content of personnel practice. The impact of these influences on the efforts of the new occupational grouping to achieve both professional autonomy and legitimate status within the business enterprise, will be examined in greater detail.

3.1.1 Industrial welfare: concern for people or concern for productivity?

A personalised form of paternalism is generally posed as a distinct form of management control in the early stages of capitalist production. Both Watson and Niven attribute the industrial welfare movement to the efforts of a number of Quaker and other entrepreneurs, such as Seebohm Rowntree, Edward Cadbury and Jesse Boot.

> The pioneering employers in the welfare movement were motivated to an important extent by religious thought and feelings of conscience. These were men who sponsored welfare activities and employed the first welfare workers, and they did show an undoubted concern for the people whom they employed. (Watson, 1977:38)

Watson argues that the benevolence of the pioneering employers should not be seen as insincerity, but should be considered in terms of the Weberian concept of *elective affinities*, which expresses the dual aspect of ideas: that the individual creates or chooses them and that they fit in with material interests. Whilst acknowledging the hope of employers that an interest in the welfare of employees would curb labour unrest and counteract organised resistance to employer policies through the growth of the trade union movement, he emphasises the simultaneous expression of what are often stated as contradictory interests and holds that the 'combination of religious thinking and interests in efficiency and profit' held by these entrepreneurs should also be considered in terms of its contribution towards embedding ambiguity in the attitudes of employers (1977:40).

The Quaker-owned companies in the United Kingdom were by no means a pervasive power grouping, but their influence on the establishment of the personnel role was significant. Rowntrees appointed the first industrial welfare worker in 1896 and Seebohm Rowntree initiated the conference which led to the founding of the Welfare Workers Association in 1913. During the First World War he exerted enormous influence on state involvement in industrial welfare policies when he was appointed to establish the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Munitions (Niven, 1967:21, 32-33, 41).

Niven reiterates the fundamental contribution of the Quaker firms in bettering working conditions: 'their influence was out of all proportion to their numbers', but she argues that the efforts of the first female factory inspectors and welfare workers should be seen as a driving force with its own momentum and initiative. She reminds us that the 'pioneering employers were in trades which employed mainly women' (:28), and that the 're-awakening of interest in the education of women by the middle of the nineteenth century played an important role in preparing them for work in new fields' (:19).

> The motives [for industrial betterment] were no doubt as mixed as they were at any time but philanthropy and a realisation that efficiency paid, predominated among the employers, while concern for the individual, idealism and sound sense were usually the driving forces for the welfare workers (1967:11)

This distinction between two sets of motives establishes differing though not mutually exclusive frames of meaning for the interpretation of welfare work by the social agents involved. At the same time two further trends should be noted: the extra-mural nature of welfare work and the focus of activity on the welfare of women and children as an emerging sub-group in the composition of the work force in Britain. Both these aspects are evident in the first formal definition of the function of social welfare officers provided by Seebohm Rowntree:

> As representatives of the directors they are expected to suggest and devise improvements in the conditions of work, to initiate and control any extensions in social work that may be determined upon and to assist in keeping the personal element prominent in their relations with employees. As representatives of the employees, it is the duty of the social workers to be constantly in touch with them, to gain their confidence, to voice any grievances they may have either individually or collectively, to give effect to any reasonable desire they may show for recreative clubs, educational classes etc. and to give advice in matters affecting them personally. (quoted in Niven, 1967:23)

The welfare worker was constituted as an agent of management to 'keep the personal element prominent' but at the same time the welfare worker acted as a representative of the employees to management. The distancing of the direct employment relationship in interactive terms was thus achieved by the introduction of a 'go-between' role to promote extension of the employment relationship beyond the cash nexus. It is, however, retention of the assumption of opposition of interest between management and worker that introduces ambiguity as a requirement of such role performance.

The ideological nature of the managerial assumption that the welfare worker represented the interests of employees and the non-recognition of the representation of interests by the union movement, in the case of women workers particularly, is put into perspective by a report by trade union leader, Gertude Tuckwell, at a war-time meeting of women trade union delegates.

> The consensus of opinion was that, with some notable exceptions, the welfare worker found no place in the girls' vision of the factors which go to make a freer, healthier, and more independent life for them. She meddled and did not understand their real needs, seeking to impose on them regulations which she thought for their good, instead of realising the value of self-government. Some welfare workers had even been known to discourage trade unions and to argue against their membership. (quoted in Niven, 1967:42)

On the other hand the testimony of a worker at Dairycoates of Hull, a tin box manufacturer, on the work of Miss Agatha Harrison, illustrates an employee's interpretation of the meaning of welfare work.

> In those days there was a stigma attached to the word factory girl. She taught us that we counted, that we were of value as citizens. She gave us self-confidence. (quoted in Niven, 1967:43)

The tensions embedded in the first formulations of the official welfare role is perhaps best captured by the discussion at the founding conference of the Welfare Workers' Association in 1913, attended by employers, managers and welfare workers of firms which practised voluntary welfare. Niven summarises the proceedings from notes made by an employer, Charles Jacobs.

> At its first session the conference went to the root of the matter by discussing two fundamental problems then confronting the movement. The first was the question of whether or not the welfare worker should play a part in the work of the factory. Behind this concern lay the long history of extra-mural welfare, by which the social workers were engaged in sick visiting, supervision of the dining room and arrangement of evening classes, but was not admitted to the factory itself. The discussion showed that there was no doubt in the minds of practically everybody present that the welfare worker should in fact be in touch with the employees at their work in order to be effective, but in this view they showed themselves to be ahead of the times.
> The second problem was that of the 'danger of sapping the independence and initiative of the employees by too paternal methods of betterment'. There is unfortunately no record of how far this discussion went, as Jacob only notes that 'everyone agreed that the more responsibility thrown on to the workers in the management of their clubs the better'. But it may be surmised that with the growing doubts about the paternalistic approach and with the experience of a form of works committee that some of the representatives had, something more searching was said; on the other hand it is possible that the idea of cooperation between workers and management was still so revolutionary, especially in the setting of the previous year's widespread and serious strikes, that if it were voiced at all it was left to die in silence. (:33-34)

The two discussion points illustrate the unevenness of the institutionalisation process. Welfare may well have been equated with efficiency in the eyes of the employers, but the area of work designated to the welfare officer, as well as the tenuous nature of the executive authority attached to the position, entrenched its status as, at best, a marginal activity which attempted to act as a buffer between direct employer control and individual if not collective worker resistance.

3.1.2 The shift from extra-mural welfare to bureaucratic forms of labour management inside the firm

3.1.2.1 Shifts in modes of managerial control

It is necessary to digress briefly, in order to locate the shift from extra-mural welfare to participation in labour management as an intra-company activity, within the debates about shift in forms of management control.

Enormous expansion in industrial output in the boom years between 1880 and 1920, led to a rapid increase in the industrial labour force both in America and Great Britain. Traditional forms of management control in the late nineteenth century relied on a combination of direct and indirect control systems: entrepeneurial or simple control where authority was exercised directly by the factory owner, based on personal relationships with the workers and foremen, although frequently sustained by legal coercion and harsh market conditions; delegation of responsibility for production decisions, cost control, work organisation and labour direction to either external or internal sub-contractors around whom the employment relationship was constructed, including the recruitment of their own employees and supervision of the work process; and craft control where skilled workers were assisted by a small number of less skilled operators, and had the power to plan and direct immediate work processes. (Hill, 1981:17-21; Thompson & McHugh, 1990:51-54)

As the size and complexity of industrial enterprises increased the constraints imposed by such forms of control necessitated a shift to

bureaucratic forms of management which would bring about a more direct employment relationship.

> Organisationally the crucial issue was a growing gap between the structures and expertise of management and a more extensive division of labour with its requirements for new forms of control and co-ordination. For capital, the solution had to go beyond the employment of more managers, towards transforming the structures of managerial activity itself. (Thompson & McHugh, 1990:55)

An important shift was the modification of the foremen's role. In late nineteenth century factories foremen had tended to be salaried employees, responsible for supervision of less skilled work, as well as for the hiring of sub-contractors and for the work they produced (Hill, 1981:19). Modification in the role of supervisory labour involved breaking up the foremen's empire and redirecting traditional functions such as hiring-and-firing and work organisation to a centralised office, leaving to the foreman the narrower sphere of task supervision and discipline.

More impersonal methods of control, notably payment-by-results, brought about an increased need for record-keeping in order to specify objectives and keep track of results, necessitating in the introduction of the administrative aspects of the management system. Payment through the office, instead of by the sub-contractor or foreman, represented a move to a more direct employment relationship, with earlier modes of control displaced by a more remote yet at the same time more rigid bureaucratic control structure.

While noting the criticism of a notion of discrete, successive modes of control (Thompson, 1989:152), and therefore of treating bureaucratic control as a distinct category, it is clear that bureaucratic forms of work organisation constituted a displacement of control from the factory floor to the central office. This shift, which coincided with an intensification of production before and during the First World War, had important implications for the development of management as an interrelated series of specialist activities, through which personnel management, as an in-company activity, became a distinct area of managerial expertise.

3.1.2.2 Locating welfare work inside the factory

The shift in managerial control, outlined above, can by no means be viewed as a uniform process that spread systematically through industrialised countries. It was, perhaps ironically, political pressure rather than 'economic rationality' that forced large scale acceptance of a diversified form of personnel practice. The state as the largest employer during war-time, intervened in the terms and conditions of the employment relationship to regulate working conditions and to prevent industrial unrest so that co-operation from both management and labour would be secured.

State intervention in Britain during the First World War took mainly two forms: the appointment of the Health of Munitions Workers Committee in 1915 to advise on the control of working conditions in the vast munition factories, where large numbers of women were employed in routine operations as well as in skilled and heavy duty engineering jobs; and, the appointment of the Whitley Committee in 1916 to advise on employer-worker relationships in order to curb industrial unrest and the rise of the shop steward movement.

The Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1916 empowered the Home Secretary to make Orders requiring provisions to be made in a factory or workshop for securing the welfare of workers, men as well as women. Compulsory welfare supervision forced the shift from voluntary to legal welfare and created many new positions for welfare officers. The status and duties of women welfare supervisors in munition factories, as described in the Committee's final report on Industrial Health and Efficiency in 1918, emphasised that welfare supervisors should have recognised status with specified duties and should be directly responsible to the general manager. The Report warned that the support of employers and employed alike was essential, although it was not intended to interfere with the role of trade unions. The engagement of workers was the first duty listed, as well as the keeping of records from which the welfare supervisor could investigate the causes of absence and low output. Other responsibilities included advising on working conditions, discipline off the shopfloor, night supervision, sick visiting, feeding arrangements, housing and transit,

thrift and benevolent funds and recreation. Welfare supervisors were also responsible for seeing that suitable instruction on technical methods of work in the factory was arrranged and for encouraging workers to take advantage of them, although they did not usually do the teaching. (Niven, 1967:44)

The compulsory introduction of welfare officers met with a mixed reception. Many employers viewed their presence as an interference with their rights to manage their factories as they saw fit. Niven notes that it was virtually impossible for welfare workers in these factories to win recognition as an essential part of the factory staff and they usually found themselves relegated to extra-mural social work (1967:39). Nevertheless, it can be argued that state intervention forced acknowledgment of the welfare officer's role in formal terms and promoted explicit identification of welfare officers with the aims of management, in order to continue their task as providers of extra-mural welfare and accept additional responsibilities for recruitment, selection and record-keeping. As discussed in the previous section, these administrative functions had already been centralised within the direct realm of management and, although many employers disbanded their welfare departments after the war, the allocation of administrative duties to welfare officers, secured for them a foothold inside the factory, which would provide the basis for the advancement of occupational interests.

It should also be noted that acceptance of the Whitley Report's recommendations on Industrial Councils in 1917, which led to the introduction of a series of interlocking joint national and district councils with works committees in the factories, each representative of employers and of workers through their trade unions (Niven, 1967:46), introduced a second form of labour regulation at the collective level. The formal institutionalisation of two separate structures that managed fluctuations in the labour situation, reinforced the already ambiguous nature of personnel work by providing employers with a site for co-option at an individual level to counteract collective pressure or resistance.

Significantly, state support for research in industrial psychology during World War 1, at a time when the American scientific management

movement was gaining ground, (Watson, 1877:41), provided the legitimising scientific base for state intervention in the labour field. Burawoy (1985), provides a macro perspective when he argues that Taylorism was embraced enthusiastically during the first three decades of this century at a time of transition from competitive to monopoly capitalism. As the market became increasingly ineffective as a mechanism for regulating relations among capitalists, between capital and labour and among different segments of the labour force, the state assumed a larger role in the organisation of these relations. 'The economic and the political became increasingly intertwined' and the state's growing involvement in the organisation of the economy had to be obscured or made acceptable to the public. The application of science to the labour process 'laid the basis for a new ideology in which the preservation of capitalist relations was presented as a technical matter removed from political discourse'. State intervention was legitimated as 'non-political because scientific'. (Burawoy, 1985:43-44)

3.1.3 The bid for professionalism

The entry of large numbers of relatively inexperienced welfare officers to the field at a time when unfavourable publicity had hardened union attitudes and when all employers had not embraced the welfare principle in the first place, brought the need for the construction of a status that would legitimate the role on both counts. This could be achieved by seeking professional autonomy and claiming a body of knowledge that would confirm the need for welfare activity as a specialist area inside the factory, as well as provide it with practical content.

The formation of the Central Association of Welfare Workers in 1917 is significant on two related counts. Principles of association and training were established for the profession; and employers and other interested parties could only join as associate members (Niven 1967:49). These developments indicate an attempt to achieve an autonomous 'professional' position, but at the same time it was realised that management support was necessary for their work and essential for furthering their occupational self-interest. The definition of welfare work drawn up at the

third meeting of the executive committee in 1918, was therefore explicit in its affiliation.

> Welfare is that part of management which deals with the well-being of those engaged in business. (quoted in Niven, 1867:51)

But if acceptance by management was one of the problems facing welfare workers, so was acceptance by the increasingly strong trade unions:

> He or she claims no right to interfere between organised labour and the employers as the chosen means of self-expression of the workers.....The work of the welfare worker is purely administrative and advisory, not legislative. (:51)

Watson argues that it is important to understand the Central Association of Welfare Workers as an occupational association through which 'an *objective* common interest, based at this stage on such shared problems as the relationship with general management, the relationship with trade unions and the need to establish and maintain standards of competence, became a *subjective* one with the consequent mobilisation of effort' (original emphasis), (1977:122). His argument is premised on the assumption that 'occupations do not automatically follow 'professionalisation processes' but tend, rather, 'to follow occupational strategies appropriate to what they or their "spokesmen" perceive as their own specific interests. Such strategies use elements of "professionalism" as appropriate' (:123). Viewed as an occupational strategy, explicit identification with management and acknowledgement of procedural rather than executive authority, constitutes an occupational bid for an identity that would not threaten or undermine the basis of the employment relationship.

Esland in his exploration of the nature of a profession as 'symbol' and as 'reality' refers to the privileged status of professions in comparison to other occupations.

> 'Professionalism' is one of the most fundamental forms of legitimacy and political control which can be sought in the contemporary organisation of work. (in Esland & Salaman (eds), 1980:218)

Claims to professionalism are usually framed in terms of the specificity of a given area of specialised knowledge and skill and its value to society. Hill (1981:39-40), discusses the emergence of professionalism as a recurrent theme in both British and American managerial thought, promoting the idea of management as a highly technical function that requires appropriate levels of education and training. Through the notion of professionalism, managers are presented, no longer as ruthlessly pursuing profits, but as sharing the service and social responsibility ethics of the traditional professions within a 'solidary community', where conflict of economic interest is minimised. On these grounds personnel management, with its religiously-inspired humanitarian base, has a stronger claim to professional status than most other areas of management. Such 'occupational altruism', as Watson calls it in a later work, requires an ideological justification which is found in the general attributes of a profession: 'skill based on theoretical knowledge, the provision of education and training, the testing of member competence, the existence of a professional body, adherence to a code of conduct, and altruistic service (i.e. community orientation rather than self interest)' (1980:165). It is to this end that the social sciences made a particularly crucial contribution, providing legitimation in the form of a body of knowledge as well as offering prescriptions for practice.

3.2 Legitimation of practice

3.2.1 Utilising the social sciences

Claims to legitimacy through the symbol of professionalism are illuminated in interesting ways when one examines public statements made by representatives of the emerging, and as yet unorganised occupational grouping in South Africa, where personnel management gained prominence during the Second World War. Mrs Isobel White, the founder of the South African Institute of Personnel Management (in 1946), can be regarded as a key 'spokesperson' for the occupational grouping. She came to this country from Britain in 1938 and took up a position as research officer for the Leather Industries Research Institute at Rhodes University College in Grahamstown. Although her work in South Africa related mainly to labour management in the footwear industry, she had

brought with her a legacy of institutionalised personnel practice which would gradually be reproduced throughout the country. The intersection between the British and South African versions of personnel management occurred at the shift between labour and personnel management in its more fully diversified form. As in Britain, the occupational strategy for status and recognition relied on identification with management and claims to professionalism based on specialised knowledge and skill. The first public statements made in South Africa utilised the debates of the day to persuade industry, the occupation itself and the general public of its value. Training featured prominently as an illustration of practical use-value of certain labour practice, and as a professionalising mechanism that would increase the standing of the professional grouping.

3.2.1.1 Management discourse

Two publically recorded statements in which Mrs White addressed the captains of industry to argue the need for personnel management as part of the factory process and as part of the management function, illustrate the way in which the language of science and production was interchanged with the language of human relations to create an equation that would secure managerial acceptance of personnel work on both counts. Utilising the language of progress, science and production she focussed on war-time personnel problems.

> On all sides we are being told by those in high authority that one of the direct effects of the present war on the Union will be an expansion and stimulation in every field of our industry. Our present industries will undergo considerable extension and new industries will be planned and established. South Africa is stepping on the shoulders of her industrial forerunners and will take every advantage of their experience of industrial evolution.
>
> In practice, this new development means that sites will be chosen and factories erected to meet the needs of each particular industry, that production and output will be carefully planned and controlled. This is all as it should be, but unless our new production policy is seconded by a no less energetic personnel policy we are likely to be disappointed ...
>
> It is the aim of every industrialist to see that the work flows smoothly from start to finish. He plans his departments so that the product moves swiftly from one to the other till the finished article emerges ready for packing and despatch. To accomplish this he appoints various key individuals. The buyers of raw

> materials are entrusted with the work of providing a sufficiency of all the various items, so that the production may go forward unhindered by delays; the works manager sees to it that all the orders proceed without delay through the various departments and are ready for delivery when promised; the sales manager organises the distribution of these goods. But whose job is it to ensure that the essential supply of labour for the the work shall not only be numerically adequate but efficient and therefore contented ? (1941:3)

At the same time the 'production' metaphor emphasising adequacy and efficiency of labour supply, was counterposed with an emphasis on the humanistic aspect of labour management. A report in an Eastern Cape newspaper, on a special joint meeting of the South African Institute of the Boot and Shoe Industry and the Port Elizabeth Shoe Trade and Tanning Industry Manager's and Foremen's Association, where Mrs White spoke on 'Human Problems in Management', illustrates the point:

> Mrs White who was received with applause, spoke on many subjects dealing with labour and the need for a new attitude towards labour supply such as the training and following up of new employees, and the necessity of fostering a spirit of co-operation between the management and employees.....
>
> The speaker went on to sat that production was becoming more and more mechanised. At one time the owner of a business could himself control the activities of a company and have intimate contact with each one of his employees, but as most of them knew in their business, those days were over. This meant that problems of labour had arisen and unless these were thought out and a definite policy formulated, there would be constant difficulties and friction. Industry must and could only function through human effort and it could not secure the maximum of efficiency of that effort unless it remembered that that effort was human. (*Eastern Province Herald*, Friday, 31 October 1941)

The intertwining of scientific management and human relations rhetoric within a unitary view of the industrial workplace, posed personnel as the specialised regulatory institution for the promotion of both labour harmony and productivity. Such legitimation served both managerial and occupational interests and in that sense the two sets of interests should be understood as complementary, though not synonymous.

3.2.1.2 Personnel discourse

The development of an occupational ideology found its natural expression in the principles embodied at a 'common sense' level in the human relations discourse. Reports on the first meetings of the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) illustrate how the ambiguity underlying the personnel function was projected as congruent and unproblematic. Speaking at a meeting of the Port Elizabeth branch of the IPM, Mrs White outlined the different areas of activity within the occupation as proof of its legitimate existence as a specialised management function.

> Personnel management was concerned primarily with the human relationships within an organisation and its aim was to enable all those in the organisation to make a maximum contribution to the effective working of the undertaking. It dealt with recruitment, selection, training and education; with terms of employment, remuneration, working conditions, amenities and employee services. (*Eastern Province Herald*, 28 June 1946)

In a subsequent address to the Port Elizabeth branch of the IPM in 1955, Mrs White referred to the initial welfare activities and to the efforts to educate and convince employers of the need for expenditure on these activities in order to get a more efficient and contented staff. Whilst these activities were admirable, factory legislation had imposed standards which could be applied to monitor physical conditions in the factory. The role of personnel was changing in line with the shift in industrial psychology thinking, to the consideration of motivation and morale.

> Today we have moved away from the conception of the factory as a kind of hygienic cowshed where the cows, if given every physical condition that is conducive to content will produce an ever-increasing volume of milk, to one where we realise that we are employing human beings who react in different ways not only to each other but to those who are leading them. The Personnel Manager has therefore become much more concerned not so much with the battle for staff comfort - these problems though they still need some of our attention, are now covered by our factory legislation and our industrial agreements - but with the human relations side of his job. (1955:2)

The distinguishing feature between the way in which personnel practice was posed to management and to the practitioners themselves, lies in the aspects of practice that received emphasis and the language that was used

to frame practice in different ways. Management was addressed in the language of productivity and efficiency, while personnel was addressed in the language of the individual. Both discourses were legitimated by an appeal to scientific rationality and progress that removed any semblance of incongruity. A shift in emphasis prompted each audience in a way was perceived as ideologically acceptable. Not only did 'human relations' provide a theoretical base that distinguished personnel from the other components of management, but it accommodated the welfare perception that still clung to personnel, no longer as an instrumental act of charity but as a 'scientifically valid' prescription for labour regulation and control.

3.2.2 Training as symbol

It was training that was emphasised as opportunities arose for the growing profession to present itself to the general public. Training was promoted as a concrete practice that served a multitude of ends. In an article on the 'Human Side of Production', Professor T. H. Kelly argued for more attention to the training and education of recruits as 'the best means by which migrants to the towns, both European and non-European may adjust (sic) themselves to store and factory life in urban areas' (*Natal Mercury*, 2 June 1947).

Addressing a meeting of the Institute of Citizenship in Cape Town, Mrs White stressed the need for training at all levels of industry. Training was portrayed as the means of constructing work in meaningful terms for the individual worker so as to become a worthwhile member of society, while contributing to industrial efficiency and inculcating moral values of commitment and loyalty (*Cape Times*, 29 October 1947).

During an interview with a local newspaper, Mrs. White stated the ideological function of training more explicitly:

> One well-known footwear factory has recently appointed a training officer to devote a good deal of his time to teaching the beginners the simplest jobs so that the quality of the article will be improved and also to give the employee a greater pride and interest in the seemingly small and unimportant part of the whole job he is doing.....

> The circle is a vicious one and unless a conscious effort is made to break it, primarily by good training methods and by promoting interest in the jobs, the present slovenly attitude will be maintained.(Evening Post, 29 January 1953)

Training's proximity to the labour process itself, facilitated its claim to productivity improvement while simultaneously improving work attitudes and promoting work satisfaction.

But training also served occupational interests as a professionalising mechanism that enhanced the standing of the profession and attempted to establish a monopoly on competence in the 'human relations' area.

In January 1944 a two-year post graduate diploma in Personnel and Welfare Management was introduced at Rhodes University College, which was recognised by the Council of the Institute of Labour Management in Britain (White, 1945:144; *The Star*, 4 December 1945; *The Cape Times*, 6 September, 1946). In 1945 Mrs White also made recommendations in this regard to the Member of Parliament for Port Elizabeth North on the status of employment officers appointed by the Juvenile Affairs Board.

> Also the employment officer must be well acquainted with the latest work which has been done in vocational guidance so that he or she can place applicants in the posts for which they are the most suited. This work also implies a thorough knowledge of industry and commerce, of the vacancies available - with the remuneration and prospects as well as the educational, physical, manual, mechanical and temperamental qualities needed for this work. Therefore the qualfications for such a professional officer should be a B.A. or M.A. degree with special qualifications in psychology and economics. (Reported in Assembly Debates, 12 April 1945:5240)

It should be noted that the balance between a theoretical grounding in aspects of the social sciences and an understanding of economic and business principles, an argument pursued later in the debates on the shift to human resource management, was advocated by the profession at an early stage, as a precursor to a shift in occupational survival strategy.

3.2.3 *Contradiction or coherence?*

The influence of both 'scientific management' and 'human relations' as modes of technical and social control has been well documented (Baritz,

1960; Braverman, 1974; Burawoy, 1979, 1985; Watson, 1980; Hill, 1981; Rose, 1988; Thompson, 1989; Thompson & McHugh, 1990). Both Taylor and Mayo figure prominently as creators of managerial legitimation. The question about whether statements (such as the ones quoted in sections 3.2.1.1 -.3) indicate theoretical contradiction or coherence is not a 'puzzle' in labour process theory, where a contradiction between the interests of capital and labour is taken as the fundamental assumption so that, to quote Braverman,

> Taylor dealt with the fundamentals of the organization of the labor process and of control over it. The later schools of Hugo Munsterberg and Elton Mayo, and of others of this type, dealt primarily with the adjustment of the worker to the production process. The successors to Taylor are to be found in engineering and work design, and in top management; the successors to Munsterberg and Mayo are to be found in Personnel Departments and schools of industrial psychology and sociology. (Braverman, 1974:87)

Acceptance of contradiction at 'relations of production' level leads to an interpretation of apparently contradictory theories as coherent. It is the assumption of coherence at the 'relations of production' level that leads to apparent contradiction at explanatory level. Peters & Waterman (1982:5), for example, pose the work of Elton Mayo and others as 'challenging' the ideas of both Max Weber and Frederick Taylor, and promote an argument for development in management theory that poses 'human relations' and its derivatives as a new and more sophisticated order. What these writers do not explain, is why both these 'stages of development' continue to have appeal.

Watson (1980) offers a persuasive explanation for the dual appeal to managerial thinking of 'scientific management' and the 'neo-Human Relations' school, inspired by A.H. Maslow's general psychological theory of human behaviour. He argues that both these approaches are 'quite openly managerially orientated' and both tend towards a 'psychologistic' school of thought.

> This is because they are both individualistic in emphasis, both base themselves on assumptions about 'human nature' and, as a consequence of this, both tend not to recognise the dimension of cultural variation and the range of possibilities of work organisation and orientation implied by this. Further, they both

> fly the banner of science to legitimate what are in effect techniques of manipulation rather than disinterested concerns with understanding. (Watson, 1980:35-36)

He labels theorists like McGregor, Likert, Argyris and others as 'behavioural science entrepeneurs' (:38) and condemns their consumerist approach:

> Like the task-splitting scientific managers with whom they so passionately took issue, their work is reductionist, partial, evangelistic and sociologically highly inadequate on the explanatory level, with its underplaying of structural, situational, cultural, political and economic factors. It is ultimately simplistic but by a judicious mixing of simplistic assumptions and pseudo-scientific jargon it has made itself highly marketable. (Watson, 1980:38)

Such harsh treatment is partially explained by pointing out that 'our choice between work organisations which are cash-reward orientated or self-actualising is a political or value one' and that 'it is not a scientific choice' (:41).

Rose (1988) is somewhat kinder in his treatment of, what he calls the 'organizational psychotechnologists' (Rose, 1988:200). He argues that criticisms of general applications of Maslow found in the work of the above-mentioned theorists are based on the questionable status of the needs hierarchy concept, selectivity of evidence used and the 'sweeping generalizations' based on such evidence (:205-206).

> These writers may have repeatedly muddled their interventionist aims and their scientific obligations, but they were always people whose goodwill you could pick up on your radar while they were still at the railway station. They were genuinely concerned with the well-being of all groups in the organization, and eager to remove destructive stresses. It is appropriate also to endorse here a point made sometime ago about them by David Silverman: unlike many organizational theorists they do not view the worker as a being who merely *responds* to a technological setting or formal organizational structure; he or she brings to the workplace certain needs and expectations which also affect behaviour in the workplace. In other words, their position is implicitly anti-behaviouristic. (original emphasis) (Rose, 1988:206-207, with reference to Silverman, D., *The Theory of Organizations*, 1970)

The debate about the validity and value of various contributions will, no doubt, continue. The relationship between theory and practice from the vantage point of both the manager and the personnel specialist is not a direct one. Practitioners tend to treat theories as resources that guide action while at the same time explaining and justifying action. A utilitarian approach to theory promotes partial appropriation of those aspects of theory that embody guiding or justificatory principles. Combination of theories become possible when they are viewed in insular historical sequence without consideration of macro-economic and political dimensions, national and sectoral variations as well as internal organisational circumstances that shape the conditions of appropriation. This tendency, which has been mentioned by many of the writers quoted in this chapter, promotes a capacity for their use in control and legitimation processes that does not merely rest on the notion of what Thompson & McHugh call a 'plurality of competing perspectives' (1990:359).

> It is in the nature of theories of and for management that they give incomplete pictures. The perspectives and accompanying prescriptions only address aspects of the basic contradictions in capitalist work organisation. Therefore at one level both theorists and practitioners respond within a continuum that has Taylor's minimum interaction model at one end and varieties of human relations at the other. Employers, of course would like it both ways ...
>
> To some extent they can do this by combining theories and practice within the continuum ... That story of combination to deal with different dimensions of organisational experience is repeated through every period and sector. It is, of course, the case that management is not only trying to deal with the contradictory aspects of utilising human labour. Variations in strategy reflect broader problems ... But the resultant difficulties in managing the contradictions are similar - different routes to partial success and failure ... (original emphasis) (Thompson & McHugh, 1990:359)

'Partial success and failure' aptly describes the advancement of occupational group interests discussed in previous sections, despite the shift from extra-mural welfare provision to specialist procedural regulation of the employment relationship. Mrs White found it necessary, in mid 1950, to issue a warning to occupational members:

> **Too often the Personnel Manager is appointed without a clear enough mandate from his Board of Directors nor an assured enough position. Industry neither demands of him the most up to date knowledge nor gives him the facilities to acquire it. On the other hand too many Personnel Managers remain in an intellectual backwater and are incapable of giving to industry the leadership which it is their duty to provide. Therefore their work becomes ineffective, their advice is ignored because it is not worth having and they weakly protest that they are not given the authority to carry out their work. (1955:8)**

This message has been repeated often and remains a recurring theme. (For further South African contributions see, for instance, Richardson, B. (1988:24) and Bhengu, J. (1993:9).) An essential difficulty has been that the human relations and interactive skills that have been appropriated as the stock-in-trade of the personnel profession, have been too indeterminate to provide a sufficiently distinctive basis for a claim to monopoly, despite the emphasis on specialised education and training. The expansion of their sphere of influence has occurred through impositions upon traditional 'line' functions, particularly in the areas of recruitment and selection, dismissals and general disciplinary procedures. It should be recognised that the increased focus on industrial relations during the last twenty years has assisted the personnel profession. The introduction of labour legislation has provided a new rationale for their presence. Industrial relations as a specialised problem allows them to impose methods of discipline on both line management and employees and to emerge as procedural specialists in the legislative sphere. Armstrong goes so far as to suggest that the assumption of conflict that underlies a pluralist perspective is in their ocupational interest and they may therefore play a part in promoting such a perspective (1986:37).

Competition in the race for corporate ascendancy comes mainly from the financial specialists, who have succeeded extremely well in promoting accountancy and its derivatives from back-room clerical status to being a key executive activity (Armstrong, 1986:29). The shift to strategic human resource management, which will be discussed in the next section, indicates the direction and form of new strategies for achieving 'board room' status. The industrial relations scenario in South Africa differs from those in Britain and the United States, as will be shown later, but it is clear that, in a global perspective, industrial relations and labour

legislation are no longer perceived as crucial areas of management activity - hence the quest for new specialist contributions.

4. FROM PERSONNEL TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

4.1 Strategy as the new imperative

The prescription offered by Naisbitt and Aburdene to corporations, who want to survive in the 'new information society', signals the conditions that have shaped the global shift from procedural personnel management to strategic human resource management (usually referred to as HRM).

> We are living in one of those rare times in history when the two crucial elements for social change are present - new values and economic necessity.
>
> You must have *both*. Neither force is powerful enough to produce social change on their own. There must be a confluence of both changing values and economic necessity. And that is precisely what we have now: new humanistic values and global economic imperatives ...
>
> In the new information society, human capital has replaced dollar capital as the strategic resource. People and profits are inexorably linked. (original emphasis) (Naisbitt and Aburdene, 1986:2 & 4)

In line with this prescription the arguments advanced in current American (Fombrun *et al*, 1984), British (Armstrong, 1987; Fowler, 1987; Guest, 1989; Miller, 1989; Keenoy, 1990) and South African (Horwitz, 1988; Swanepoel 1993) contributions to the 'human resources versus personnel' debate generally describe human resource management as a 'strategic market-orientated activity which ought to emanate from the overall business policy' (Keenoy, 1990:3), directed towards 'creating and sustaining competitive advantage' (Miller, 1989:51).

Fowler explains the shift succinctly when he says:

> So perhaps what is new about HRM is not what it is but who is saying it. In a nutshell HRM represents the discovery of personnel management by chief executives. (1987:3)

He identifies two main assumptions in HRM thinking: an assumption that an organisation's long-term business or corporate plan is the starting point for effective manpower planning, which should be concerned with 'qualitative characteristics of the workforce' rather than the conventional statistical forecasting of labour demand and supply; and an assumption that 'current management practice is in essence adversarial and that this results in a massive limitation of the contribution to an organisation's business performance which employees are potentially capable of ' (:3). These assumptions translate into two inter-related themes:

> First, that every aspect of employee management must be wholly integrated with general business management and reinforce the desired company culture. Secondly, that a dominant emphasis on the common interests of employer and employed in the success of the business will release a massive potential of initiative and commitment within the workforce. (:3)

Proponents of the new order identify an ideological shift from pluralism to unitarism as a key requirement for the transition from traditional personnel management. Guest draws attention to the 'individualist and unitarist' values underpinning HRM, which provides 'a marked contrast to the dominant values of personnel management and more especially industrial relations which emphasise collective and pluralist values' (1989:50). Fowler, however, cautions that such totalising emphasis on a 'mutuality' of interests based on complete identification of employees with the aims and values of the company, as well as the absence of any discussion of power in HRM literature, signal 'a blindness to the role of trade unions in providing a degree of balance in the exercise of economic authority' (1987:3).

This argument is put into a South African perspective by Swanepoel (1993), in an outline of the differences between British and South African socio-political and economic contexts during the last thirty years. He argues that Britain has had relative political stability, with six legislative changes introduced between 1980 and 1990 aimed at reducing the influence of the trade union movement. Partly as a result of privatisation and deregulation and partly as a result of a break down in national bargaining arrangements, more attention is being paid to 'local

circumstances' and collective bargaining is becoming increasingly decentralised. In South Africa collective representation by trade unions is on the increase and the level of worker competence is generally far lower than in Britain. Political pressure for wealth distribution and organisational pressure for affirmative action and black advancement are intensifying. He therefore questions 'to what extent human resource practices in South Africa should emulate those of the United Kingdom' and argues for a 'selective' and 'analytical' approach that recognises contextual differences (1993:23-28).

Horwitz (1988) also criticises 'the idealization and romanticisation of HRM as a new found panacea to organizational problems' within a South African context and argues for recognition of 'a multiplicity of common and conflicting interests' that are present in any organisation (1988:4-8).

The concerns voiced by academic writers do not, however, prevent popular advocacy to South African corporations of a recognition of 'mutuality' of interests, with prescriptions for practice that range from participative management and 'total quality' initiatives to literacy training. (Manning, 1987, for example, offers advice for managing the future of South African organisations that includes, *inter alia*, the corporate mission statement as a key strategic activity in the 'management of meaning' to create a climate for high performance and co-operation.)

Watson (1980:227) offers a broader framework for interpreting the proposed ideological shift, in his discussion of various frames of reference. He poses the unitary and pluralist frames against a radical perspective of conflict as endemic to the basic inequalities and power differentials that characterise industrial capitalist society. Seen from a radical perspective the debate about a community or variety of interest which can be accommodated within a consensual framework, does not pose a fundamental challenge to the *status quo*.

Keenoy echoes these sentiments at action level when he concludes that the supposed conflict between personnel management and human resource management disappears 'once it is realised that they are complementary rather than mutually exclusive forms of practice, which may be unitary or

pluralistic, collaborative or conflictual, depending both upon circumstances and strategic choice' (1990:6). What makes personnel management strategic is not how policies relate to practice but whether or not those policies 'fit' with the strategic market-orientated thrust of the organisation.

The new imperative for integration of Naisbitt's 'human capital' into the strategic resource base of the corporation has had a discernible effect on the boundary status of the personnel practitioner. These effects will be discussed in the next section, with reference to changes in organisational design.

4.2 Issues of status and authority re-visited

Historically the employment relationship has never been the exclusive responsibility of the personnel function. The tension between management of the human resource as a general line function or as a specialist personnel function, has worked itself out at the level of sub-group competition that translates into 'a variable mixture of three forms of management practice' as outlined by Keenoy:

> (1) conventional *operational* personnel management (the acquisition, training, deployment, development and rewarding of staff together with the institutional management of employee relations);
>
> (2) the generic responsibility of line or general managers for the day-to-day 'people management' activities; and
>
> (3) the strategic business policy decision-making activity designed to ensure a coherent and integrated approach to the overall management of the organisation. (original emphasis) (1990:7)

Personnel's authority base, located at operational level in procedural discipline on both managers and employees has resulted in contestation by other managerial groupings that manifests itelf in a continual requirement for demonstration of the relevance of various personnel activities to business goals. It is a contestation, as already mentioned, of personnel's claim to a core of specialist knowledge that imposes procedural restrictions on line management's day-to-day activities in the area of

human resource management. Current occupational strategy for status and advancement acknowledges the inherent weakness in personnel's claim and therefore argues for a shift away from the role of 'surrogate human resource expert' (Schuitema, 1991:36), towards involvement in the political sphere of strategy planning.

In South African occupational literature such a shift finds its justification in the national 'change' debate and increased trade union activity. Slabbert (1990) reminds South African HR managers of their ideological belief in 'basic business concepts such as free enterprise and capitalism' which 'are the cornerstones of his profession and the point of departure for his numerous people-oriented activities', and advocates 'an aggressively proactive stance in protecting his (sic) company against nationalisation' by ensuring that 'their employees form a consolidated, dedicated, loyal and united force' (1990:4,5).

Lindeque (1991) is equally unequivocal in his prescription.

> Our role as HR professionals is definitely not to sit on one side with our minds politically neutral. On the contrary, our role is to lead, support, facilitate and manage the transition of our organisation's position in the changing political environment in which we find ourselves. (1991:4)

The re-location of human resource activity from the operational level to the 'boardroom' is, however, a partial re-location that integrates elements of the function at a higher corporate level and retains conventional personnel management at the lower operational level. Evidence of such a two-tier division in organisational design terms was already found by Joan Woodward in her examination of the relationship between technology and organisational structure in the late 1950s.

She distinguishes between the *task* and *element* functions of management, with task functions directed towards specific and definable end results and element functions as intrinsic parts of the management process.

> Thus line-staff organisation is based not on a differentiation between specialist skills but on an assignment of roles. For conceptual purposes, the distinction between line and staff is rigid and theoretical: 'line' defining the positions in the organisation

> which have responsibility and authority in that those occupying them are directly accountable for end results, and 'staff' the positions which provide support and service to the line; those occupying staff positions are not accountable for end results either individually or collectively. (Woodward, 1980:99)

The distinction between line and staff authority on the basis of roles, rather than on the basis of knowledge and skill, prevents a polarised relation between line responsibility as a function of general management and staff responsibility as a function of specialist management. Personnel management, however, proved to be the function which illustrated the problems associated with the line-staff concept in the most extreme form. As an element function it did not fit into the new trend towards divisionalisation, brought about by technical changes, diversification and a wider range of manufactured products. In some firms large specialist personnel departments were split up and each product division had its own small group of personnel management staff, with the executive authority vested in the divisional line manager. Several arguments were, however, put forward in favour of having a personnel/human resource department directly responsible to the chief executive:

> A very important part of the personnel specialist's responsibility was to brief the board on policy formulation, he had to be near the the top of the hierarchy and able to talk to board members on almost equal terms. Another was that the personnel manager needed power and prestige in order to make the other managers treat him with sufficient respect. In all staff roles there is an element of control; the personnel manager has to ensure that the labour policy laid down by the board is implemented throughout the organization. It was felt that he could only do this effectively if he had direct access to the chief executive and could call upon him to apply sanctions. A third argument was that for top management the only way of indicating either to the people employed or to the world at large that it regards good industrial relations as important was by putting the specialist responsible for personnel management high on the management ladder. (Woodward, 1980:117)

The arguments advanced for personnel representation at board level, are reflective of the difficulties encountered by personnel in exercising procedural control over both managers and employees, as well as the need for firms to develop a positive external profile. In many firms the solution was found in a two-tier personnel system consisting of a high-status personnel executive responsible to the chief executive and concerned

mainly with the development of policies and procedures, and low-status personnel managers who were responsible to line management and who functioned as trouble-shooters on the shop floor - an arrangement described by Woodward as "the most satisfactory arrangement in theory ... to get the best of both worlds" (1980:118).

While the variations in organisational design found in Woodward's research 'altered the whole course of debate on organizational universalism' (Rose, 1988:214), it also identified forms of organisational structure that accommodates the advocated shift from 'low-risk tactical casework' focussing on individual needs and motivation to 'high-risk strategy' that concerns itelf with issues of organisational leadership, culture facilitation and the management of symbolism (Georgiades, 1990:14,15). At the operational level, however, the tensions between dictates of the market, organisational demands for employee control and resistance to these strategies continues. The requirement for ambiguity therefore remains.

4.3 Implications for training as a sub-set of personnel

Training will be examined in its own terms in succeeding chapters. Suffice it to note that the strategic human resource management debate places renewed focus on training as a mechanism that will promote: flexibility (Guest, 1989:49), the understanding, re-inforcement and change of organisational culture (Armstrong, 1987:35), the pre-empting of conflict (Miller, 1989:51), and, an orientation towards investment in the future (Keenoy, 1990:8).

Corporate mission statements pose congruence between organisational and employee interests as a universal 'rational' element of organisational behaviour that provides the starting point for the 'identity' work promoted by these forms of training. Organisational culture as a form of control, however, largely ignores the notion of cultural relativism, although Hofstede's (1980) study of 116 000 IBM managers in 39 different national subsidiaries, including a group of white South African managers, identified marked differences in this regard.

It should also be noted that the promotion of training as a discrete though integral component of strategic business objectives (Gois, 1989:32-33; Adonisi, 1991:27-30), and the resulting requirement for 'the "know-how" to sell ways of thinking or doing to decision-makers' (Daniel, 1991:29-30), are manifestations of the ongoing sub-group competition for organisational status within the human resources division itself.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter attempted to pose two sets of interests: general managerial interests and personnel's occupational interests as the dominant ideological frames that shaped the institutional form and function of personnel as a specialised corporate activity. The argument as a whole followed the insight, derived from labour process theory, that managerial strategies of control should be understood at one level, as a collection of relatively self-conscious specialisms which compete at group level for access to key positions of command, by claiming a core of specialist knolwedge that is sufficiently indeterminate to prevent parts being routinised or detached (Armstrong, 1986, Thompson and McHugh, 1990).

It has, however, been argued that personnel, more than any other managerial sub-set, requires a certain amount of ambiguity for its procedural regulation of the employment relationship between managers and workers. The British version of personnel management that informed South African practices, orginated in the industrial welfare era and from the beginning it occupied a 'go-between' role between individual workers and management. It struggled to shift its terrain of work from extra-mural welfare activities directed mostly at women workers, to being able to exert influence over the conditions of work inside the factory. By creating a new means of labour administration inside the factory, the early practitioners found a 'niche' that advanced their occupational self-interests, but that also provided an alternative form of labour regulation. They identified their own formal authority position as being 'purely administrative and advisory' as they could not be seen to encroach upon either the territory of production managers or the territory of organised

labour. Claims to a specialist territory found its legitimation in the 'human relations' strand of the social sciences.

The establishment of the first professional organisation to represent the interests of personnel, was portrayed as an attempt to establish professional autonomy. This claim was viewed not simply as a demand to be allowed to work according to the profession's own conception of an appropriate code of ethics, but as an attempt to impose standards and practices on line management and thus expand the occupational grouping's influence base. Explicit identification with management was therefore interpreted, at a group level, as a strategy for occupational self-advancement. The apparently contradictory ways in which key spokespersons portrayed personnel practice to managers and to fellow practitioners were shown to find congruence in their consistent appeal to the progress made in scientific thinking. The rationality of science provided the ideological mechanism for the merging or separation of managerial and occupational motives, whichever was considered strategically appropriate at any particular time.

Industrial relations and labour legislation were identified as two areas where personnel practitioners temporarily found a core of specialist knowledge that advanced their organisational influence and power, but the shift to strategic human resource management and unitarism indicates that this area is losing its immediacy and topicality and that new areas of influence are being sought through participation in strategic planning at board room level. The resulting two-tier structure has re-located the requirement for ambiguity to the lower operational level, whilst integrating managerial and occupational interests in executive 'general manager' status at the higher level.

Of course it must be taken into account that individual practitioners and clusters of practitioners would have had in those days, and today still have their own particular philosophical and methodological predispositions which prompt particular stances. Such a reading strengthens rather than dilutes the argument for ambiguity, but it is a phenomenon that is found in every instance of social practice and it is therefore not an argument that explains institutionalised forms of practice.

In the next chapter the corporate function of training, as a component of the human resource function, will be explored. It is at this level where the tensions and conflicts between market imperatives, organisational demands for control and the aspirations of employees work themselves out in ideological and practical terms, and it is here that the capacity for ambiguity that was historically institutionalised into the role, remains a key requirement.

Chapter 4

THE FUNCTION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT AS A CORPORATE INSTITUTION WITH RELATED ISSUES OF FORMAL AUTHORITY AND LOCATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the function and tasks of corporate training, as a sub-set of the personnel function, will be investigated. It will be argued that, contrary to conventional definitions, the function of training as a corporate institution is not to deliver efficiency/effectiveness improvement. It is a site where individual employee identification with the corporation is secured and maintained. The corporate principle of 'mobility basd on meritocracy' finds its practical co-ordination in corporate training. Interview data will be analysed to show the symbolic nature of training's function and tasks, both in terms of the formal public corporate versions and as it is understood by the actors. The location and formal authority levels allocated to training are viewed as consistent with this task in that they provide a particular kind of institutional embeddedness that creates the conditions for task achievement.

2. LOCATING TRAINING IN A WIDER CONTEXT

2.1 Training as a societal institution

Field (1991) ascribes a treble function to vocational education and training and argues that, like all educational practice, it is:

> an agency of socialisation, (re)producing a labour force with appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes; it is patently an agency of selection, offering qualifications which distribute the population between different roles. And vocational education shares with the rest of the educational system the function of generating new knowledge and skills, and even new frameworks of meaning which enable the institutions of human activity to change and survive; in this third sense it is future-orientated and even emancipatory. (Field, 1991:41)

In general terms training as a societal institution is thus viewed as having the function of selection, socialisation and 'meaning' creation. Training as a corporate institution has, in addition, an obvious relation to profit-driven economic rationality aimed at the maximisation of productivity. Corporate efficiency/effectiveness concerns call for control mechanisms that have the overriding aim of ensuring that goods or services are produced economically, with the concomitant aim of subduing or transforming worker resistance and creating a positive stance towards work in general and the workplace in particular. It is in this context that Rose's argument against a general interpretation of the function of vocational education and training becomes pertinent. He argues that patterns of industrial practices cannot be identified in the abstract but that such practices can be understood by 'mapping out the institutional geography that shapes action within the societal locality' (Rose, 1988:402). The way in which skills and training, that is the production and delivery of competence, is institutionalised, results in particular industrial structures and procedures, industrial relations practices and work attitudes so that certain types of behaviours are sustained and others excluded.

> What most affects the *shape* and complexity of control systems, is not such 'commitment', or the general willingness to accept industrial discipline, but the mix of *competence* - real skills not paper ones - available to production managers. The stock of skills, training and qualifications puts strict limits on how a work process is designed, supervised and operated.
>
> ...Training provision can thus become a battlefield in the politics of the workplace, but technical training is organised very differently from one country to another; and these training systems are likely to produce within each country, conventional recipes for utilising the stockpile of competence and capturing a measure of employee commitment. (original emphasis) (Rose, 1988:398-399)

To illustrate this point he refers to a study of the comparison of the organisation of training systems in France and West Germany undertaken by the Aix Group. (The work of M. Maurice, F. Sellier and J.-J. Silvestre, 1986, discussed in Rose, 1988:398-404.)

The study identified two different sets of institutional practices in

Germany and France, that could be regarded as proto-types for analysis of the South African system. The dual system in Germany retains apprenticeship as the cornerstone of industrial training, with apprenticeship diplomas for both technical and managerial occupations awarded, not by employers but by bodies independent of firms. This provides management and workers with a common base of *technical* culture that carries some of the prestige of craftmanship and stresses know-how gained from work experience. Technical competence for both management and workers becomes the basis of authority and the qualifying factor for promotion. It also provides valid credentials for movement throughout industry. Psychological self-identification is with an occupation rather than with an employing firm.

In France competence is created in the organisational domain. The limitations of general training offered by technical institutes forced large employers to devise their own training programmes, slanted towards the particularities of the employer's product, labour process and technology and based on a social doctrine of each firm as a 'working family' with psychological identity derived from organisational membership. This has resulted in a narrow technical competence that has exchange value within the firm but workers who want to broaden their skill tend to change firms. As a result of the general low level of technical training, competence has to be organised into the labour process along Taylorist lines. The particular form of work organisation in French firms should therefore be seen as a reflection of the defects of the training system. It is, however interesting that the study could not draw conclusions in terms of the desirability of one system over the other in economic terms. Both systems have proved viable in economic expansion terms for the countries in question. A conclusion that can be drawn though is that training's agency is directly related to the way in which the training system is institutionalised.

In South Africa training provision is shared by the state and private sector. The state has concerned itself mainly with the administration of the apprenticeship system through the Department of Manpower, although the Manpower Training Amendment Act, 1990 (Act no. 39 of 1990) has provided for the devolution of responsibility for training in a specific industry to its accredited training board. The private sector

provides enterprise-specific training for employees at different levels in the company hierarchy, specialising in middle level supervisory and management training rather than in the provision of technical training. In the next section a brief outline of trends in current provisioning will be given, preceded by a discussion of the dominant definition of skill that determines both training policy and the features of the institutional division. Definitions are not value-free, and to the extent that they create capacities and limitations of practice, they should be viewed as political macro-constructs, historically located and reflecting the dominant power relations in society.

2.2 Training as institutionalised in South Africa

2.2.1 Definitions of training in relation to 'skill formation'

The taken-for-grantedness of the connection between vocational training and the acquisition of job-related skills tends to obscure the political nature of skill as a labour market commodity. Critiques of state and private sector training policy refer to the ideological nature of skills training as a mechanism for creating labour harmony and overcoming negative worker 'attitudes', (see for instance Chisholm (1984), Schaffer (1984) in Millar, 1991), but leaves the technical facet of the skill definition largely intact. A shift in emphasis is found in current debates in international and South African labour process literature, with renewed interest in skill formation and training systems as a result of a world-wide market trend towards post-Fordist forms of work organisation [Mathews (1989), Fanaroff (1990), Kraak (1992a); Freund (1992)]. It is argued that a high and composite level of technical skill is required to achieve the flexible specialisation that the market demands. Related concepts such as multi-skilling, the broad-banding of skills, and democratisation of the workplace therefore call for a re-working of definitions of skill based on Fordist/Taylorist division of labour that result in categories of 'unskilled', 'semi-skilled' and 'skilled' workers.

Webster and Leger (1992) enter the debate at precisely this point. They argue that, while there is general, if contested, agreement on the skills shortage in South Africa, what is often taken for granted is the definition

of skill and how skills are formed. They introduce four components to the skill definition rather than the two, manual dexterity and knowledge, used in conventional definitions. The third component relates to the social construction of 'skill' as a barrier that permits or restricts entry to an occupation:

> To speak of skills as socially constructed is then to suggest that skill cannot be objectively measured; its construction is a result of the relative strength of employers and employees in specific historical contexts. Each context is shaped by the organisational power of workers at the point of production and in the labour market. (Webster & Leger, 1992:54-55)

Interpretations of the social construction of skill generally take as their starting point the autonomy of the traditional craft worker (Braverman (1974), McClelland in Joyce (1987)). In an earlier work Webster (1985), exploring the effect of the labour process on forms of workplace organisation in the foundries, argues decisively against a general version of traditional craft work and points to the capability of one group, for example, white-dominated craft unions in South Africa, to act defensively to exclude outsiders and monopolise resources. This capacity derived from a particular social construction of 'skill' and was upheld by legal and institutional mechanisms of the day.

The fourth component referred to by Webster and Leger pertains to tacit skills that lie between formal knowledge and manual dexterity. It is informal knowledge that is acquired from peers and fellow workers. (Here they refer to the tacit skills of underground safety, or pit sense, that black miners learn informally on the job.) These tacit skills are not recognised formally and are seldom acknowledged in skill definitions, yet they are indispensable to production.

Such a composite definition of skill, whilst not unproblematic for the development of measurable standards or criteria usually required to determine skill levels or grades, nevertheless reveals the political complexity of skill as a discrete concept. It indicates how definitions of skill are shaped by, and in turn shape, particular socio-historical contexts and how stratified systems are created and reproduced at the definitional stage.

Most of the standard definitions of training for skill used by the state and the private sector display none of the nuances of Webster and Leger's argument and continue to emphasise technical competence within a narrow and job-specific version of skill formation. An exception to this can be found in a definition offered by Coetzee (1992), a representative of the para-statal Development Bank of Southern Africa, in which he refers to skill as a description of 'a worker's occupational qualifications, which are generally attested to in a certificate or diploma after passing certain vocational tests' (1992:4).

The following definition drawn from a textbook currently prescribed by many courses on Human Resources Management, illustrates the stratificatory nature of definitions-in-use:

> *Education* refers to activities aimed at developing knowledge, moral values and understanding. Its purpose is to develop the student intellectually and to provide him with the basis for further learning. Education is basic knowledge rather than applied skills, and it has little or no immediate application to a specific job. Basic preparatory education is received at high school, college or university. It is required in all walks of life and is of value throughout life.
>
> *Management development*, ...is more specific than education .... it is a process whereby managers gain experience, skills and attitudes to become or remain successful leaders in their enterprises..... The term management development can refer to the improvement of the skills of a person - a manager - or it can refer to the amendment of the management function within the enterprise.
>
> *Training* refers to the use of specific means to inculcate specific learning, using techniques that can be identified and described. These techniques and methods should be continually improved. Training is therefore a deliberate effort to teach specific skills, knowledge, or attitudes to serve a specific purpose.....the purpose of training is to enable the learner to apply knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to achieve the objectives of the enterprise and it should result in the trainee's being able to do a specific job effectively directly or soon after training. (Gerber, Nel & Van Dyk, 1987:184-5)

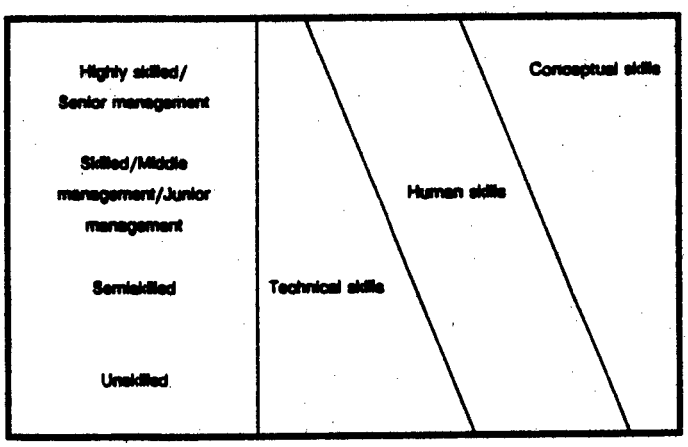
A definition such as the one quoted above with its clear separation between education as an area of general cognitive development, development in the corporate sense as a management activity and training as pertaining to applied skills, knowledge and attitudes at lower levels of

the organisational hierarchy, obscures and reproduces selection stratification, (based largely on categories of race) that exists at entry into the workplace. It creates the impression that, by throwing in her lot with the employer, the employee will receive training that will earn her a specific and secure place in the industrial hierarchy. The concept of 'development' as a future-orientated activity is located at managerial level, well beyond the grasp of the majority of employees. Black advancement programmes, which have gained currency in progressive firms over the last ten years, expose the reality of the lack of advancement opportunities available to lower-level employees while the definition of skill remains an expression of the classic Fordist/Taylorist separation between task conception and task execution. It can be argued that it is not only the way in which work is organised but also the nature of the definition itself that sets up the barriers that translate into skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupational levels.

The following definition and accompanying graph provided by the National Training Board (1991:7) is even more direct in its stratification emphasis. Training is:

> the transfer or gaining of technical knowledge, related skills, values and attitudes in order to develop proficiency and to develop a person's natural aptitudes and other abilities to improve his capabilities as a worker. Training which generally takes place outside formal educational institutions, is more often than not directed towards the needs of a specific employer or group of employers.
>
> The skills that are developed could be of a technical, human or conceptual nature and are needed to a varying degree in the various levels of occupation from the unskilled worker up to the highly skilled levels of senior management.

THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TYPES OF SKILLS AT DIFFERENT EMPLOYMENT LEVELS



(Compendium of Training, p.3.)

Stratification manifests itself as a skill division that distinguishes between technical, human/interpersonal and conceptual skills. These areas are identified as distinct areas of skill formation that are appropriated at different levels of the organisational hierarchy to 'achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness'. Such a skill division explicitly makes certain types of training available to the different hierarchical levels, with technical training geared to lower-level employees who are the greatest in number. (Kraak (1992b:70-71) argues for a revised version of the above-mentioned graph in order to develop a 'high skill equilibrium' perpective.)

In the following two sections training provision offered by the state and the private sector will be outlined in order to demonstrate that access to training remains the privilege of those who have already had access to formal education, with massive under-investment in training opportunity for so-called semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

2.2.2 State provision

The impact of 'apartheid' on all components of the South African societal structure is well-documented (see for instance Kallaway (1983), Gelb (1991), Millar et al (1991)). Training in South Africa, within a structure of restriction on black working class mobility, job reservation to protect jobs for white and later so-called coloured artisans, separate state-sponsored training institutions for different racial groups with entry qualifications well beyond the average scope of the results of Bantu education, and reliance on the importation of skilled labour as a substitute for expenditure on training (here the Mossgas Project is a good example), have resulted in the much-debated skills shortage (Muller (1984), Kraak (1989). The apprenticeship system, as a tri-partite contract between state, employer and apprentice, has been the backbone of technical training provision, dating back to 1884 when the Natal Government Railways started the first classes for apprentices in Durban (HSRC/NTB, 1989:19). One of the notable features of a recent series of state-sponsored publications on various aspects of training in South Africa (HSRC/NTB, 1984, 1989, 1991) is the inclusion of bland historical versions of state involvement in training provision which focusses on a series of successive

commissions and changes in legislation without explicit acknowledgement of the political system that was upheld and reproduced through such state interventions. It is left to educationalists such as Dr Ken Hartshorne to re-iterate the effect of Verwoerdian ideology on the composition and skill distribution of the South African labour force:

> Indeed, up to 1960, private sector perceptions of education were in the main utilitarian and instrumentalist, while at the worst African education was still being criticised because it made people 'unfit for manual work'. In general the Verwoerdian myth of the two economies and his dogmatic assertion that there was no place for the black South African 'in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour' was not publically subscribed to by economic interests. Nevertheless there is no question that the dominant viewpoint was that the economy was at a level at which limited skills were required of black workers, and that emphasis should not be laid on 'education' but on industrial and vocational training leading to lower level skills. It is of some significance that the term 'technical' was not used at this time, probably because it would have suggested a level of training and skill that was not intended. The 'real' skills were to be provided by whites. The task of African education was to develop habits of industry and regularity, to produce 'good workers' who could 'make an honest living' and know their place in both the economy and society. (Hartshorne (1987) in Millar *et al*, 1991:118-119)

Despite significant changes in labour legislation in the last 30 years, SALDRU (1992) reports that currently only 10% of South Africa's work force is being trained in technical fields against an economic requirement estimate of 75%. Apprenticeship is still considered the main route to artisan status, but the 1983 statistics show that only 1,25% of the total economically active population was registered during that year, whereas in 1977 Germany accommodated 5,70 %, Austria 6,15% and Switzerland 5,38% of their respective total economically active populations.

Removal of statutory work reservation from labour legislation in 1979 and the removal of racial restrictions on access to the apprenticeship in 1981, resulted in a significant increase in the number of African apprenticeships. The statistics, however, show an overall decline in the total number of apprentices in the latter half of the 1980s. SALDRU ascribes this trend to the following factors:

1. White-dominated artisan unions were strongly opposed to the indenturing of African apprentices because of their racist political ideology as well as the fear of black skilled labour providing a cheap alternative.

2. Inferior Bantu education limited the number of Africans to be indentured as apprentices. One of the requirements was that an applicant should have passed both mathematics and science at the Std. 7 level (nine years schooling). In 1985 the number of pupils who attained this level amounted to less than 25% of all pupils.

3. The employment of apprentices was still contingent upon the business cycle as employers were loath to invest money in training during periods of recession.

4. Employers were reluctant to commit themselves to the lengthy contractual obligations which accompanied the employment of an apprentice. (SALDRU, 1992:4)

The last two factors imply that businesses tend to train only for their immediate needs, despite generous tax concessions for training during the 1980s, which led to the establishment of many in-company training centres to supplement training offered by the state. The apprenticeship route is a declining area still premised on racial division, with white artisans comprising 72,6% of the total distribution and African artisans comprising 5,8% (SALDRU, 1992:16), and with black apprentices being channelled mainly towards the building industry which is subject to cyclical fluctuations and offers little scope for career advancement and long-term security. Little 'real increase' has occurred in such occupational sectors as metal and engineering, electrical trades and motor trades (Lundall & Kimmie, 1992:42).

The paucity of technical training provision can be illustrated by reference to figures released by the National Manpower Commission in their 1990 annual report. The figure for new apprentice indentures for 1990 is 9 054 (a breakdown by population group is not provided). When this figure is considered in relation to the 1990 estimate of nearly 11 million (36% of the total population) as the economically active population of South Africa, but excluding the TBVC states, (National Manpower Commission, 1990:27,50), then the extent of under-provision becomes apparent.

2.2.3 *Private sector provision*

Private sector provision has traditionally focussed mainly on the development of supervisory and management skills to provide the leadership and control necessary for a work force characterised by a large low-skill component. This type of training focus articulates with current affirmative action policies designed to increase the number of black (used as a generic category for 'other than white') employees as well as the number of women who are appointed in supervisory and management positions.

The findings of the 1989 *HSRC/NTB Investigation into Skills Training in the RSA* present a positive account of in-company training activities:

> Many large industries have a positive and dynamic manpower policy based on sound principles and continual research. In such industries management is dedicated to structured training programmes and large sums of money are spent annually on the training of employees.
>
> It is clear that the professionally trained, dedicated and enthusiastic director plays an important role in the training policy of a company and its execution. In companies with such staff there consequently are no serious problems in training their employees and the development of careers is set as a goal for trainees. (Quoted in NTB/HSRC, 1991:36)

Whilst these statements would undoubtedly apply to some South African companies, the generality of the finding must be questioned in terms of who gets access to training and what career mobility follows as a result of in-company training. An external information exchange survey conducted by BPSA in 1989 and repeated in 1991 to ascertain current trends in the development of black managers and professional staff, paints a rather more bleak picture. It should be borne in mind that no distinction made between sources of recruitment, that is whether appointments were made internally or whether staff were recruited on the external labour market. (Permission was obtained from A Bowmaker-Falconer to quote the following figures):

% Management representation (Paterson D band and above)

Average black management representation in	1989 21 co's	1991 23 co's
African	2,57%	3,22%
Coloured	1,66%	2,48%
Asian	2,4%	2,81%
Total	**6,63%**	**8,51%**
Black management representation in best company		
African	10,9%	13,6%
Total black management	**19,7%**	**18,42%**

Whilst in terms of total management representation these figures show an increase of 1,88% in black employees at management level over 2 years, the overall percentages remain low and affirmative action remains a strategy designed to provide limited access to select individuals rather than a concerted attempt towards large-scale redress. These trends were confirmed by a pilot survey done by the Graduate School of Business of the University of Cape Town in 1992. The purpose of the survey was to collect strategic human resource development information both nationally and by economic sector, with a view to setting up a national human resource database. The training and development strategies and results of 22 national companies who employ a total of 500 000 people' were investigated:

Management (Paterson D band and above)

	African/Coloured/Asian	Women
Industry Sector 1	7,0%	8,8%
Industry Sector 2	4,8%	12,9%
Industry Sector 3	2,2%	2,2%

Skilled and Supervisory (Paterson C Band)

	African/Coloured/Asian	Women
Industry Sector 1	35,6%	11,8%
Industry Sector 2	35,2%	47,3%
Industry Sector 3	13,6%	13,3%

13 companies could provide figures regarding expenditure on training and development as a percentage of total employment costs. These figures ranged from 0,2% to 3,3% with an average of 1,1%. Compared to an average of 6% to 10% in leading industrial nations (Van der Walt (1989) in Horwitz 1990:7), the under-investment in training and development by the private sector becomes apparent. Closer scrutiny of the statistics for one industrial sector in terms of training focus, the number trained in each race category and the average amount spent on each trainee for the quarter September to December 1991, further confirms maintenance of the *status quo* rather than investment in training that would create mobility opportunities for workers in the categories of semi-skilled and unskilled.

										TOTAL	VERAG
CATEGORY	WHITE	BLACK	COL	ASIAN	TOTAL	WHIT	BLAC	%COL	%ASIAN	SPENT	SPENT
D	2322	156	36	30	2543	91%	6%	1%	1%	442012	173.82
C	2476	539	1232	197	4444	56%	12%	28%	4%	582298	131.08
SEMI-SKILLED	433	690	309	67	1499	29%	46%	21%	4%	152301	101.60
APPRENTICES	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0	0.00
UNSKILLED	4683	2589	1375	168	8815	53%	29%	16%	2%	391342	44.40
EDUCATION	109	54	17	18	198	55%	27%	9%	9%	101786	514.07
TOTAL	10023	4028	2968	480	17499	57%	23%	17%	3%	2E+06	984.91

Note – Average Spent is per Trainee and is Calculated from Total Spent and Number of Trainees
*TOTAL SAMPLE – 51165

The findings of both surveys indicate the false assumption in the NTB/HSRC investigation that there are 'no serious problems' in companies with structured training programmes, adequate training budgets and dedicated training staff.

3. TRAINING IN THE CORPORATION

Whilst statistics and definitions can only provide partial views, they nevertheless provide anchor points for analysis. In order to investigate the tension between public documents and quoted statistics and the based-on-experience views of those involved in training, a micro-analysis of the corporate training function was undertaken. By juxtaposing the public and private versions of corporate training an analytically more intriguing complexity becomes visible.

3.1 The public version

Argyris and Schon (1984) argue that documents such as corporate mission statements outline an organisation's instrumental theory of action for achieving its corporate objectives:

> The company's instumental theory of action is a complex system of norms, strategies and assumptions. It includes in its scope the organisation's patterns of communication and control, its ways of allocating resources to goals, and its provisions for self-maintenance - that is, for rewarding and punishing individual performance, for constructing career ladders and regulating the rate at which individuals climb them, and for recruiting new members and instructing them in the ways of the organisation. (Argyris & Schon in Pugh (ed), 1984:358)

They differentiate between two theories of action, namely espoused theory and theory-in-use:

> When someone is asked how he would behave under certain circumstances he usually gives his espoused theory of action for that situation. This is the theory of action to which he gives allegiance and which, upon request, he communicates to others. However, the theory that actually governs his actions is his theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with his espoused theory; furthermore the individual may not be aware of the incompatibility of the two theories. (:354)

In Weberian terms the espoused corporate theory could be viewed as a cultural 'ideal type' that provides a standard against which similarities and differences in actual historical situations can be located. It provides a basis for comparison and analysis of the interpretations given by actors as cultural beings within the corporate milieu.

The data that follows, illustrates the public version or espoused corporate theory about the training and development function. Information was obtained from a range of big business corporations in South Africa. No distinction will be made between industry and commerce, as these distinctions did not become apparent in the data. (The examples were selected because they were made available to the researcher. There is no intent to identify particular corporations.)

Example A:

... We are committed to equality of opportunity and the development of our people to their full potential, the development of local industry and the community with a view to the uplifting of living standards. In pursuing these interests we aim to make a return on investment which will result in a viable company over the long term and the optimization of the interest of our parent company ...

Corporate goals include the following:

... motivate all people in the ... family by promoting a feeling of belonging and striving for goals that are recognised as rewarding and worthwhile ...

Example B:

We will:
... Foster innovation, competence and commitment in our management and staff, and promote a working environment both stimulating and sensitive to individual needs.

Reward solely on the basis of performance and initiative and provide opportunities for advancement according to individual potential and personal resolve with access to excellent skills training and career education ...

Example C:

... We believe that time, thought action and money should be devoted to ensure that all are developed to their full potential.

We believe that training, education and job advancement opportunities should be provided for all employees. For employees to play their full role in the achievement of company and personal objectives, it is essential that a comprehensive and effective training system exists at all levels.

Managers and employees should take joint responsibility for training and development and commit themselves to improving their productivity and worth to the company ...

Example D:

... The core purpose of Training and Development is to ensure that the Company has competent employees to meet present and future needs. Training is also a means of taking the Company's purpose to all employees and teaching the values and behaviours to which the Company is committed. All employees will understand what their role is and how it contributes to the goals of the business. They will be given the training necessary to ensure their functional excellence in performing that role.

> **Individuals will be trained for present and future job competence provided a need exists in the organisation and the individual has the necessary potential. Employees will be considered as individuals with needs, rather than as members of groups where training needs are assumed on the basis of that membership.**
>
> **The responsibility for training and development is shared amongst manager, employee and trainer. Managers and supervisors will be accountable for the Training and Development of their people and will be actively involved in both formal and on-the-job training activities. Individuals will be encouraged to be proactive in formulating and actioning their development plans. All parties will identify and remove barriers to individual growth and development.**
>
> **The assessment of needs and the measurement of results will form part of the training process. Business sense will determine the balance between the use of in-Company and external resources in meeting training needs. Innovative ways of meeting training needs will be established so that they become part of ongoing practice. The organisation will be managed in such a way that training is part of the ongoing work.**
>
> **Needs driven and professionally executed training will only be of value if the concepts and skills taught via training are consistent with desired work place practices. Where there are inconsistencies between what is taught in training and environmental factors such as appraisal of performance, rewards, structure and management behaviour, these will be identified and corrected.**

Variations in emphasis can obviously be discerned, but of greater interest is the common set of assumptions embedded in these statements:

* training and development available to all employees,
* focus on the individual, with total identification between individual and corporation,
* mobility and promotion premised on individual meritocracy,
* a direct link between training/career education and opportunities for advancement.

In line with human resource management thinking, these assumptions are underpinned by an ideology of congruence between individual and corporate objectives, a zero-conflict base of social relations with organisational mobility available to all. Regulatory aspects are framed as being dependent on individual potential, performance and initiative in relation to organisational need. The free market system, advocated by most corporations as an economic principle, clearly guides corporate policy with regard to training and development. The public function of training

in its corporate context becomes the provision of a mechanism whereby the ideology for the merging of individual and corporate interests can be created and sustained. Training shows in concrete terms that the corporation cares about the well-being and development of its employees and that, depending only on individual aptitude and initiative, mobility is available to all. It is this qualification that reveals the features of the corporate labour market. Training is the site where skills can be acquired and developed for 'exchange' in the internal (or external) labour market. The pivotal concept is the notion of 'career'. Hierarchical organisation structures create the possibility of promotion, with concomitant salary and status increases. Corporations nurture and sustain an ideology of career mobility for the individual in order to attract and retain high-quality employees. The ideology of career development as a continual process is noticably absent in the traditional professions or trades, where access is obtained through a recognised qualification which certifies that the individual is skilled in a specific area of work. In general terms, income, status and psychological identification are derived from association with the particular profession or trade, rather than from identification with a particular organisation or company. The division of labour that creates the corporate hierarchy requires an ideological underpinning that presents the individual with possibilities for obtaining increased material and psychological benefits within the boundaries of the firm. At the same time the external labour market is kept in focus as an alternative site for career mobility. Not all career aspirations can be accommodated within the firm and recruitment from outside, which occurs as a parallel process to internal promotion, increases conditions of competition. Training derives its agency from this ideological frame.

3.2 The private version

In order to deconstruct the agency of corporate training we need to examine the other side of the 'theory of action' coin, namely the theory-in-use as constructed by individuals inside the corporation. Argyris and Schon maintain that any organisation should be seen as an artifact of individual ways of representation:

> Each member of the organization constructs his or her own representation, or image of the theory-in-use of the whole. That picture is always incomplete. The organization members strive continually to complete it, and to understand themselves in the context of the organization. They try to describe themselves and their performance insofar as they interact with others. Moreover, others are continually engaged in similar inquiry. It is this continual, concerted meshing of individual images of self and others, of one's own activity in the context of collective interaction, which constitutes an organization's theory-in-use. (Argyris & Schon in Pugh (ed), 1984:359)

A sample of 22 trainers from a range of corporations within commerce and industry were asked to give their impressions of perceptions of training at various organisational levels. As trainers probably have the strongest vested interest in the continuation of training at a practical level, it was presumed that they would have definite theories-in-use about training's role and function. The extracts that follow have been selected to illustrate a range of perceptions.

3.2.1 Trainers' views of management perceptions of training

Question:

'How do you think management sees training?'

* 'Our MD is extremely serious about training but the production managers see training as an add-on. If there's any disruption the first thing they do is to cancel training courses. They say it's 'nice to have' but it's not essential.'

* 'I think training is seen largely as a necessary evil by a lot of people. Management see it as something that has to be done to keep the workers happy and to use up the budget that is available. I don't think there is enough emphasis placed on training and I don't think the technical training is ever really looked at. I think the mere fact that a person is being trained is good enough and the MD's of companies with training will say that it's great. That is where it ends. It's the numbers game, the whole social profile.'

* 'Some see it as a necessary evil and others recognise it as a totally positive force that has great influence in the company and its people. There are some people who say: "It's a waste of time, let's just get on with our jobs, this training really doesn't achieve much." There are others who say: "Yes, it does achieve, we must be concerned with our employees and their development; we must be looking ahead and training them for future positions, etc." '

* 'It's something they send other people on - "not for me", but it varies again. So much actually seems to depend on the personal credibility that you have with that manager when you go and talk about a particular course. I think I operate on personal credibility quite a lot because people tend to look at the "deliverer" of the training rather than the training initially.'

* 'Necessary in terms of their image in the market place - that this is a company which does training. Expensive.'

* 'Top management, I think, is very committed to training from the top down, but there is still a tendency amongst many businesses that if budgets need to be cut, they cut training.'

* 'I hope this doesn't sound too negative, but I almost think they see it as a necessary evil. They feel that it's something that must be done. They have to make money available for it, they have to allow people time off to go on courses and so on, but I get the impression that they actually resent doing it. Staff should be there to work and if training is internal, or if it's assignment-based or experienced-based then that's fine. It is almost seen as a reward or a privilege: "If you are sufficiently advanced or if you have promise then we'll send you on training." '

* 'Management see trainers as people who get the staff up to scratch as quickly as possible without wasting management time. We're just there to get people up to competency level, to produce, not robots, but people with technical skills that can be used as quickly as possible.'

* 'Management sees training as essential, however, work pressures often delay or hamper attendance on courses.'

* 'There are very few South African firms that see training as a totally positive force that has a great influence on the company and its people. Most SA firms are not prepared to support the training function properly and intelligently.'

* 'My impression is that most managers have a short-term perspective on training - a quick fix.'

* 'We are often seen as the department that is magically supposed to solve problems that have more often than not resulted from bad management practice.'

* 'Training is often used as a reward: "You have done well, now you can go on a training course." The way the company can give recognition is to send somebody on a training course.'

* 'Training is viewed as getting in people's way, but needed.'

* 'They'll take you round their training rooms and it's clean and empty. Especially companies with overseas links - they want to report on how many people have gone through training.'

* 'The staff who are happiest and most successful are managed by people who are totally committed to training while the managers who believe it's a waste of time have dissatisfied and frustrated staff.'

* 'It's sort of token training almost, "You haven't given us anything really relevant." Management, I think, sees it as a privilege. It seems to be reserved for people who are already there anyway. The people who really need training are shop floor people, the people struggling to break out of the ranks and start climbing the ladder.'

Contradictory images emerge from these comments. The contradiction is perhaps best captured by the phrase 'a necessary evil', a metaphor that was mentioned twice. A composite reading of the comments shows general rather than specific management support for training. On the positive side it is perceived as an investment for the future - 'we must be looking ahead and training them for future positions.' At the same time training is seen as a non-monetary reward for past performance. There is a marked lack of confidence in training's capacity to engage with the 'realities' of particular workplaces - 'training doesn't really achieve much', yet the occurrence of training as an event that 'keeps the workers happy' is tolerated and even encouraged. Policies such as the Sullivan Code can be traced in the 'numbers game' references, but training is also perceived as reflecting positively on the corporation's social profile in the external world. At the same time frequent references to the perceived expendability of training in budget or time terms, indicate a short-term perspective on the viability of formal corporate training, which is re-inforced by a stated preference for job-based informal training.

Given these contradictions what then is the task of formal training from a management perspective? It is understandable that there should be resentment towards a practice that disrupts the work routine and takes employees away from their jobs. If, however the perceived outcome adds little to current or future technical capacity to perform a job, why should formal training still be regarded as 'necessary'?

Hopper (1973) offers a dated but useful functionalist explanation of the contradictory messages contained in management's perceptions of training. He points to the structural dilemma experienced by all industrial societies that are stratified with respect to status and economic

and political power and argues that educational systems have the dual-task of 'warming up' some candidates and 'cooling out' others. The ambition of all candidates must be sponsored to provide the strongest pool of potential candidates, yet the ambition of some candidates must be regulated in order to achieve and maintain the desired stratification. A need therefore exists for the simultaneous provision of both experiences.

This dilemma is found at micro-level within the corporation as a social entity. The task of nominating employees to training courses, found throughout the survey to be a management prerogative, places access to training within the management control system. The formal authority to 'cool out' certain individuals or levels of employees whilst engendering a 'warming up' experience for those employees who are regarded as worthy of 'investment', provides the control mechanism that transforms training from a general societal function to a particular corporate institution. The stratification implications, examined earlier in definitions of training, find their practical expression in access control. Hourly or weekly paid workers at the lower levels, where having a job is considered to be sufficient 'warming up' are, needless to say, not the prime target for training. Permanently-employed salaried employees constitute the grouping that requires both sponsorship and regulation. A statement such as 'the mere fact that a person is being trained is good enough', finds explanation if the management perception of training is interpreted in terms other than technical efficiency/effectiveness. Within a corporate milieu that desires and requires a productive work force and would therefore prefer to regard training in efficiency/effectiveness terms, status or mobility experiences provided by training are regarded as desirable but expendable if they interfere with the exigencies of work. (It should be borne in mind that more concrete 'warming up' mechanisms such as promotion and salary or wage increases are available to perform this task.)

The other perceived task of formal training, namely to create a positive image of the particular corporation in the external market place, confirms the general nature of the 'warming up' task. This aspect relates to a wider catchment area outside the confines of a particular workplace. Constant recruitment is vital for continuity in the quest for potential

labour power. The combination of external market forces and the maintenance and reproduction of the features of the internal labour market thus create the conditions for the existence of a formal training function within the corporation.

3.2.2 Trainers' views of employee perceptions of training

Question:

'How do you think staff/employees see training?'

* 'I don't think staff have a very clear understanding of what training is all about because the courses we offer here in the plant for staff people are very basic courses. They don't really help people learn and know their technical work better. So all that they see is supervisors and managers coming on a lot of training courses. They see them developing but they don't see much going for themselves really. I don't think the perception is very good.'

* 'I think that there is a kind of dualism in their approach to training. I think one of the approaches is that, yes, this is very valuable stuff. "This company is showing how important I am by training me; this is my development; I am going to progress with this training; it is useful to me." There is a positive side to this training. The reverse side of the coin is that there are a lot of people who think training is a time for a break and a play and the company is sponsoring drinks and eats and whatever, and its going to be fun doing this, this time. "It actually doesn't have much relevance to my job, so I'll enjoy, I'll sit through the information and we'll have fun afterwards." '

* 'I think it varies. In my experience people generally come into training situations feeling at best sort of neutral and at worst quite resistant. I've had managers saying: "I'm very proud of the fact that in 30 years I've never been on a training course. Isn't it good that I've managed to keep out of the clutches of the training people." It's terrible if you think about it - so I think there must be some people who come to a course feeling excited and interested but I think so many times they're neutral or actually quite negative.'

* 'In this company at the moment - they don't really believe the organisation totally cares about them. The company hasn't made sufficient investment in training.'

* 'I think a lot of staff wish that they could have more training and there are two reasons for that not happening. One is the cost of training and the other is the time that it takes. And the bitter reality of this company is that it is a small organisation and everybody is very busy all day long. To remove people from the work environment and put them into a classroom situation is

actually a big thing, it's not done lightly. That's an ongoing battle, I wouldn't even call it a battle, I would call it a reality.'

* 'I think the majority of them see it as a couple of days out of the workplace. I have a problem with that. In most cases where you get nominated for a course you don't really have a lot of choice. If your boss has seen that there is some kind of deficiency that needs to be addressed, and he's nominated you to come on a course, you can't say: "No, I'm not going." It's then the trainer's responsibility to make that guy as receptive to what you're trying to teach as possible. The majority of people out there think it's a "jolly".'

* 'When the staff come to training they are never quite sure. We get some of the old pro's who've been through a couple of courses so they are quite at home and they know what to expect. They come expecting to be lectured at, they expect a school-class room type week here. I think they're very surprised when they sit in a horse shoe, when they have to introduce themselves - that it is actually different to school - that they work in little groups and their ideas are asked - that the trainers do not have all the answers. Normally they thoroughly enjoy it - they get involved and really participate. We don't have a lot of people who don't participate at all once they get to the training room.'

* 'I think staff see training as a right, as something they're entitled to, something they must have to recognise their worth and for there own progression On the other hand, it's something that doesn't really help in their jobs. I think I mentioned earlier, I spoke to one engineer who when nominated for a course, wasn't too keen. He was happy to go on the course just to have a few days away, but not really for the sake of the course. I asked him what it was that made him hate going on training and he said training was okay, but it really never made any difference. I think possibly that is one of the problems, that you are actually exposing people to a lot of things, opening a new world to them to a degree and then they go back to the workplace and nothing changes. So there is no transfer.'

* 'Some people/staff expect miracles in the training room and some people have maybe been on too many courses where their expectations weren't met - so that they are I wouldn't say reluctant to come into the training room but they maybe know that at the end they will be a little bit further down the road but not as far as they actually expected.'

* 'It makes me sad that so many people dismiss training as:"Ag, it's only these funny people who run courses." It just makes me sad that it has that image both from the inside and the outside.'

A key link between the analysis attempted in the previous section and employee perceptions of training, is found in the statement: 'I don't think staff have a clear perception of what training is all about.' This opinion is based on the perceived discrepancy between the limited content and

relevance of courses offered to lower level staff and the variety of courses available at a higher hierarchical level. Generally a time-space disjunction can be traced between 'going to the training room', 'being in the training room' and 'taking something out of the training room' as three separate and distinct occurrences that are not be interpreted as a continuum of either intent or outcome. The most positive version of 'going to the training room' is found in a mobility or status expectation that manifests itself as: 'This company is showing how important I am by training me; this is my development - I am going to progress with this training.' Contrary to management perceptions of training as a reward or privilege based on past performance, training is seen as a right or entitlement by those who have mobility or status expectations.

Previous experience of formal training, entwined with memories of schooling, prompt defensive strategies for coping with 'being in the training room', ranging from 'training is time for a break and a play' so that 'I'll sit through the information and we'll have fun afterwards' or 'feeling at best sort of neutral and at worst quite resistant.' These responses are indicative of various strategies of 'making out' as forms of passive compliance. Not all the comments are negative. Statements such as 'normally they thoroughly enjoy it - they get involved and really participate' are more representative of Burawoy's notion of active 'consent' to the 'game' of training. All the statements, however, implicitly portray the training room as a 'dummy' place that has little to do with the 'real world'.

'Taking something out of the training room' is portrayed as the most disillusioning of the three events. If training 'never really makes any difference' and 'it doesn't really have much relevance to my job', or even if it exposes 'people to a lot of things, opening up a new world to them to a degree' and 'then they go back to the workplace and nothing changes', there is very little sense of 'taking something out of the training room' even for those who had high expectations prior to the event.

It was found that in-company training courses generally do not award certificates at the end of a course, although this used to be a requirement for courses registered with the Department of Manpower, before tax

concessions for approved in-site training were amended in 1984 and made applicable only to the training of employees whose gross income did not exceed R15 000 per annum (HSRC/NTB, 1989:33-34). In July 1990, on the recommendation of the Margo commision, all tax concessions were discontinued (NTB/HSRC, 1991:260). The issuing of in-house certificates is now an internal matter and most companies have discontinued the practice. There is therefore no longer a symbolic representation of course attendance that offers a degree of status compensation for perceived lack of practical utility.

A later more direct question about the link between formal training and mobility patterns revealed powerful theories-in-use about stratification between different levels of employees and the 'myth' of mobility for all:

* 'The connection between training and a career path is often an exaggerated one. When promotion occurs the training record is not as powerful as it's made out to be.'

* 'I sometimes think training is used as a manipulation weapon. When a person says: "Why can't I be promoted" or: "What does it take for me to become a supervisor or a senior engineer or project manager?", the answer is: "Well, you still have to be trained in this and this and this, so we'll do an appraisal on you and we'll draw up a training programme. So until you've done those steps you won't be considered for promotion." When promotion time comes up, it's not that that counts - what counts is the actual technical competence in the job which largely, and this is probably a terrible thing to say, is not dependent on the training ... It's really his day-to-day work experience that counts very much and then his social interaction with people and the sort of underground company politics.'

* 'A lot of people don't need development plans and a lot of people don't want them. Talking again about the solid citizen - those are the backbone of any business and the majority of them are quite happy where they are. They don't want to go anywhere else. People are happy because they're doing a good job. A lot of guys are just not interested. "I can do my job, I'm fine. Leave me alone. I don't want to know about training." I'm quite happy to accept that. The last thing that we would want to do is to try and force anybody to go on something that they don't want to go on. Those guys are fine and the development plan will say that they are happy in their job and they don't need anything - which is completely honest, otherwise you're wasting time.'

* 'Often it depends on the individual's own sense of security. There are some managers who are very secure, who love training up their people and whose job is to get somebody to take over their job. They know that without somebody to take over their job they won't

get promoted. The other guys who have almost reached their limit within the company will sit on the job and not train anybody to take their place because there is nowhere for them to go. They feel insecure and threatened if somebody is trained to take their job.'

* 'A lot of companies put people on training courses purely because they look at their records and they say: "This chap hasn't been on a course for a year. Let's put him on another one." '

These comments are consistent with related findings in Finegold and Soskice's analysis of the failure of training in Britain:

> In those firms that do train, managers tend to treat training as an operating expense to be pared during economic downturns and fail to incorporate manpower planning into the firm's overall competitive strategy. For managers interested in career advancement, the training department is generally seen as a low status option. And for poorly qualified line managers, training may be seen as a threat to their authority rather than a means of improving productivity. (Finegold and Soskice, 1990:27)

Whilst the public version of training in the corporation presents a causal connection between training and career development, this relationship is not corroborated by the private version. The way in which individuals make sense of training is by disjunctive interpretation of the three stages of training, rather than by viewing training as a continuous input-throughput-output process favoured by traditional systems thinking. This disjunction severs the linkage that would secure direct causation between training and career mobility.

3.2.3 Trainers' views of trade union perceptions on training

Question:

> *'How do you think the trade unions that represent your employees view training?'*

* 'I have very little contact. Some people are involved in the union but I'm afraid I have very little contact.'

* 'They see it as a means for advancement. Advancement is a big issue with our union at the moment. They have focussed more on the technical training. They would like to see some sort of financial rewards for people having been through training but definitely they see that training guarantees advancement. They would like to see everybody getting a lot more training than what they are getting.'

* 'We have union activity, it's getting stronger. I asked one shop steward recently how he felt about training from a union point of view. In union affairs they get training from the union, which is just a short one-day course and he feels the company should train the shop stewards on things like negotiation skills. He said that if they knew how to negotiate more effectively, they wouldn't get to the stage where they would have to go to the Conciliation Board. Why is management not prepared to teach them how to be good shop stewards? And to quote him, he says, "I don't know if management is prepared to let us in on the deal. I don't know what their priorities are as far as shop stewards are concerned". The feeling there is that they should be training them but they're not and he doesn't know why. Then I said, "What about job related training, apart from your training as a shop steward ? In the job you are doing, have you ever been trained?" He said he had been with the company for 12 years and said, "Job-related training, I don't get any. I've been on two courses, an on-the-job training course which was a one-on-one instruction and a safety representatives' course. I have had no other training in the 12 years I've been here. I can't comment on any management training because I haven't had any". I then asked, "The two courses you have been on, have they been any good to you?" He said, "No, because I had no opportunity to put it into practice, so it was no good." I said, "How do you learn your job?" And he said, "We just learn it as we go." The impression I got when speaking to him was that they need it, they should have it, management isn't giving it to them and they don't know why.

* 'The union sees training in very positive terms. I wouldn't know what the perception was in the past because I was't here, but I was talking to one of the shop stewards a month ago and he was saying the union was going to combine workers' problems on the shopfloor with community struggles, but the most important thing was training and development. It wasn't any use to ask the company to do certain things and to make the working conditions better, to pay the people better if the people weren't getting the training. As a result the policies regarding education in the company I think are very progressive and very forward-looking. There is somebody in the union council that holds the portfolio for training and development and they really go for it. He was telling me that the employers and the unions are now challenging the state for people's education and training and development.'

* 'I really couldn't answer that with any kind of authority. My contact with the union as a group of people is very limited. Our guys are all unionised and there's a lot of union activity. I've had very limited contact with the 'shoppies' on training and that was on a specific training programme. I think the guys have got a fairly good perception of what we're doing. I think that they have a problem with the amount of training that gets focussed onto weekly paid guys, which is their area of responsibility. And I would agree with them on that, because that's maintenance stuff. The stuff that gets done with those guys is generally maintenance type training. "OK, let's make sure the guy knows how to work his machine." We also do 6M but the 6M programme has died a death

here. The problem here is that the guys see 6M as being extremely patronising. I think it had a place 10 years ago. It has no place now. We're going to be using a sort of semi-customised version of *Justice for All*.

* Ek sien dat ons grootste unie al hoe meer begin konsentreer op opleiding as 'n strategiese element van die verbetering van die lot van hulle lede. Ongelukkig dink ek tot hede was daar nog te min interaksie van vakbondkant. Die ambaggerigte "trade unions" was nog altyd spesifiek daarop gerig, maar in terme van "upliftment" dink ek was daar nog altyd te min interaksie.

* 'I don't know really. I think they see training as a means to develop knowledge and skill - perhaps particularly as a route to promotion. From what I've gathered I think unions usually consider training to be a good thing.

(The trainers from commercial corporations could not answer this question and the comments quoted above were all made by trainers from industrial corporations. The names of unions mentioned directly were omitted for the sake of anonymity, but it should be noted that they were all COSATU-affiliated unions.)

This question drew the briefest responses. It is evident that the majority of respondents have very little contact with shop stewards or union members, who mostly fall into the weekly-paid category and therefore are not eligible for many of the training courses offered. Contact occurs on an ad-hoc basis and although the general feeling seems to be that the unions regard training as 'a good thing', there is certainly no indication that the trainers themselves are making any effort to lobby for training for lower-level employees. The training offered at this level is either what is called 'basic maintenance training' or free market propaganda, neither of which provides a basis for advancement. Yet is is the union that perceive the link between training, remuneration and mobility opportunities most directly and are pushing for technical training that will secure material benefits and advancement.

There is generally no expression of antagonism towards trade unions, but rather an indication of ignorance. It is clear that there has been no direct negotiation between the training department and the trade union about training provision, except in one corporation where the company's stance is termed 'very progressive'.

3.2.4 Trainers' perceptions of training

Question:

'How do you think trainers, in general, see training?'

* 'At the last HR conference we were asked to paint a picture of how we saw the HR function and Training in particular. Our group decided that we are like Cinderella, because we are always left with the dirty work to do, we have to smooth out funny policies that are implemented, we have to bridge the gap between performance appraisals and what actually happens in "real" life - that kind of thing. We're the ones that have to explain it all away or make up the difference between what the staff's perception is and what is actually happening. We have to make it palatable or acceptable or attractive - whatever excuses you have to palm out. We have to do a lot of "selling" of company decisions and policies.'

* 'In speaking to trainers, a lot of them express dissatisfaction and frustration with the way training happens, but they don't seem to, themselves, be doing anything to change it. It's almost like, on the one hand, they are promoting what already exists and they are entrenching it in a system. We're becoming more and more structured and more and more automated in what we do. On the other hand there is something deep inside us that says it's wrong, it's not working but we don't know how to bring the two together.'

* 'I think you get the old-school trainer and the new-school trainer. I think I see a difference there. I think the old school of trainer was like my ex-boss who sat in his office, devised a course and then presented it for the next 20 years. That was knowledge and one should respect knowledge and one shouldn't say: "That's not necessary or that's not needed" because he knew that it was needed.

  I think the new school of trainer is trying very hard to really help people to be more effective in their roles in some way. So rather than having a product which you churn people through, the trainer has a skill in working out what is needed to perhaps overcome the blockages or even enhance what is there. The issue becomes the driving force rather than "I've got a product." '

* 'In my experience there are two distinct groups of trainers. There's one group of people who think very much along the lines that we are here to affect the bottom line of the business at the end of the day. I believe that is one of the things that nobody knows how to measure. There's another group who see themselves and their training departments declaring UDI and going off and saying: "This is us, we are Training and we are going to run the boat". That's unfortunate because there are quite a few of those guys out there who don't see themselves as a service function, they see themselves as a line function, which I have a problem with.'

* 'I think some people see training as just going through a schedule of courses. You run those courses because they've always been run. I think other people see training as sort of the dogsbody thing in the organisation - if you don't make it elsewhere you get put into Personnel and if you don't make it there you get put into Training because you can't do too much damage there. I see a lot of people very disillusioned with training. I don't know why that is. It seems that they're not delivering things of value to their customers, which is their managers presumably and the people in the organisation. It's an interesting point.'

* 'I suppose what the training department is really doing is making accessible, knowledge and skills to the people who need it - to grow as an individual within their job and to give them opportunities to develop. But just as much it's there to make sure that the organisation has the skills and knowledge available, so it can stay in business. It's incomprehensible that in the 1990's an organisation could survive without any new knowledge coming into the organisation. You have to upgrade skills and sometimes change skills completely in order for the business to survive. Training is definitely empowering the individual to develop the skills he needs to retain his job but at the same time it is giving the organisation the skills that allows it to stay in business. You have to balance those two at the same time. But within that, no one is forced to go on training, its a personal request, that training is made available and the people who want access to it can have it.'

* 'Ek sien opleiding as 'n diens aan die organisasie - om daardie behoeftes aan te spreek wat krities tot die organisasie se sukses is. Dit hang af van die mense. Die masjiene kan nie werk nie. Die kwaliteit van die menslike hulpbron moet verhoog word.

  Ek dink daar is ongelukkig baie organisasies waar die opleiers nie werklik besef watter bydrae hulle maak nie. Dis al asof hulle 'n tipe van 'n minderwaardigheidskompleks het teenoor produksie. Ek dink daar's baie ouens wat nie genoeg feite het om die bydrae wat hulle maak te staaf nie en nie eens bewus is daarvan dat hulle wel 'n bydrae maak nie.'

* 'The bottom line is that it should improve on-the-job skills. It should enable the company to improve its bottom line. It should enable the people to do their jobs better. But doing their jobs better involves a whole lot of things. There are very specific skills that can be measured, but more important to me is the culture and the attitude, because I think that if you have the attitude of people right and the approach is right, then all the other things come relatively easily to a person.'

This composite set of responses is perhaps analytically the most intriguing as they represent trainers' sense of their own agency. The first notable feature is a similarity in the terms and phrases used, to the language employed in the formal mission statements. One explanation could be that the psychological risk of exposing the occupational 'I' to an unknown

interviewer is greater than when articulating the perceived theories-in-use of 'other' organisational actors - hence the shift to formal organisational language in the portrayal of trainer perceptions. A further explanation lies in the emergence of an occupational self-interest which prompts two contradictory responses. On the one hand there is a requirement to project a normative view of training - what should be and could be if all 'environmental' variables, such as 'attitudes' and 'culture', were positively disposed towards training. Phrases such as 'affecting the bottom line of the business at the end of the day' and 'empowering the individual to develop the skills he needs', illuminate the well-documented and, in this instance, personally-felt contradiction between the interests of the individual and the interests of the organisation, which translates into a continual need for trainers to prove the 'meaning' of their work. 'Facts to prove their contribution to the organisation' (translated freely from the Afrikaans extract), and therefore the importance of 'measurement', remain the elusive factors in the assessment of training's bottom-line value. On the other hand, there is reference to the perceived powerlessness of training to 'bridge the gap' between organisational plan and individual experience - hence the emergence of the 'Cinderella' metaphor. In occupational terms this perception of powerlessness translates into 'dissatisfaction and frustration with the way training happens' or 'a lot of people very disillusioned with training', with concomitant low-status implications for training as an occupation.

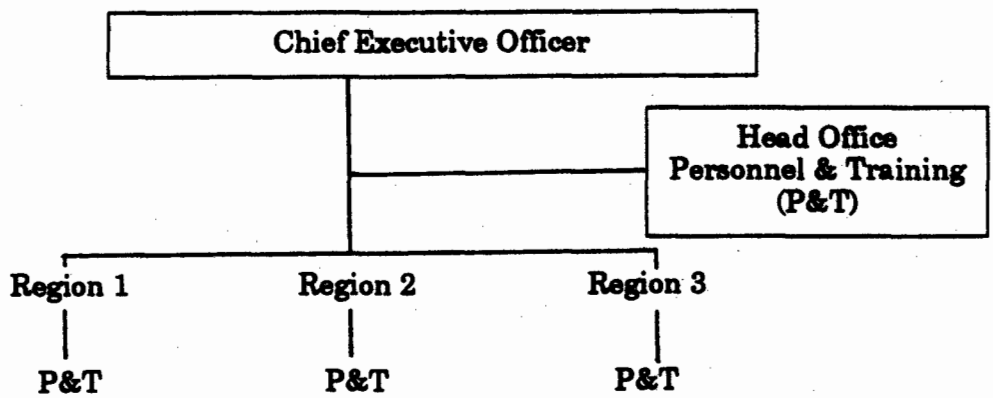
The second notable feature is an indication of role shift. References to two groups of trainers: 'old-school' and 'new-school', as well as reference to trainers who identify completely with the 'bottom line' and others who see training as a thing-in-itself, reflect a change in role expectations as they are understood by trainers. The notion of 'role shift' will be taken up in chapter five. As the data pertaining to training's organisational location and formal decision-making authorities offers a particular insight into the contradiction between espoused theories and theories-in-use relating to corporate training, this area will be examined in the next section.

4. TRAINING'S LOCATION AND FORMAL AUTHORITY WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

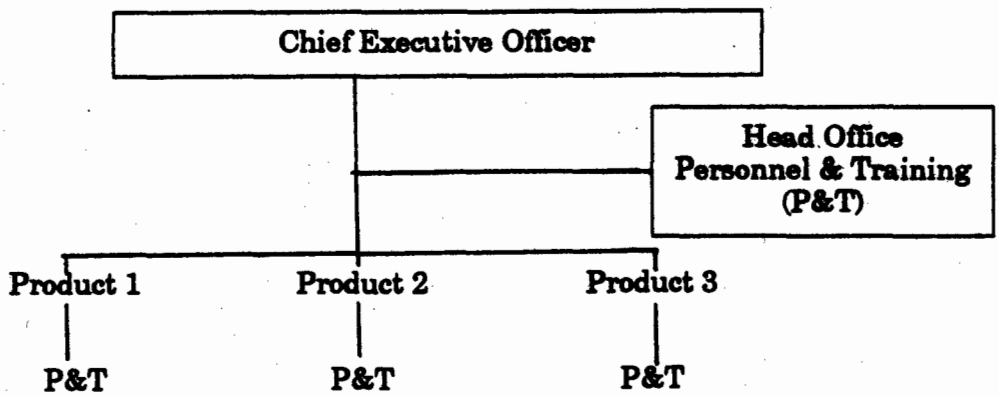
4.1 The organisational location of training and development

In the questionnaire survey directed at 10 large corporations, representative of commercial service and industrial manufacturing enterprises, divisionalisation was identified as a common element which manifests itself in two forms: by geographical location and by product or service unit. These forms of work organisation can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

Structure 1: Locational division (4 companies):



Structure 2: Product or service unit division (5 companies):



(A variation was found in one company where Personnel was divisionalised by location whereas Training was divisionalised by Product/Service Unit.)

Both forms of work organisation are representative of Woodward's two-tier structure, with a further two-tier structure found in both types of head office personnel human resource departments: the higher level represented at general manager (GM) or director level and reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and the lower level consisting of a number of specialists reporting to the head office Human Resource (HR) manager. A further two-tier structure was also found at locational and product/service divisional level with the training section reporting to the divisional HR manager who in turn reported to the divisional/regional line manager. Titles in the training section at lower levels, range from training officers to training consultants to training managers, the latter often an indication of status or grading rather than as a line function with subordinates reporting to the position.

4.1.1 Division of labour

The distinguishing feature between the two sets of second-tier structures is the division of labour between head office and divisional training departments.

Structure 1: Locational division

The most significant feature of the relationship between head office and regional/area training departments is a division of labour along Taylorist lines. Course design and control over any policy matter related to training are vested in the head office division, while regional/area training departments are responsible for the presentation of courses and accompanying administration. Between them the two departments share the whole range of training activities in the company, directed towards satisfying organisational needs as identified in the company's strategic plan (although no trainer interviewed at this level had access to strategic information), and satisfying individual needs identified in an annual needs analysis conducted through interviews with managers, supervisors and section heads. (Only two respondents mentioned that they discuss training needs with individual employees.)

The relationship emanating from this partnership is essentially a 'service' relationship. The head office department 'serves the needs of regional training departments and the direct training needs of head office staff, while the regional training department 'serves the needs of the region' operating under the direct control of the regional manager. Branches or departments in the region are not encouraged to consult outside the organisation but are expected to approach their training department with regard to any training requirement. The department advises on the suitability of outside consultants or designs customised training if appropriate material is not available.

There is, however, evidence of friction - in the words of one respondent: 'My authority and decision-making limits are severely curtailed by head office. This is a problem, because being regional staff, I have a better idea of the needs of the region than does head office. Much of the training that needs to be done is taken out of my control and vested in the head office department'

Regulation of the training market is achieved by a division of labour that suppresses competition between the two operational levels and maintains training as an intra-organisational mechanism. The two departments are separated geographically but they function as a unit to provide a comprehensive training service to the organisation as a whole. Directional control is held at the head office human resource level and operational control is located in the senior head office or regional line position.

Structure 2: Product/Service division

A different division of labour characterises the relationship between head office and product/service division, with no direct link between the two. Product/service training departments train the technical skills required by the particular line of business, while the head office training department offers a 'menu' of general awareness and skills courses, such as 'Communications Skills', 'Self-Development', and, 'Problem-Solving and Decision-making' to all divisions.

Each division, including head office training, operates as a profit centre and for each course there is a specified course fee that is paid by the trainee's home unit. Product/service units have the option of utilising the courses offered by their head office training department or of 'shopping around for better quality or price' in the outside market. Relationships are characterised by a 'buying-selling' mode and the marketing component, described by one respondent as 'the road show', features prominently in the training officer's job description. Networking and consultancy are considered vital, with the latter described as 'consciously networking to get business - it's more than the numbers game, its the amount of money that you are bringing in.'

Division of labour between head office and divisional training units in structure 2 creates the competitive edge characteristic of a free market system, with direction derived from market conditions and determined by the company's strategic plan. It is this structural shift in the social relations-within-training, that introduces external market features within the internal training function itself. Internal and external competition for delivery of training sharpens the competitive edge and removes the protection offered by internal regulation of the training market. The notion of the in-company trainer as an internal consultant who competes for business with other internal and external consultants emerges from this shift.

It has already been argued that sealed-off internal labout markets *contain* mobility aspirations within the enterprise, while a combination of the features of both internal and external labour markets increase individual competitiveness, as well as introducing mobility opportunities outside the particualr enterprise. The latter option also allows for recruitment *from* the outside which, in many instances, obviates the need for internal training. The variations found in structures 1 and 2 are characteristic of structural forms of labour regulation within the corporation as a whole. Trainers, as employees of the corporation, are therefore subject to the same regulation of mobility opportunities as other employees.

4.2 The formal authority allocated to training

4.2.1 Functional versus staff authority

The direct link between management control and personnel (including training) as an in-company activity is constituted through delegated managerial authority. Formal organisational authority therefore relates to the implicit or explicit sanction granted by line management. In this regard Mullins notes:

> Whatever the range of responsibilities, the personnel manager operates by consent, by delegated authority. How much consent is dependent upon the attitudes of top management, the role which they see the personnel specialists(s) as performing and formal organisational relationships with 'line' managers. (Mullins, 1989:211)

Gerber *et al* (1987) distinguishes between 3 types of authority found in business enterprises, with authority defined as the 'right to use resources to accomplish goals'.

> Line authority: ... the authority vested in managers to give their subordinates orders which they are expected to carry out. In other words, line authority is the direct authority of any manager/supervisor over immediate subordinates ...
>
> Functional authority: ... the right given to staff personnel to demand compliance with methods, procedures, policies and timing of one specialised function of the organisation..... the right to issue enforcable instructions on staff matters throughout the enterprise, in order to fulfil duties and responsibilities outside her own department.... the personnel manager's functional authority gives him just as much power outside his own department as his line authority gives him within the training department. These orders are enforcable ...
>
> Staff authority: ... the responsibility of acting in an advisory and supporting capacity towards the rest of the enterprise ... the advice is not enforcable. (1987:15-16)

As this research study is interested in the authority relationships between training, as a sub-set of the human resource function, and the rest of the firm, line authority within the training department itself was not investigated. The validity of the distinction between functional and staff

authority was tested by asking the ten questionnaire respondents to indicate the percentage of each kind of authority vested in their jobs.

Most respondents felt that functional authority is a 'theoretical concept' which may have some relevance for top-level HR or personnel executives but does not really apply to their work situations. Even those in managerial positions referred to 'derived procedural authority', which they described as authority that operates under sanction of the line manager to whom they report.

There was an even division between respondents in managerial (with staff reporting to them) and non-managerial training positions. 50% of respondents worked in head office training and 50% were located in a region/division.

No. of respondents	Functional Authority	Staff Authority
7	0%	100%
1	10%	90%
1	25%	75%
1	60%	40%
Average:	**9,5%**	**90,5%**

Out of the three respondents who reported a percentage of functional authority, ranging from 10% - 60%, two were the only respondents in the sample who work in a specialist area i.e. quality circles (10%) and computer systems development and application (60%). The third respondent (25%) is a national training manager who can enforce training policies throughout the company (the only repondent to hold a national training position). Even this respondent complained that he did not have the authority to 'insist that employees are not taken off training initiatives at the last minute because of other work demands.'

Functional authority, as identified in this sample, was found to be based on top management sanction of a 'new' intervention such as quality circles, or on built-in systems control. As the computer training manager explained: 'This authority is possible because of the strict controls on our computer system.' The other seven respondents are all involved in general

management and staff development training. They identified staff authority, with its emphasis on non-enforcable advice and support, as the dominant authority relationship existing between training the rest of the corporation.

4.2.2 Areas of decision-making

Questions posed to both interviewees and questionnaire respondents about the nature of the decisions that job holders can make in the execution of their jobs with and without reference to anybody else revealed a consistent pattern.

Independent decisions related to:

* what training to offer based on the annual needs analysis;
* course design and development (not in all cases);
* course methodology;
* re-working of course material;
* scheduling and cancellation of courses;
* expenditure within approved budget.

Referred decisions related to:

* nomination and withdrawal of delegates to courses (decision taken by line management);
* purchasing of training packages (decision taken by Head Office Training);
* course design (done by Head Office Training for specialist areas);
* appointment of training staff (confirmed by Head Office Training);
* any extraordinary expenditure outside approved budget or list of approved expenditure items (approved by regional/divisional manager or Head Office Training).

Authority of non-managerial staff and even managerial staff at regional/product divisional level pertains mainly to activities related to training as an 'event' in the training room, such as the research, design and presentation of courses. Decisions regarding who attends courses and why they attend do not fall within their jurisdiction. Any procedural authority that they may have outside the training room is a delegated

authority from the regional/divisional manager and may be perceived as personal influence rather than as delegated authority. As one respondent explained:

> 'This exact thing happened - an engineer was due to go on a supervisory course and he had a problem with his supervisor. This engineer felt that his supervisor did not want him promoted and was holding him back. Now he was due to go on this supervisory course. He had been there for many years and it would be the next step in his development. I try to come up with a core pattern for everybody and in terms of his pattern, he now needed this supervisory course. His supervisor refused to let him go and I had been working on it for about three years. We only run the course twice a year and he couldn't go for one reason and the next time it was another reason and then another reason. This was now the fourth time in about three years and eventually I fought this blockage and took it all the way to the top and said: "Look, this guy must go." The supervisor was called in and eventually we just overruled the supervisor and we sent the chap on the course. I intervened there and I had a problem with this, I thought: "Am I interfering ? What's my role as a trainer ?" I knew the individual engineer and I knew he needed it in terms of his career path. I knew his supervisor was blocking him and I thought that, as part of a large organisation, what chance would that guy ever have of breaking out from under his supervisor. He'd be stuck. So yes, what is the role of a trainer ?

4.3 Implications of location and formal authority

The location of training as a discrete area of activity within the human resource function creates a gap between the world of work and the world of training, identified in the interview data as a conceptual distinction between between 'going to the training room', 'being in the training room' and 'taking something out of the training room.' Formal authority outside the training room is of an advisory nature and trainers cannot secure of enforce conditions of work that would promote transfer of skill development or 'attitude' improvement to the workplace. Activity in the training room, no matter how closely simulated, can never recreate all the variables in terms of job design, work flows, supervisory or managerial styles, peer co-operation or competition and sub-cultural forces that impact on work performance and attitudes. Neither can it approximate the external socialisation processes and class interests that each individual trainee brings to the training room as a subconscious or conscious orientation. Any notion that a direct transfer of skill, knowledge

or attitude is possible is therefore not only highly improbable but borders on the absurd.

Whilst a linear correlation between training's distance from the workplace, its lack of enforceable authority and its ideological or symbolic function is consistent with Rose's argument that institutional form determines function, it does not provide sufficient explanation for the complexity of the process in terms of the orientations of the actors involved and the means available to induce compliance or involvement. The statements about training presented in a previous section do not, on the whole, describe training in completely negative terms. Training does fulfil a function, despite its isolated location and limited authorities, otherwise it would not have held its ground for so long or be so enthusiastically promoted in human resource management discourse.

The authority concept utilised thus far has referred to a formal understanding of authority as the 'sanctioned right of the occupant of a role to act at his discretion' (Newman and Rowbottom,1968:22) that is established by the employment contract. Since the position taken in this study has been that employment relationships contain oppositional elements, the sanctioning of authority in formal organisational terms is not necessarily reflective of the processes of negotiation that constitute relations-in-production. In this sense the *de jure* 'right to act' must be distinguished from the *de facto* 'ability to act' and the dynamic nature of the sanctioning process must be acknowledged in terms of its power dimensions.

The next section will shift from an organisational design frame to organisational sociology where a revival of interest in the subjective meanings that organisational actors attach to work and the conditions of work, provide an alternative interpretative framework.

5. TRAINING AS CREATOR OF CULTURE

The ideological framing of employees as a 'resource' rather than as a 'cost' or 'commodity' that characterises current post-Fordist and strategic human resource management discourses, have placed renewed focus on corporate culture as a means of investment in cultural conditions that will maximise the potential of the human resource. There is explicit recognition of the benefits of emotional engagement. Performance-related remuneration is seen as a key element in transforming employee attitudes and is linked to individual staff development practices that encourage employees to perceive their performance and progress in the enterprise as their own responsibility. These factors are constitutive of what Thompson and McHugh (1990:229) call the new *unmediated* social relations of the workplace.

Berger's (1964, 1974) distinction between the public sphere of 'work' and the private sphere of home, family and leisure as sites of stable identity formation has now broadened to include moral incorporation into the corporate 'family' as a site of identity formation that extends the employment relationship beyond the cash nexus. It must be borne in mind that the distinction between 'knowledge workers' and 'manual workers '(in South Africa these workers would be termed 'semi-skilled' or 'unskilled') posed by Drucker (1988), is not articulated in corporate mission statements. Any claims of a universal shift to the values of the new 'information society' must be therefore be interpreted under conditions of ideological obfuscation.

While the 'crisis in U.S. business and the undeniable success of Japan and other Asian countries in beating the Americans at their own game, playing with different management rules' (Hofstede, 1986:253) is usually given as the reason why organisational culture or 'the management of meanings' has gained such prominence in popular and academic management literature, it has also been shown that the performance of Peters and Waterman's 'excellent companies' cannot be attributed to organisational culture strategies employed by these companies and not by other less

successful companies. In this regard it is interesting to note Schofield's analyses (*The Weekly Mail*, 22-28 January 1993:16-17) of IBM's current poor business performance which he attributes to poor marketing decisions, with no indication of the company being saved from disaster by their 'excellent' culture strategies.

Nevertheless, one of the primary objectives of human resource management is to create conditions whereby the latent potential of employees will be realised and their commitment to the future success of the enterprise will be secured. Training and development is seen as a central feature, or what Keep (1992:335) calls the 'litmus test', of the translation of the new enthusiasm into organisational reality. Training's *de facto* 'ability to act' or power means thus becomes a key focus area for investigation.

5.1 Forms of power

Power is generally seen, within the Weberian framework of *macht* as 'the production of intended effects' (Russell, 1986:19), through the manipulation of various resources at the disposal of the individual or group as purposive-rational actor to induce others to action (carrying out directives) or to belief (normative support) that furthers the capacity for goal-attainment by such actor. Resources at the disposal of the actor include personal resources such as skill, knowledge, experience, personality, appearance and leadership ability; control over capital, financial and technical resources; and, traditional family, social, class or organisational connections and affiliations that become relevant as sources of power.

Hannah Arendt conceptualises power as something that potentially 'springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse' (Arendt, 1958:200), with power viewed not as 'the instrumentalization of *another's* will but [as] the formation of a *common* will in a communication directed to reaching agreement' (original emphasis) (Habermas on Arendt, 1986:76). Contrasted against this version the first definition appears rigidly teleological, and, in common-sense terms, negative. At a superficial level coherence can be found

between Arendt's emphasis on collective consensus and the unitary framework posed by strategic human resource management ideology. Power that is built up through communicative action becomes an ideal proto-type for desired organisational behaviour. Habermas's observation that 'seriously intended agreement is an end in itself and cannot be instrumentalized for other ends' (1986:77) and his criticism that Arendt regards 'the contract between free and equal parties with which they place themselves under mutual obligation' (:89) as the basis of power, dispel any possibility of such an interpretation. Recognition of structurally opposed conflicts of interests as a consequence of inequalities in power and resources and the resultant need for managerial control, brings the first definition back into focus. The problem with this definition is that it contains a tacit assumption that the 'receivers' of the power-means are passive recipients or objects of structural processes. Ray's (1986:292-293) distinction between *acting as if* and *believing* as two strategies for responding to forms of control illustrate externalised and internalised actor orientations, not on the basis of the perceived legitimacy or non-legitimacy of the power-means applied but as a purposive act of self-preservation or self-interest. Eckstein and Gurr state this more clearly in their discussion of compliance.

> One may comply with a directive issued by an authority as illegitimate because compliance appears to be in one's calculated self-interest ... One may fail to comply for the same reason. Legitimacy may be unquestioned but the cost of compliance may outweigh the benefits. (Eckstein and Gurr, 1975:200)

This view poses instrumentality as the rationale for action on both sides. Yet the current emphasis on combinations of forms of control and therefore a variation in the power-means applied to induce compliance, indicates a more complex process than the calculative economic rationality that characterises the employment relationship in classic Taylorism.

Etzioni's model which poses individual or group compliance as a universal and central element of organisational structure, whilst decidedly a-historical and a-contextual, provides a useful framework for understanding the complexity of the processes of power or inducement and

compliance. For the purposes of discussion the main tenets of the model will be briefly outlined.

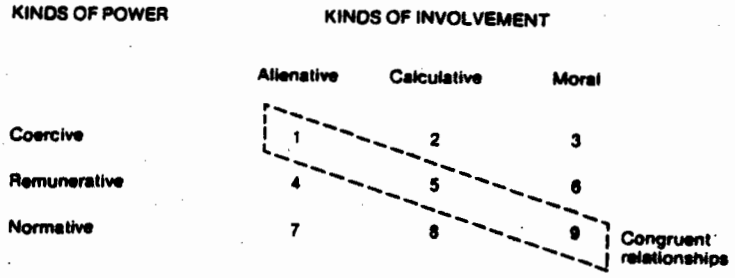
Etzioni defines compliance as referring to 'both a relation in which an actor behaves in accordance with a directive supported by another actor's power, and to the orientation of the subordinated actor to the power applied' (Etzione, 1969:59). Three kinds of power-means are identified as available to organisational representives to induce compliance in lower organisational participants:

> *Coercive* power rests on the application, or the threat of application, of physical sanctions ...
>
> *Remunerative* power is based on control over material resources and rewards ...
>
> *Normative* power rests on the allocation and manipulation of symbolic rewards and deprivations through employment of leaders, manipulation of mass media, allocation of esteem and prestige symbols, administration of rituals and influence over the distribution of 'acceptance' and 'positive response'. Pure normative power is based on the manipulation of esteem, prestige and ritualistic symbols ... Social power is based on allocation and manipulation of acceptance and positive response. (Etzione, 1969:61-62)

Subordinate actors orientate themselves in either a positive or negative way to the power applied, depending in part on whether the power-means is considered legitimate by the subordinated actor, and in part by its congruence with the line of action the actor would desire. Subordinate actor involvement manifests itself in three ways within a range of high to low intensity:

> *Alienative* involvement designates an intense negative orientation ...
>
> *Calculative* involvement designates either a negative or positive orientation ...
>
> *Moral* involvement designates a positive orientation of high intensity ... Pure moral commitments are based on internalisation of norms and identification with authority; social commitment rests on sensitivity to pressures of primary groups and their members ... Both pure moral and social orientations might be found in the same relationships, but as a rule, one orientation predominates. (:65-66)

The relationship between the power-means applied and the orientation of lower organisational participants constitutes the compliance relationship. The table reproduced below, shows nine types of compliance produced by the combination of three kinds of power and three kinds of involvement.



(reproduced in Mullins, 1989:67)

Etzione argues that coercive remunerative and normative power (types 1, 5 and 9) constitute congruent relationships whereas the other 6 positions are incongruent types. Incongruence occurs because organisations have only limited control over the powers they apply and the resultant involvement of lower participants. The exercise of power depends on the resources the organisation can recruit and the license it is allowed in utilising them. Involvement depends in part on external factors, such as membership of the participants in other collectivities, basic value commitments and personality structure of the participants. All these factors may reduce the expected congruence of power and involvement. The central hypothesis is that congruent types are more effective than incongruent types.

The central feature of Etzione's argument is that, whilst organisations employ all three kinds of power, there is a tendency towards power specialisation. When two kinds of power are emphasised at the same time over the same subject group, they tend to neutralise each other, although the issue is complicated by the amount of power each kind of power that is applied. Some organisations manage to apply two kinds of power without much waste through neutralisation because they segregate the application of one power from that of the other (:62-64).

5.2 Realisation of power

Lebas and Weigenstein (1986) show that managerial control systems are based on a combination of 'market, rules and culture' in order to obtain desired organisational behaviour. When the 'neutralisation' concept is applied to corporate forms of control, it becomes clear that combinations of forms of control is not an *ad hoc* process. Application of different kinds of power-means in close proximity to each other can lead to incongruent compliance relationships.

The corporate policy statements presented in an earlier section utilise a combination of the features of cultural control, namely the promise of job advancement with resulting economic and status rewards for individuals with potential that rests upon identification of the individual employee with the goals of the company in moral terms. To this extent there is a requirement for congruence at a normative level. Moral commitment generated in organisational participants is deemed to shift them from being *employees* with various low negative or positive degrees of calculative involvement, to being *members* of the corporate 'family'. High positive moral and social involvement fosters positive attitudes towards the firm and translates into labour harmony, productivity increases as well as innovative thinking and creativity. The notion of access to training and development opportunities becomes a key signaling device, enabling employers to confirm to employees that they are important to the enterprise's future success.

Such a strategy constitutes a form of cultural control that obscures the continued application of other more direct forms of control. Promises of opportunities for mobility or advancement are premised on the existence of hierarchical structures of work organisation, traditionally the hallmark of bureaucratic forms of control. The minimising of uncertainty has consistently been advanced in organisational literature as a motif for bureaucratisation. Specialised division of labour, hierarchical lines of authority, and the standardisation of work procedures are key features of establishing parameters of indirect bureaucratic control. Whilst bureaucracy is often portrayed as 'public enemy number one', its capacity

to provide stable identity markers is often missed. Thompson and McHugh make the point succintly.

> We have been talking as if such bureaucratic work organisation only favours management. This is to miss part of the point. Many of its features benefit workers, or at least those who are long-term employees. Such benefits include mobility through internal labour markets, seniority rules governing pay and lay-offs, grievance procedures, and job protection and demarcation. In well-organised workplaces these are enforced through plant-wide collective bargaining or informal shopfloor power. As part of this process there is a limited movement towards positive benefits for co-operation rather than negative sanctions: a sytem of mutually binding rules, material and symbolic incentives, and eventually the emergence of an ethos that is impersonally oriented towards performance. (1990:175)

A managerial strategy that seeks to *increase* the uncertainty of employees by removing the security of advancement based on seniority and years of service and replacing it with the notion of individual meritocracy that provides scope for the aspirations of the new upwardly mobile class of 'knowledge workers', lays itself open to contradiction. The two forms of control are clearly intended to complement each other as the 'success' of meritocratic mobility depends on the existence of hierarchical structures of work organisation that provide mobility paths. Furthermore, the basis of any employment relationship is primarily based on a remunerative-calculative contract, with a normative-moral relationship as a secondary and more tenuous source of control. In order to replace the certainty of impersonal bureaucratic structures with the uncertainty of meritocratic mobility that will promote individual competitiveness, the latter must be posed as the dominant power relation. In this way both the economic nature of the employment contract in individual terms and the inherent conflict of interest between management and workers are obscured. The certainty of bureaucratic forms of structure and control is replaced by the uncertainty of the realisation of individual potential as the means of mobility and the notion of
continuous training and learning is posed as the mechanism through which the corporation's commitment to the individual is concretely realised.

If we take this argument into training's sub-world which has little relation to the world of work and no formal authority to intervene in this world, the contradictions become even more evident. The perceived absence of a direct link between training and career progression, precludes or restricts application of remunerative power so that training relies predominantly on normative and social power created in the training room and mostly not sustainable beyond the 'event' itself. Training's location puts distance (in more than the geographical sense) between the social relations of the employer-employee relationship and the social relations of the trainer-learner relationship and its lack of formal authority prevents this distance from being narrowed. Morphet's (1992) argument about literacy learning finds its reverse application in corporate training. He advances the position that the most successful attempts at promoting literacy occur when the learner role is incorporated into a powerful process of social role construction, for example that of conversion to Christianity in the Laubach method, or that of becoming a political activist in the Freirian method. It is exactly because the role of learner and the role of worker or corporate employee are so far apart that the 'desired' learning does not take place in either technical or ideological terms. A separation of roles across space and time when there is an expectation of immediate applicability amongst the different sets of actors, prevents 'success' the corporation seeks.

The actor orientations of employees as trainees that were portrayed in the data corroborate this argument. Trainees who are middle or higher level employees are, by definition, less subordinated and better remunerated than lower participants and may indeed display a higher degree of commitment towards the firm. Yet, even the middle level trainees identified in the survey display little pure moral involvement in their orientation towards training as a manifestation of company commitment to the individual. A degree of negative or positive calculative involvement remain prominent with some evidence of social commitment created during the training process itself, but also evidence of alienative involvement. In a sense the argument for neutralisation of power-means leads to a double-incongruence: the 'concensus of interest' assumption poses organisational and individual employee motive as generally congruent. Current trends towards participative management strategies

tend to ignore differences in levels of subordination, performance obligations and monetary and status rewards and poses congruence as a general and universal power relation. Those who are considered upwardly mobile in the corporation may well have better reasons to display moral involvement, yet the absence of direct links between training as a form of personal development and tangible career progression result, in some cases, neither in calculative or moral compliance but rather in mild forms of alienative involvement that causes training to be perceived as 'time out' or 'isn't it good that I've managed to keep out of the clutches of training'. Training as the supposed place where the reciprocal commitment between employer and employee is concretely co-ordinated, does not have the capacity to deliver. Whilst the event of 'going' to the training room' may pose the possibility of future mobility, the emptiness of 'taking something out of the training room' - either in terms of practical utility or as a 'credit' that will promote further advancement - reduces 'being in the training room to a 'game' that is at best enjoyable and at worst mildly irritating.

Again we have to take into account that nobody is saying that training should be abolished, although it is one of the first activities to be curtailed during times of budget constraints. The explanation lies in training's capacity to pose the *possibility* of advancement and mobility for those who have no access to the training room. Regulation of access to the training room through stratification of the labour force, upheld by traditional skill definitions, entitles those who are already skilled rather than those who lack formal qualifications to opportunities for further training or re-training. Nominations are controlled by managers and even if the trainers themselves should attempt to open up more opportunities (though such initiative is not corroborated by the data), they have limited influence in this regard. It is therefore 'safe' to state meritocratic advancement as a general normative principle in the public mission statement as the safe-guards are in place to ensure regulation of Hopper's processes of 'warming up' and 'cooling out'

Training also serves as a reward for those who have a record of service and loyalty but who are not in line for promotion. Nomination to a training course continues to pose the possibility that they may be considered for advancement and it is a token of recognition that is

intended to maintain the status of such employees. The game of 'making out' that was identified as a response to 'being in the training room' finds its explanation in this context.

6. CONCLUSION

Whilst the argument presented in this chapter has attempted to show that function is not pre-determined but results from patterns of institutionalisation that construct the form of practice, it has also argued for a complex interpretation of this process. At one level the data shows that corporate training cannot fulfil its narrowly stated technical function of engendering skill formation that promotes improved 'efficiency and effectiveness' in the workplace. Training as an activity is not an integrated feature of day-to-day workplace routine, neither can training, as a discrete organisational function that operates under 'staff' authority relationships of support and advice, enforce its 'teaching' by formal means.

At another level the function of training was identified as providing the means of identity creation that fosters individual incorporation in moral terms. The evidence of mobility premised on individual achievement in the training room, is however, lacking. Positive or negative calculative involvement as well as mild forms of alienative involvement are more prominent than the positive moral involvement implied by the notion of congruence between the goals of the organisation and the individual. 'Enculturation', if it occurs, is and remains a training room process as it is promoted under the social relations of the trainer-learner interaction and not under the social relations of the employer-employee relationship.

The expectation of opportunities for advancement, however, remains as a feature of the formal employment relationship, both in material and psychological terms. Employers and employees and, not least, trainers retain their assumptions about the transformative capacity of training. Trainers, as agents of management, must strive to achieve lasting changes in the behaviour and disposition of trainees.

In the next chapter, training room activity will be posed as educational practice in order to introduce an educational dimension to the perspectives utilised thus far. It has already been mentioned that trainers attempt to stake their claim to occupational autonomy through the appropriation of a specialist core of 'educational' knowledge that is sufficiently indeterminate to prevent parts from being detached and appropriated by other managerial sub-groups. The indications are, however, that this traditional 'teaching' role is being usurped by none other than the manager as 'leader'. Included in the specifications for the role of the manager in the new 'learning organisation' is a prominent 'teacher' sub-role. The notion of 'role shift' that was identified in the data will be explored in educational terms and the institutionalised capacity for ambiguity, that was the focus of chapter three, will emerge as an internalised mechanism for the resolution of contradiction.

Chapter 5

CORPORATE TRAINING AS EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter showed that in business corporations, as sites of cultural production and reproduction work, a universalised and a-contextual organisational narrative provides the master frame for the construction of a 'consensus' ideology. It was also identified that one of the places where this happens, is the corporate training room. Like in other educational sites it is the institutionalised social relations of the trainer-learner interaction that provide the conditions for cultural identity work. Current corporate emphasis on 'diversity', the competitive nature of corporate individualism and, the globalisation of corporate activity through increased and expanded international markets, requires a universal corporate identity that is appropriated in individual terms. Cultural 'meaning making' work as a mode of managerial control therefore operates in the realm of the *individual* worker and manager as employee of the corporation.

It is in this context that this chapter poses training as a form of educational activity. The aim is to place the focus on the trainer as a particular kind of cultural agent who has the task of reconciling any conflict between employer and individual employee and convincing the employee that, since the corporation offers opportunities for advancement and self-fulfilment, it is in the employee's best interest to identify with the corporation. It has already been shown that trainers have little formal authority outside the training room and that they are separated from the world of work. The legitimation provided by theories of adult education and the interactive processes in the training room itself, are resources at the disposal of the trainer to achieve this task. The concept of corporations as 'learning organisations' that is being advocated in strategic human resource management literature, has resulted in a definite shift in the trainer role that has implications for task achievement as well as for the profiles that trainers construct for themselves.

2. TRAINER IDENTITY AS A PERSONAL CONSTRUCT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE CORPORATION AS 'LEARNING ORGANISATION'

2.1 The new corporate ground

Pedler *et al* (1988:6-7) offer a concise general history of organised training and development that rests on a progression of organisational problems and solutions. Skills shortage is seen as the key problem during the 1950s with systematic training posed as the solution. This caused a new problem in the 1960s and 70s, namely poor transfer of training or the gap between skill development on a training course and improved job performance. The solution was found in the location of the skill development process within workplace tasks, which gave rise to the methodologies of action learning and self-directed learning, underpinned by an organisational ideology of 'self-development'. The problem of the 1980s emerged as constraints posed by organisational hierarchy and bureaucracy so that organisations became 'straightjackets frustrating the self-development efforts of individual members and failing to capitalise upon their potential'. The 'learning organisation', posed as the solution of the 1990s, is one 'in which learning and working is posed as synonomous', with a collapse of hierachical terminology such as 'bosses, subordinates and workers' and replaced by organisational relationships of collegiality and companionship. The 'learning organisation' practices a self-development approach to individual learning combined with the aim of organisational transformation and displays the following features:

> (1) has a climate in which individual members are encouraged to learn and to develop their full potential ...
>
> (2) extends this learning culture to include customers, suppliers and other significant stakekholders wherever possible ...
>
> (3) makes Human Resource Development strategy central to Business Policy ...
>
> (4) a continous process of organisational transformation which harnesses the fruits of individual learning to make fundamental changes in assumptions, goals, norms and operating procedures on the basis of an internal drive to self-direction and not simply reactively to external pressures. (Pedler *et al*, 1988:4-5)

The organisational adaptibility and innovation required by post-Fordist market conditions has given rise to a spate of prescriptions for transforming organisations so that the generation of new ideas will give them a 'competitive edge'in the market place. Peter Senge's (1990) book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation* is one the most popular in this category. It is not so much a technical prescription as a cultural prescription, in the same vein as Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* in the early eighties. Culture formation is equated with an organisational leadership role that differs from that of the charismatic decision-maker. In the words of Senge:

> Leaders are designers, teachers and stewards. These roles require new skills: the ability to build shared vision, to bring to the surface and challenge prevailing mental models, and to foster more systemic patterns of thinking. In short, leaders in learning orgganisations are responsible for building organizations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future - that is, leaders are responsbile for learning. (1990:9)

The emphasis on 'mind' as the new battleground for organisational control is unmistakable. According to Senge (:9-12), the learning organisation is based on the notion of a 'creative tension' between '*our* vision' and '*our* current reality'. Learning organisations, as constituted by individuals and groups, learn how to use the energy created by such tension to move their reality towards their vision. The process through which this shift occurs is called 'surfacing and restructuring mental models'. The leader's first role is that of designer. There are three design tasks: designing 'the governing ideas of purpose, vision, and core values by which people will live'; designing 'the policies, strategies, and structures that translate guiding ideas into business decisions' as a collaborative crafting process that 'fosters strategic thinking'; and, thirdly, designing 'effective learning processes' such as scenario analysis and group planning. The second leadership role emerges at this point: the leader as teacher. The teaching process involves both 'defining reality' and 'helping people achieve *more* accurate, more insightful, and more empowering views of reality'. The process is not perceived as teaching people the 'correct' view of reality but rather as facilitating a process that helps everyone, including the leader, to challenge their assumptions about the ways in which they perceive problems, identify courses of action and make choices.

Stewardship is viewed as the subtlest of leadership roles as it involves the 'matter of attitude'. A leader's 'sense of personal purpose and commitment to the organization's larger mission' will unleash 'people's natural impulse to learn ... when they are engaged in an endeavour they consider worthy of their fullest commitment'. Furthermore, the leader should 'see himself as a servant before seeing himself as a leader' (:13).

The contradictions contained in the language of the 'learning organisation' are self-evident. The drive towards systems thinking and behavioural change, draws primarily on the discursive traditions of behaviourism, but the vocabulary of humanism emphasises individual human potential and a desire for self-actualisation. At the same time a progressive-liberal problem-solving stance is adopted that invites cognitive activity and the 'challenging of mental models'.

Such eclecticism obscures the relationship between the conditions or nature of knowledge construction and the teacher-facilitator role and invokes Youngman's (1986) criticism of Freirean practice, albeit in a different setting. The leader as 'designer' sets the outer boundaries for organisational problem-solving and for the 'cognitive rules' that would be considered legitimate. The leader as 'teacher' helps people to achieve more accurate and empowering views of reality, with the implication that the leader already knows what the vision for the desired future is. The leader as 'steward' displays an aura of humility that obscures the hierarchical authority that underpins the leadership role so that the grounds for the production and organisation of knowledge are retained within the hegemonic domain. Challenge is discouraged by posing 'failure' in individual and personal terms. Notions of deficiency or inadequacy are deemed to be personal learning deficiencies which seem to have no relation to organisational context. Consensus is the 'ideal' outcome, although differences of opinion are tolerated and even actively encouraged as components of the learning process.

It is ironic that a process which sees as its aim the challenging of tacit assumptions, should have the capacity to obscure the very assumptions on which the process is based. Questions that may relativise and challenge

the nature and purpose of organisational goals in philosophical terms are effectively screened out. An already-formulated vision of a desired future is placed at the centre of a process that is intended to generate new learning and foster strategic thinking through scenario analysis and group problem-solving. A progressivist view of organisational problem-posing and problem-solving, such as the one outlined above, does not entertain any notion of individual or collective resistance, neither does the assumption of 'an internal drive to self-direction' attend to the processes of self-identification that are required to accommodate the continual uncertainty implicit in the idea of organisations constantly transforming themselves.

The disparity between the leader-employee interactions advocated above and the reality of day-to-day corporate activities brings formal training into the picture. Organisational leaders (chief executive officers) often enter into a few well-publicised group problem-posing and problem-solving sessions with senior and middle management and then commission these managers or the training department to continue or sustain the process at lower organisational levels. Here, however, the grounds for knowledge production are not underpinned by hierarchical authority. When the trainer becomes 'surrogate leader' under delegated managerial authority in the training room, she cannot automatically draw on a hierarchical authority base and her version of the corporation's vision lacks the authenticity provided by the chief executive s leader. In order to understand the 'surrogate' training room process it is firstly necessary to understand who the trainers are and how they construct their corporate identities.

2.2 Who are the trainers?

2.2.1 Biographical profiles

A distinct set of common patterns emerged from the field survey. (See appendix A and B for interview and questionnaire questions.) These patterns will be outlined to serve as an indication of the way in which trainers are likely to take up their subject positions.

Educational qualifications

Corporate trainers are mostly graduates with degrees in the Arts and Social Sciences. English, Psychology, Industrial Psychology and Industrial Sociology are the most common majors. A significant number of trainers hold further qualifications in Psychology and/or Industrial Psychology at Honours or Masters level. A post-graduate diploma in Human Resource Management has sometimes been obtained subsequent to entering the HR field.

Responses to the SABPP/ESKOM 'generic competency model' (Appendix B), indicate that industrial psychology (80% of respondents) is regarded as the most important knowledge base in the social sciences, followed by industrial sociology (40%) and industrial or labour law (20%). In the business science section 80% of respondents identified business management as the most important knowledge base, followed by accounting (50%), statistics (40%), computer systems (40%) and economics (30%).

Industrial psychology and business management are regarded as the two main conceptual pillars for future training practice, with knowledge of accounting emerging as the third pillar. This finding is in line with the shift towards strategic management and indicates that trainers do not regard their formal qualifications as sufficient to promote mobility. It is knowledge of business or financial management that secures a transfer into line management where there are more promotional opportunities, or that enables the shift from operational to strategic human resource management.

Previous work histories

Previous work histories revealed two patterns: a shift from school teaching to training; or, a first job in personnel with a subsequent move to training. Not one of the people interviewed had envisaged training as a career. The most common expression used to describe their entry into training was 'by default and circumstance'. 25% of respondents had previous work experience in their companies before moving to training. It was

particularly noticable that respondents had only a vague idea of what training entailed before they entered the trainer role. Statements such as 'I knew it had to do with developing people' or 'I thought training was about helping people be better people. I didn't really think of it as helping them to do their job better', indicate a general humanistic orientation as the common factor.

In-service development and skills base

In-house training courses that helped interviewees to develop as trainers, centred mostly around practical instruction techniques, including interpersonal facilitation, and a variety of training packages focussing on supervisory or management development and organisation development for which trainers were 'leader-trained' and certificated by external consultants.

The skills base identified in the SABPP/ESKOM questionnaire revealed interesting future-orientated trends. All the managerial skills were well-supported, with 'communicating' and 'change management' getting 100% support, followed by 'planning', 'marketing and promotion', 'negotiating' and 'reporting' (all 90%). Only 'monitoring' (60%) was less well supported. 'Consulting' as a functional skill got 100% support followed by 'group process' (80%). 'Research methodology' and 'systems design' were the least popular and each drew only 40% support.

Clearly strategic management involvement and consulting are seen as the directions of the future, with 'people involvement' remaining high. Current or anticipated 'output areas' identified in the next section, remain largely in the realm current training activity, namely individual 'performance development' and 'inter- or intra-group functioning'. Involvement in 'industrial relations structures', 'trade union relations' and 'collective bargaining' were mostly excluded, but 'recruitment', 'selection' and especially 'career management' were identified in the 'deployment' section. 'HR policies and procedures' and 'employee assistance programmes' were popular choices in the 'administration' section. All the values outlined in the final section of the questionnaire were fully supported by all respondents.

Again there is an indication that trainers hope to extend their area of work by imposing on traditional areas of personnel activity, such as recruitment, selection and career management which are activities that occur before and after the training room process itself. They also see themselves as becoming more involved in the operational area, acting as consultants in the areas of communication and change management and fulfilling a more definite management role.

Career aspirations

It was in the discussion of mobility patterns that a gender distinction arose, not as a split between the opinions given by gender groupings, but as a perception that training as a 'stepping stone' into line management or higher HR positions is an option more often available to men than to women. Respondents from both gender groupings felt that young mobile men tend to do a stint in training as part of their development plan and then move on to general line management or to labour relations as the highest 'status' position in the human resource Department. There was also reference to the 'new breed' of professionals that see training as a career, with mobility opportunities arising from the current focus on strategic human resource management. As one respondent phrased it - 'You no longer have to go into the "line" to get into the boardroom.'

Significantly many trainers had not really considered career implications. They mentioned that they had got into training by 'coincidence' and that they initially tended to see it as an 'in-between' stage where they now stay because they like various aspects of the job. Many of them do not want to branch into personnel so they tend to be promoted from training officer to training manager and remain at that level. Training was often described as a 'dead-end', where 'hard core' trainers willingly remain because they are interested in the educational dimension, or where executives near retirement are 'put out to pasture'.

The experience of belonging to a professional organisation such as the Institute for Personnel Management (IPM) or the South African Society for Training and Development (SASTD), was consistently described

negatively - as a 'self-marketing exercise' rather than as a forum for critical discussion. Notions of being part of a national or international professional body of practitioners were sometimes described in the normative sense, but immediately refuted by reference to negative experiences.

The over-riding conclusion here is that trainers tend to operate individually, both within the firm and within the wider training community. Personal internal and external networks are formed over time, but professional organisations are mostly regarded as a platform for those who have mobility aspirations. A conception of trainers as a cohesive occupational grouping that constitutes a 'moral community' in the Durkheimian sense, or engenders solidarity and collective bargaining power was conspicuously absent.

Personal likes and dislikes

'Interaction' with almost all employees and managers and 'helping people to learn and unlock their potential' emerged as key factors that provide job satisfaction. The autonomy trainers have in the training room and the space to be creative in the design of learning tasks and materials were also mentioned. Exposure to people and ideas inside and outside the organisation were seen to be part of the job of 'keeping up to date', but were also described as promoting mobility and general personal growth.

Having to present and re-present pre-packaged courses and having to 'sell' training and continually try to 'prove our contribution' emerged as major dislikes. Course preparation and administration, described as 'paper work', were seen as tedious. The dislike of compiling month-end reports that are used to monitor training's activities, was mentioned frequently.

It is evident from their likes and dislikes that trainers compensate for the perceived lack of promotional opportunities by appropriating for themselves a freedom from 'drudgery' and an occupational autonomy that allows them to be 'individuals' within the corporation.

Major job challenges

The most noticable aspect of the views on the challenges of the training job, was the emphasis on training's problematic relations with the firm: establishing needs and meeting identified training needs while the need still exists, evaluation of the transfer of learning from the training room to the workplace, the promotion or facilitation of organisational change, proving the impact of training and obtaining commitment from line managers. Only 11% of respondents identified problems inside the training room: the difficulty of training packaged courses 'by the book', and the difficulty of working with a diverse group of 'course delegates'.

Perceptions of the job

Trainers perceptions of tension or conflict between the individual and the organisation were probed by posing the two in binary opposition and asking respondents to make a forced choice and explain the reasons for their choice. The 55% : 45% split in favour of 'productivity improvement' rather than 'personal development' as the stated purpose of training, suggests ambivalent rather than oppositional interpretations. The reasons for choosing 'personal development' centred mostly around 'holistic growth' that instil 'ability and desire to achieve organisational goals'. In some instances productivity was seen to be the realm of line management. The notion of 'empowerment' leading to 'alignment' was also present.

The privilege of getting to know each employee and the satisfaction derived from 'seeing them grow in knowledge and skills' was another reason for choosing 'personal development'. Only one respondent was adamant that she didn't 'care much about organisational goals'. The respondents who chose 'increased productivity', on the other hand, all mentioned 'personal development' as either *a* or *the* route to improved work performance.

Surface perceptions of congruence or even equalisation (personal development = increased productivity) suggested by these statements, were made more complex by descriptions of the 'lived experience' of the

training role. Although a few people acknowledged training's ideological function in creating 'a balance', or the trainer as 'bridge between the individual and the company' or as a 'buffer between the two' or as 'mediating between those two positions', there was unanimous and strong disapproval of what was termed the 'hypocrisy', 'dishonesty' or 'patronage' of courses such as *6M* and the Free Market Foundation's *Justice for All*, that explicitly promote the ideology of free market capitalism. Their confict management was not, however, considered to have similar ideological overtones.

What became obvious was that, while trainers do not necessarily publically acknowledge a 'person-organisation' dualism, they experience this conflict in personal terms: 'You play games - you play the organisation's objectives against the individual's objectives. I can't live with that', or 'I can handle the conflict, I presume - but I hate recognising that training is being used', or ' We've got to go out there and we've got to market *ourselves* and we've got to manipulate the customer at the same time'.

The mechanism for conflict resolution is found in the notion of 'personal credibility'. Whilst their sensibilities are offended by what they term the 'explicit ideological manipulation' of the courses mentioned above, and they generally hold a conviction that 'ideology is not our role really', they see themselves as having an ability to act and influence that derives from 'personality and credibility on an individual basis.' The instrumental nature of such 'credibility' was explicitly acknowledged in some instances and described as a 'subtle way' to obtain line management commitment and influence decision making. These respondants generally viewed strategic human resource management positively and identified 'a good network' as essential.

A reverse and more cynical interpretation of instrumentality was also offered: 'one uses personal credibility all the time and I think that is why we are used nine times out of ten - we make it personal,' or 'managers try to make their management problem my training problem so that their failure becomes my failure', or 'training is used all the time for a variety of reasons and I just hope that, at the end of the day, the staff member who

is in the middle of all this, comes out better than before', or 'I am used as a kind of watchdog that prompts management to doing for staff and prompts staff to doing for themselves, but I think more and more that training tends to narrow rather than broaden people.'

A third version of 'personal credibility' placed high value on integrity and moral stance: 'Hopefully the organisations that I have been able to work in and my influence as a person - as part of that organisation - has made people think about what the organisation offers.' Interpretations of the trainer as *embodying* company values were often accompanied by 'having an excessive personal sense of responsibility.'

The fourth version was noticable for its naive optimism. These respondents believed that, despite their complaints about having 'very little power', they could 'try and marry the two expectations and make it worthwhile for people to give their time, effort and brains towards the organisation, by actually making sure that they do something that they enjoy doing and that they are well equipped to do', or 'we keep stressing individual responsibility - if you want to be better at your job, learn new things and you will be better.'

2.2 Trainer identity

The 'common sense' understanding of trainer identity that emerges from the composite biographical profile shows that trainers strongly identify with the ambiguity of the 'go-between' role. They portray themselves as individuals who have the task of managing 'conflict'. Their educational qualifications are of a general kind and the orientation deriving from this clearly leads to 'text book' versions of people management. Their biggest disadvantage is that they mostly lack direct work experience so that their advice and prescriptions are often regarded as, what one respondent termed 'pie-in-the-sky'. Lack of work experience also accounts for the 'generic' nature of the training that they offer, and for their preference for consultancy in the areas of communication and change management.

Their mobility expectations clearly indicate that they aspire to 'proper' management status and that they view qualifications in the business

regulates the tension between optimistic and pessimistic versions of 'mobility' and continually poses the 'possibility' of congruence between corporation and 'self'.

What these stances have in common is the internalisation of historical conflict and its re-constitution in personal terms. Once the conflict has been 'personalised' constraints imposed by corporate hierarchy, forms of work organisation and mobility regulation disappear and are replaced by inter-personal or inter-group interpretations of conflict. Such a reading of conflict turns trainers into specialists, by virtue of their educational qualifications in the social sciences.

At a corporate level the implications of the personalised version of conflict that trainers construct for themselves and reproduce in their training room practice, is significant. Regulation through external 'rules and procedure' is dislodged from the realm of bureaucratic control and reconstituted as internal self-regulation, constituted by forms of cultural identity work.

The potentially totalising impact of 'culture' as the new form of control is, however, undermined by the relations-in-production of the very practices that promote incorporation. Constraints may 'disappear' ideologically, but they do not disappear in the specificity of activity and practice. The quest for 'credibility' is also embedded in the 'relations-in-production' in the training room. Here lack of work experience prevents trainers from contextualising the 'procedural' models that they offer, resulting in complaints from trainees that training lacks 'relevance' and 'practical application'. 'Personal credibility' is therefore not only perceived as the mechanism that will allow trainers to overcome the lack of formal authority that constrains their influence on areas, pertaining to training, that falls outside their jurisdiction, such as nomination to courses and conditions of work organisation that do not support the skills learnt in the training room. It is also perceived as reinforcing the training process itself. It is here that the notion of 'role shift' becomes pertinent. Trainers have shifted from being called 'instructors' to becoming 'facilitators' of both interpersonal communication and strategic thinking processes, drawing on the vocabulary provided by education discourse for

sciences as essential for advancement. On the other hand their portrayal of career aspirations indicate a marked absence of mobility opportunities which, at one level may be ascribed to the fact that their entry into training was mostly coincidental. On the other hand it is clear that there is no recognised career path that links training directly to other areas of human resource management or line management. The trainers who are promoted were mostly portrayed as young upwardly mobile men who enter and leave training as part of a planned career track. Their enthusiasm for strategic human resource management indicates that this is seen as a new area that offers possibilities for advancement. This route is however, not considered to be without problems. Whilst they are trainers they can fulfil their vision of themselves as 'helping people', utilising the ambiguity of the role to perform a 'balancing act'. Stronger identification with the goals of the organisation is required for the *strategic* management of the human resource. By equating personal development with increased productivity, they attempt to self-regulate the conflict that they experience daily so that a situation of oppositional interests need not be consciously encountered. The mechanism though which such conflict can be resolved is viewed as a personal trait or characteristic, namely personal credibility. While it is obvious that they lack a strong base of expertise that is considered to have specialist value in corporate terms, their insistence on 'personal credibility' is an indication of more than lack of expertise and reflect the strain induced by the 'mediating' role.

Calculative and naive stances conflate the tension between organisation and 'self'. Cynical stances reflect a pessimism or resignation that is representative of those trainers, significantly women, who have retreated from the mobility 'myth' and construct training as an end in itself. The 'game' is recognised and these trainers try to 'make out' as best they can. It is in the innate stance that identity construction finds its most problematic expression. Respondants in this category displayed, on the one hand a keen strategic understanding of corporate practice and their own role, yet on the other hand they appropriate 'failure' in personal terms. These trainers understand the tension and acknowledge the 'game' but they keep on believing that *they* can make the difference, through who they are and through their practice. Ironically it is this stance that

legitimation of each new role. At a surface level these roles seem clearly incompatible, but an exploration of the identity requirements contained in corporate versions of these roles will show that it is possible for trainers to make such shifts without having to reconstruct their sense of 'self' or the purpose of their practice significantly. While the vocubulary utilised in each role position derives from a clearly distinguishable discursive tradition in education theory that has its own particular philosophical rationale, such distinctions are overcome by an eclectic appropriation of elements of each tradition.

3. TRAINER IDENTITY IN ROLE TERMS

3.1 Towards developing praxis

The notion of educational *practice* implies a sense of activity on the part of the educators and the learners. Consciously performed intentional activity, in turn implies a theoretical dimension characterised by ways of thinking through which practitioners make sense of their practice. Carr makes the point that:

> ... to engage in an educational practice always presupposes a theoretical scheme that is, at one and the same time, constitutive of this practice and the means for understanding the educational practices of others. (Carr, 1986:178)

Giddens's (1979, 1984) emphasis on the knowledgeability of social agents and his distinction between practical and discursive consciousness on the one hand, and unconscious motives on the other, illuminates the complexity of the relationship between theory and practice.

> All human beings are knowledgeable actors. That is to say all social actors know a great deal about the conditions and consequences of what they do in their day-to-day lives. Such knowledge is not wholly propositional in character, not is it incidental to their activities. Knowledgeability embedded in practical consciousness exhibits an extraordinary complexity ... Actors are also ordinarily able discursively to describe what they do and their reasons for doing it. However, for the most part these faculties are geared to the flow of day-to-day conduct. The rationalisation of conduct becomes the discursive offering of reasons only if individuals are asked by others why they acted as

> they did ... The knowledgeability of human actors is always bounded on the one hand by the unconscious and on the other by unacknowledged conditions/unintended consequences of action. (Giddens, 1984:281-282)

These briefly-identified arguments dispel notions of a linear relationship between theory and practice. A theoretical stance that has internal consistency presupposes the existence of a clearly articulated philosophical rationale. Practitioners, however, often construct the discursive justification for their work in idiosyncratic ways. A number of options are available to the practitioner. The practitioner may appropriate theory from the available literature and attempt to construct a theoretically consistent framework for application in practice, or she may search for a formally recognised theoretical position that provides the philosophical base and vocabulary to describe that which is already present in her practice. Both attempts may strive towards creating a discursive consciousness that will strengthen the relationship between theory and practice. There may also be the 'meta'-dimension of 'theorising about theory', both as an attempt to understand the origins and constraints of a particular theoretical stance and as a basis for the evaluation of one's own theoretical stance and those of others. Tennant, in his discussion of psychology as foundation discipline in adult education, argues for instance that 'a critical understanding of a range of psychological "world views" is preferable to a blind faith in a single one. This does not mean that adult educators should adopt a chameleon-like character, shifting colours as the environmental circumstances dictate - it only means that they should be aware of their "world view" and understand its limitations in the context of the alternatives available' (1988:159). Millar is sterner in his prescription for critical engagement.

> It is not sufficient for the 'critically reflective practitioner' to be taught simply to work within one or other of these systems of thought; nor is it sufficient to encourage him or her to draw eclectically on attractive components of different systems. The first approach would leave uncontested the legitimacy of the form of practice that has achieved dominance; the second would underestimate both the internal coherence and the oppositional nature of the forms of practice, as reflecting competing social interests and commitments. What does seem necessary ... is for each learner to engage with *each* form of practice in such a way that its pressure and internal logic are clearly felt and its

> assumptions analysed and assessed. This may well contribute to increased effectiveness 'within' one form of practice, but it will no longer be possible to see the form as given or unproblematic (original emphasis) (1991:3)

The problem with both these prescriptions is that they view the practitioner as a kind of critical 'free agent' within the market logic of choice. She can choose to stay within a particular 'world view' or she can choose to appropriate 'attractive components of different systems'. What is missing is recognition that pressures emanating from particular institutionalised sites of practice connect with individual (or collective) historical-cultural consciousnesses to promote what Youngman (1986:140-145) calls 'naive' or 'sophisticated' eclecticism. In the trainer's case it is the form and content of practice that largely determines the formal theoretical stance.

3.2 The trainer as instructor

Before the advent of 'organisational transformation' and prior to that, the brief cult status of 'organisation development' employees were viewed as workers in the technical rather than in the cultural sense. Training, whether given informally on-the-job or systematically in the training room, referred to technical instruction. The conditions of the instructional event as a social interaction and the relationship between the instructor role and the construction of knowledge were, however, profoundly affected by the change in cultural and time-space dimensions when instruction moved from the workplace into the training room.

Technical instruction in the workplace was traditionally located in the domain of the craft worker. Skill, as expressed through craft practice, was regarded as the 'property' of the craftsperson and was acquired through a long period of apprenticeship. McClelland quotes from the Birmingham Wire Weavers' Rules of 1869 to illustrate this point.

> Considering that the trade by which we live is our property, bought by certain years of servitude, which gives to us a vested right, and that we have sole and exclusive claim on it, as all will have who purchase it by the same means. (1987:190)

The artisanal culture was by its very nature a collective culture, constituted as such by the need to protect and regulate the trade. Artisans held the knowledge of their trade as an integral part of their craft identity and the learning of technical skills was therefore a process of social identity construction whereby the collective knowledge of the trade was passed on through time and collective learning experience during a lengthy apprenticeship period. McClelland again illustrates this point well by quoting from a document of the Boilermakers' Society when its members were contemplating the threat of an influx of unapprenticed labour in the early 1870s.

> Who trains, instructs and qualifies ... lads to become thorough workers in the trade - does the master? No; the instruction these lads receive comes from the men; and when a man has spent years in acquiring a perfect knowledge of his trade, such acquisition becomes his own personal capital as much as the gold or silver he carries in his pocket. (1987:191)

The social phase of life in the workshop initiated the beginner into the cognitive and interactive customs and traditions of the trade so that an integrated version of the artisanal 'self' was established within the protection of the collective bargaining identity. McClelland makes the interesting observation that the moral aspects of identity formation were not neglected. 'It was thought possible to construct a world of "reciprocity" pivoted on a morally regulated exchange of labour against capital' (:195), based on the notion of rights and obligations that bound both employers and workers. (While writing this section I happened to have a conversation with the last person to be apprenticed as a piano builder in South Africa before the process was mechanised. He emphasised the problem-posing nature of apprenticeship instruction. He called manual piano construction an 'occult' trade, in that knowledge was hidden in the head and hands of the artisan and the apprentice had to experiment, make mistakes and gradually construct a body of knowledge which was then owned in profoundly personal and idiosyncratic ways. In those days an artisan could, for instance, tell by looking at at the inside of a piano, who had built the instrument.)

Whilst there is a tendency to idealise the craft relations of yore, the difference between the craft workshop as a site of social identity

construction and the mechanistic administering of technical training as 'deficit' or 'gap' elimination that dominates later training practices, is beyond dispute. The following definition illustrates the point.

> [Training is] the organized procedure by which people acquire knowledge and or skills for a definite purpose. When there is a difference or gap between actual performance and what is needed (the standard), productivity suffers.
>
> Training can reduce if not elimimate this gap. It does so by changing the behaviour of individuals - by giving them whatever specific items of knowledge, skill or attitude they need to perform up to that standard. (Craig, 1976:1-2)

The dominance of behaviourist language is immediately noticable, but even more striking, for the purposes of this argument, is the distance and impersonality that characterises the relation between trainer and trainee. Between them stands a normative work standard, not held by the trainer as 'property' in identity terms, but determined by 'scientific' methods of time and motion study. (It is this normative determination of work standards and ethics that was removed from the control of the artisan during the bureaucratisation phase discussed earlier.)

Standardisation can only be achieved by removing all semblances of human intervention, thereby establishing standards of productivity as abstract and unchallengable entities that direct and control action. Instruction in the training room, is no longer dependent on intimate craft knowledge and the identity-creating process becomes a 'dummy' process that is characterised by adherence to design procedure. The trainer as instructor constructs a 'procedural' identity that is almost entirely reliant on steps of course design based on externally derived end-point competencies. The actions and interpretations of the instructor is regulated by the design in the same way as those of the trainee are regulated. The tasks of illustrating the desired behaviours or acting as a role-model are rapidly being taken over by videod presentations or pre-recorded simulation exercises. Knowledge is thus located as external to *both* trainer and trainee and 'procedural obedience' is inculcated in both parties as the route to task achievement in the training room and, especially for lower level participants, in the workplace itself. Procedural deviance invites the risk of the instructor being exposed as 'not knowing'

or 'not being able to do', whilst the learner is charged with 'not having learnt' or even worse 'not having the ability to learn in appropriate ways'.

This phenomenon is even more noticable in the training of supervisory and management development courses where the 'technicalisation' of the 'development' concept has become a distinctive feature. A managerial task, for instance 'delegating work to sub-ordinates' is broken up into a series of behavioural steps and a positive performance is demonstrated through a videod (often American) presentation. The trainee is then handed a flash card so that she can have the 'steps' at hand, while familiarising herself with the contextual information provided about a pre-given or self-scripted role play or, as it is often termed, skills practice. Feedback by fellow-trainees and the trainer focus on how closely the 'role player' has followed the steps and used the words/phrases suggested in the work book. (It must be born in mind that most 'management' trainers do not perform a managerial function in corporate hierarchy terms and again draw on a pre-given task). Instructor practice can again be described as procedural administration and regulation. The corresponding social identity requires an 'adherence to pre-defined rules' as its dominant quality and selection of the best available technology to promote the transmission of knowledge and skill becomes the hall mark of instructor success.

3.3 The trainer as facilitator

3.3.1 Facilitating personal growth

At this point is is useful to examine the qualities considered by Carl Rogers to be essential characteristics of a facilitator

> ' ... realness or genuineness. When the facilitator is a real person, being what she is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a facade, she is much more likely to be effective ... Thus she is a person to her students, not a faceless embodiment of a curricular requirement nor a sterile tube through which knowledge is passed from one generation to the next.
>
> ... prizing, acceptance and trust. It is a caring for the learner, but a non-possessive caring ... a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy ... prizing of the learner as an imperfect human being with many feelings, many potentialities.

> ... empathetic understanding ... When the teacher has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to be to the student, then again the likelihood of significant learning is increased. (1983:121-125)

The appeal that 'pure' facilitation holds for corporate trainers lies in its underplaying of content and technical detail. Facilitators need not fear that they are going to be 'caught out' by their lack of workplace experience. As long as they are caring, trusting, understanding 'real' people they promote 'significant learning'. The introduction of an interpretative paradigm that focuses predominantly on personal feelings and experiences establishes a person-to-person relationship that locates the source of individual problems away from the corporation towards the trainee/learner's 'life' situation. As in conventional therapy, the basis for interpreting feelings of anger, mistrust and bitterness is found in childhood family, peer and community relations. The particularity of emotions evoked by historical and current workplace relations is regarded as expressions of past repression rather than as grounds for conflict and resistance. Class, race and gender conflict between management and employees as experienced on the shopfloor is thus displaced and reconstituted as inter-personal conflict between people.

But there are two problems. The first one applies to both facilitator and learners. The instrumental focus of the corporation requires a distinction between personal and work-related development. Corporate educational assistance schemes, for instance, offer financial support for courses of study that pertain to an employee's current work situation or career development plan, but not for general intellectual or practical development that is termed 'nice to know'. Marsick, in her prescription for a 'new paradigm' of workplace learning acknowledges this separation and argues that 'while learning must acknowledge the legitimacy of self-reflection and personal growth, the organization cannot take on the role of therapist' (1988:196). The second problem lies in the identity work already done by trainers as instructors. Here, it has been argued, the 'personal' element is conspicuously absent. An identity construct that calls for 'realness as a person' requires a radical transformation in the identity construct of the trainer.

The solution to both these problems comes from Knowles's construction of the andragogical educator that draws on both the behaviourist and humanist traditions. His work has been enthusiastically embraced by many trainers and was often mentioned by interviewees when they explained the 'new breed' of trainer. Closer examination of Knowles' 'andragogical model of HRD' explains this enthusiasm.

In his popular book, *The Adult Learner A Neglected Species* (1978) Knowles addresses the question of application of 'theories of learning and teaching to human resources development' presents the reader with an astounding array of choices. The practitioner may choose to ignore theory which Knowles thinks is an 'unrealistic' approach, or the practitioner may select one theory and apply it consistently. Knowles makes it clear that a theory which does not 'fit your management's philosophy' or is not congruent 'with the organization's long-range developmental goals' (:100-101) would be inappropriate. The practitioner has a third alternative in that she can select one theory for training and another for education. Knowles recognises the contradiction implicit in this choice and therefore suggests a continuum of learning teaching situations from which the practitioner will select a model that is 'uniquely appropriate for particular kinds of learning' (:105). The risk of the individual learner being 'dehumanised' by such an approach can be counteracted by presenting the different learning-teaching models as (sic) 'optional steps up the ladder of self-development' so that the learner 'chooses them for this purpose', with provision 'made in each situation for the development of learning skills that will prepare him for the next level' (:106).

The fourth option permits the practitioner to 'drop the education of individuals in favor of organisation development' (:106), a shift that Knowles acknowledges in his own approach. Finally there is the option that underlies the andragogical model, namely 'incorporating features of various prevailing theories that make sense to me' (:108), or what Youngman refers to as 'sophisticated eclecticism'. The andragogical model is described as a 'unified model [that] can incorporate principles and technologies from various theories and still maintain its own integrity' (:108). It is posed, against a pedagogical content model, as being a *process* model. Its power and attraction lies in its prescriptions for practice.

> The andragogical teacher (facilitator, consultant, change agent) prepares in advance a set of procedures for involving the learners (and other relevant parties) in a process involving these elements: (1) establishing a climate conducive for learning; (2) creating a mechanism for mutual planning; (3) diagnosing the needs for learning; (4) formulating progam objectives (which is content) that will satisfy these needs; (5) designing a pattern of learning experiences; (6) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and (7) evaluating the learning outcomes and rediagnosing learning needs. (:108-109)

The sequence suggested is almost identical to Davies's (1971) behaviouristic sequence for 'managing learning', except that 'task analysis' as the first step in the planning process is replaced by 'joint needs diagnosis' in Knowles' model. The creation of an interpersonal climate of caring, trust, mutuality and openness that promotes honest and objective feedback and risk-taking, re-inforced by an organisational climate that rewards learning in material and status terms rather than regarding learning as intrinsically self-motivating, is, however, the distinctive hallmark of the andragogical approach. Knowles could not spell out the hegemonic intent of andragogical practice more clearly than when he says:

> In my own andragogical model, climate setting is probably the most crucial process in the whole process of HRD. If the climate is not really conducive to learning, if it doesn't convey that an organization values human beings as its most valuable asset and their development as its most productive investment, then all the other elements in the process are jeopardized. (:114)

Knowles' facilitator does not leave questions such as 'What do you want to learn? What things puzzle you? What are you curious about? What issues concern you? What problems do you wish to solve?' (Rogers, 1983:136) to the discretion of the trainee or learner. The humanist/ behaviourist facilitator 'helps each student to diagnose the gap between his aspiration and his present level of performance', 'helps the students identify the life problems they experience because of gaps in their personal equipment ' and 'involves the students in a mutual process of formulating learning objectives in which the needs of the students, of the institution, of the teacher, of the subject matter and of the society are taken into account' (1978:77,78). Given Knowles' earlier admonition regarding 'fit' or 'congruence' with organisational management philosophy and goals, it

does not require any imagination to predict the outcome of conflict between the various needs mentioned.

In identity construct terms the 'procedural' requirement of the instructor role remains largely intact, with the addition of humanist elements that are in keeping with a 'wanting to help people' ideology held by many individuals. The language of learner-directedness, personal growth and self-actualisation introduces a pseudo-democracy into training practice that enters the trainer vocabulary and re-inforces the promise of the corporate mission statement. No acknowledgement is given to the political economy of the training situation and the notion of 'joint needs diagnosis' that precedes 'joint planning, design and evaluation' effectively obscures the direction given to the *process* by the trainer as a representative of the corporation and its goals.

In occupational self-interest terms the appeal of 'andragogy' as a specialist body of knowledge for a grouping that is losing ground to the common-sense wisdom of 'leadership', is obvious. To be an andragogical facilitator requires only marginal 'humanistic' adaptation of the instructor identity so that 'procedure' becomes 'process'. The 'new' vocabulary, however, has a mystifying capacity that reaffirms the notion of specialist knowledge and expertise.

3.3.2 Facilitating critical thinking

The notion of *learning* as 'the key tradable commodity of an organisation' (Garrat quoted in Pedler *et al*, 1988:6) poses the education and adult education literature that emphasises 'critical thinking' as the interpretative frame against which the role of 'trainer as facilitator of thinking' must be examined. Prescriptions for mediational teaching have been clearly stated in the work of Jerome Bruner (1967, 1974), Meyers (1986) and to a lesser extent in Lev Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) writing through which the concept 'zone of proximal development' has enjoyed considerable discussion.

Bruner sees instruction as 'an effort to assist and to shape [cognitive] growth' (1966:1), characterised by dialogue between learner and teacher.

The teacher acts as instigator of processes of inquiry and utilises problem-solving techniques that derive from the discipline that is being studied. The learners with their own personal needs, purposes, cultural experiences and individual differences become the focal point of educational concern. The teacher's task is not just to develop those interests already present in the learner, but to arouse interest in those things deemed to be educationally desirable.

Both Bruner (1966, 1974) and Meyers (1986) are firm in their conviction that critical thinking, often conceived of as logic or general problem-solving ability, cannot be taught as a general skill, but that it is located within the particularity of the discipline itself.

> There is nothing more central to a discipline than its way of thinking. There is nothing more important in its teaching than to provide the child the earliest opportunity to learn that way of thinking - the forms of connection, the attitudes, hopes, jokes and frustrations that go with it. In a word, the best introduction to a subject is the subject itself. At the very first breath, the young learner should, we think, be given the chance to solve problems, to conjecture, to quarrel as these things are done at the heart of the discipline. (Bruner, 1974:446)

Meyers puts the problem succintly when he argues for a variety of approaches to teach critical thinking to adults. Each teacher will have her own definition of critical thinking and it is this definition that will determine her intellectual stance, All teaching should commence at a common starting point of attempting to make explicit a 'perspective or framework for disciplinary analysis' (1986:6).

What emerges from these prescriptions is the concept of the teacher as an intellectual 'self' who has been initiated, albeit idiosyncratically, into the ' ways of thinking' of the discipline. Teaching is the business of making both the epistemological rules of the given discipline and the teacher's idiosyncratic appropriation of such rules explicit, so that students' enquiry is not directed at 'guessing' what is in the teacher's head. In this sense the teacher and the learner and the 'body of knowledge' are in a constant process of interaction so that, for Bruner, 'discovering how to make something comprehensible ... is only a continuation of making something

comprehensible to ourselves in the first place - that understanding and aiding others to understand are both of a piece' (1966:38).

It is here that Vygotsky's argument that learning is socially mediated and that 'the internalisation of socially rooted and historically developed activities is the distinguishing feature of human psychology' (1978:57) finds its connecting point. The 'zone of proximal development' presupposes activity by the teacher to 'show them [the learners] various ways of dealing with the problem' (:86) but *imitation* should not be seen as a mechanical process as ' a person can only imitate that which is within her developmental level' (:88). It is perhaps Vygotsky's assertions that 'human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them' (:88) and that 'the only "good" learning is that which is in advance of development' (:89) that establishes the crucial connection between the learner, the 'world' of problems to be solved, and the teacher as developmental and cultural mediational agent.

These prescriptions for the facilitation of cognitive thinking present obvious problems to trainers as 'facilitators of thinking'. The assumption that teachers are holders of a body of knowledge in a subject discipline runs completely against the identity profile constructed from the biographical information. It is here that lack of work experience that would at least constitute an experiential base of expertise emerges as a crucial deficiency. The 'procedural identity' of the trainer as 'instructor' or as 'facilitator of personal growth' allows the procedural presentation of the topic under discussion, but does not meet the pedagogic requirements stated by Bruner, Meyers and Vygotsky. If we turn to the literature on adult education, and especially to the work of Mezirow on 'perspective transformation' and Brookfield on 'self-directed learning' the prognosis appears equally bleak.

Mezirow argues that 'it is only in late adolescence and in adulthood that a person can come to recognize being caught in his/her own history and reliving it' (1981:11). He defines the self-directed learner in the following manner.

> **A self-directed learner has access to alternative perspectives for understanding his or her situation and for giving meaning and direction to his or her life, has acquired sensitivity and competence in social interaction and has the skills and competencies required to master the productive tasks associated with controlling and manipulating the environment. (1981:21)**

'Access to alternative perspectives' is posed as the key condition for the 'understanding' that constitutes perspective transformation. It is exactly this issue that poses a serious problem for the trainer as 'facilitator of critical thinking'. As the carrier of organisational norms and goals the trainer is obliged to put forward one perspective only, even though the conclusion about cynical and innate stances suggests that she might personally hold different views. This dilemma does not, however, necessarily prevent access to the vocabulary of 'critical thinking'. Both Mezirow (1981:21) and Brookfield (1985:15) employ a vocabulary that includes 'words' familiar to behaviourists, humanists and cognitve theorists. Their prescriptions for self-directed learning therefore have wide appeal. The generality of such application de-politises its transformative potential, but at the same time allows a surface appropriation of its vocubulary. Brookfield's discussion of the potential for critical thinking in the corporate environment illustrates how the concept is used to reinforce rather than to challenge the ruling hegemony. He enthuses about the possibilities for critical thinking inherent in managerial and executive learning in both corporations and worker collectives, but then he paradoxically illustrates this process by referring to the development of the Apple Macintosh computer where 'team members working on the Macintosh were housed in separate premises, relieved of all strictures regarding patterns of attention; they worked as a democratic group, with no hierarchy of authority or "typical" pattern of working' (:139-140). The privileged elitism of such conditions of work seems to escape him completely and he blithely assumes that the introduction of 'quality circles' and more 'horisontal' channels of communication advocated by the 'Japanese style of management', will promote 'creativity of thought' and 'leaps of imagination that take companies beyond currently accepted modes of production' (:139) (See also Marsick (1987) for examples of similarly enthusiastic versions of the potential for reflectivity and critical reflectivity in organisational learning).

Field takes issue with the notion of 'critical thinking' as a distinctive 'way of knowing' that is separated from Habermas' other two learning domains, namely the technical and practical areas of cognitive interest (Mezirow, 1981:4). Whilst joining Mezirow and Brookfield in condemning behaviouristic approaches for their lack of attention to contexts, he argues that by posing competency-led curricula based on behaviouristic psychology as appropriate for lower-level organisational participants, subordination is reproduced. The lower organisational participants are excluded from 'any development of the kinds of qualities needed to take decisions and manage enterprises, even within the impoverished and limited frameworks of relative powerlessness in which most managers are given the illusion that they rule' (1991:49). Within this framework Field questions Mezirow's implicit acceptance of such sub-ordination and asks: 'Why assume that perspective transformation and technical learning can not substantially overlap? They are only separate when the purpose of technical learning is circumscribed by the need for labour to be subordinate to the demand of the enterprise'(:50).

Field's challenge is particularly pertinent to the wider field of industrial training. In terms of the argument advanced so far it is, however, clear that the notion of 'learner autonomy' in its ideal or pure sense is not applicable in the corporate context where the learner is also an *employee*. Managerial learning undoubtedly calls for ways of thinking that gives the individual the capacity to pose alternative scenarios, ask creative questions and entertain ambiguity or contextual complexity, but the realities of bureaucratic forms of work organisation, hierarchical lines of authority and the boundaries imposed by organisational goals, place severe limits on the amount of 'cognitive autonomy' that can be entertained at either the higher or lower organisational levels.

The trainer as 'facilitator of critical thinking' can therefore retain the procedural identity that characterises other forms of the trainer role. This type of training focuses on general procedures of 'strategic thinking', 'effective decision-making', 'creative problem-solving' and 'entrepreneurial risk-taking' (Brookfield, 1987:139), that differs very little from the technical prescriptions implicit in the 'instructor' role.

It is, however, evident that the procedural identity that runs through all the variations of the trainer role is not sufficient to transform the trainer-learner interaction into something that is recognised by all parties as 'adding value' in the work context. The quest for 'personal credibility' enters the training room as an attempt to extend the authority of 'procedure' in ways that will sustain the learning process more powerfully and allow it to be transferred to the workplace.

4. THE POLITICS OF AUTHORITY IN THE TRAINING ROOM

4.1 The tension between 'in authority' and 'an authority'

The issue at stake here is the grounds of 'entitlement' to authority. One cannot explore the concept of authority without referring to Weber's (1924) three forms of authority: traditional authority, legal rational authority and charismatic authority, and linking those concepts to Peters' (1966) distinction between being 'in authority' and being 'an authority' in an educational situation. It is too easy to avoid the question of 'entitlement' by simply posing cognitive, political and charismatic authority as the three kinds of authorities that facilitators exercise (Heron, 1991).

The crucial points, made by Peters (1966:246) that authority 'always pre-supposes the notion of something that is right or correct', and that authority 'thus pre-supposes some sort of normative order that has to be promulgated, maintained and perpetuated' (:238) moves any discussion of authority into the philosophical realm of morality as a normative code that simultaneously raises the question of legitimacy. Peters phrases this point succintly when he says, 'Where there is an appeal to a special person as a source, originator, interpreter, or enforcer of rules the term "authority" is properly used' (:239). When authority is accorded to an individual (or group) as the holder of an 'office' or as the holder of specialist wisdom, knowledge or expertise, the question that emerges for the recipient of the authority-means, is, 'What right has this person or group to proclaim what is right?'

Weber argues that the validity of authority claims may be based on three grounds: 'rational grounds - resting on the belief in the "legality" of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority); traditional grounds - resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them (traditional authority); or finally, charismatic grounds - resting on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic authority)', (Weber, 1990:3). He makes the point that in the case of legal authority, obedience is owed to the legally established *impersonal* order. Thus the typical person in authority occupies 'an office' and the person who obeys authority does so 'only in his capacity as "member" of the corporate group and what he obeys is only "the law" ' (:5). In the case of traditional authority, obedience is owed to the *person* who occupies the traditionally sanctioned position of authority and this person is bound by the tradition on which the sanction is based, so that obedience 'is a matter of personal *loyalty* within the area of accustomed obligations' (emphasis added) (:3). Charismatic authority is obeyed by virtue of the individual's 'personal trust in him [the charismatic leader] and his revelation' (:4). The relationship is characterised by *belief* rather than by loyalty.

Peters argues that teaching as an institutionalised practice embodies two types of authority. The teacher is 'in' authority by virtue of 'the necessity of preserving conditions of order which are necessary conditions of its [task] performance' (1966:263). Here the teacher derives entitlement from being a representative of a particular institution. She draws on the impersonal normative value sytem of the institution to maintain order. Stenhouse (1983:148) makes the additional point that this type of authority is heavily reinforced by the teacher's position as 'internal examiner'. It is also this type of authority, conceptualised at the micro-level in the classroom, that Heron terms 'political' authority, where 'the facilitator takes decisions that affect the whole content and process of learning' (1991:1).

The teacher as 'an' authority derives entitlement from her knowledge in a particular subject or field. Peters points out that such entitlement is also impersonal in that its appeals to validity of 'truth' claims are directed to the epistemological rationality of the sphere of knowledge, rather than to the person so that 'in the end nothing depends upon the appeal to particular men' (:251).

As the teacher can no longer rely on traditional forms of being 'in' authority, 'he has to demonstrate that he is an authority on something' (:256). Teaching in this sense, if it is to be distinguished from indoctrination, 'involves the passing on of knowledge, skills or modes of conduct in such a way that the learner is brought to understand and evaluate the underlying rationale for what is presented to him' (:261). This prescription for teaching corresponds to the advocacy of Bruner and Meyers outlined earlier. It also corresponds to Heron's notion of 'cognitive' authority.

Stenhouse accepts Peters' two types of authority, reinforced by personal charisma, as converging in the teacher. He takes the prescription, for the achievement of learner autonomy or self-directed learning in the classroom further by identifying both the 'logic of the task' and the 'psychology of groups' as areas where the rationale has to be made explicit.

> If a teacher handles his authority unselfconsciously as a matter of personal habit, he usually induces a relatively passive dependency relationship. Students are reluctant to participate and anxious to interpret the rules of the situation. If he does not make the conventions explicit, his students can interpret them only by observing the tutor. Their task is to study his behaviour in order to understand the situation in which they are placed. Unless they can develop from observation consistent theories about what he is up to, his authority will appear arbitrary. (1983:149)

The final point that has to be made in this section that is of direct importance to our investigation of 'personal credibility', is Peters' argument that it is in Weber's concept of 'charismatic' authority that 'two notions which have here been distinguished, that of being *an* authority in some sphere which is of concern to a group ... and that of personal characteristics which enable people to exercise actual authority in the

sphere of social control, which may include some kind of personal magnetism' (1966:245-246), are conflated. The appeal of such an interpretation of 'charismatic' authority is that personal characteristics can compensate for lack of subject knowledge and *vice versa*. As the two are fused together, they are no longer separately distinguishable so that one becomes the other. Perhaps more importantly, the grounds of entitlement or validation shift, in the first instance, from the impersonal appeal to procedural rules as embodied by the teacher, to a trust or belief in the teacher as person. But then again, entitlement to charismatic authority is not solely dependent on personal qualities, and the claims to knowledge 'authority' or more instrumental versions of 'expertise', remain. Entitlement to 'charismatic' authority in the field of educational activity must satisfy the rationalisation of authority on both counts.

4.2 From authority to credibility

The case of the corporate trainer has emerged as the paradox between 'procedure' - as the common identity denominator required by particular forms of practice, be they couched in behaviourist, humanist or cognitive terms - and 'personal credibility' as the identity requirement perceived by trainers themselves to be crucial to what they see as their mediatory or 'balancing' role. It is the frameworks provided by Weber and Peters that allow us to see that the quest for 'credibility' is in fact a quest for 'authority'. What trainers call 'personal credibility' can be termed 'charismatic authority', but a simple linguistic substitution does not provide the explanatory power that is required in this instance.

The central authority problem for trainers is the weakness of both their 'in' authority and 'an' authority positions. They represent the corporation through delegated 'management' authority which is always subordinate to direct management authority, so that their grounds for entitlement is always a more diluted version of impersonal legal-rational authority. The prescription for needs analysis or needs diagnosis as the starting point of the training process, can be seen as an attempt to strengthen their 'in' authority position in the classroom. A direct link between the corporate strategic plan and the direction and content of training, or at least a mandate from individual employees as 'learners', would legitimate

training practice in different ways. This tends not to happen. The 'generic' nature of developmental training derives its direction and content from that which is pushed onto the market by external training consultancies, rather than from any direct link with specific corporate plans. Needs analysis that consists of discussions with supervisors and managers on nominations to pre-designed courses constitutes 'order-taking' rather than a process of negotiation that confers legitimacy. It is therefore the ideology rather than the practice of needs identification that is utilised to strengthen 'in' authority positions. It should also be noted that the role of 'internal examiner' mentioned by Stenhouse, is present in the 'task' not in the trainer. Competency-based courses base assessment of competent achievement on the pre-given nature of the task in a way that reinforces both trainee and trainer subordination to the task. The notion of individual trainer judgement is understandably absent, given the trainer's weakness as 'an' authority, which should be examined in greater detail.

The Social and Business Sciences, indicated in the SABPP/ESKOM questionnaire as the areas of knowledge that pertain to human resource practitioners do not constitute an exclusive 'body of knowledge'. General management practice draws on these same disciplines for theoretical justification and direction, having the advantage that managers build up expertise through their attempts to apply these principles to practice. Whilst managers may not be 'authorities' in the academic sense, they certainly have more claim to being 'experts' than trainers who, according to the profile, rarely have direct work experience. Trainers' expertise lies in their being procedural authorities. The point can be illustrated by referring to any one of the management development courses mentioned earlier by Brookfield. Trainers will, for instance instruct trainees (in this case, managers) in 'strategic thinking' or 'entrepeneurial risk taking' without ever having been involved in corporate strategic planning or, as salaried employees, in entrepreneurial practice. Common-sense defense of lack of direct experience is usually phrased as 'one doesn't have to be an excellent tennis player to be a tennis coach'. The reverse argument is also valid, namely that 'authorities on subjects are not necessarily good teachers'. The issue at stake here, namely entitlement and justification of authority, however, demands an authority base that can be recognised by

both teacher and learners. In a pedagogic situation where the notion of 'authority' is characterised by an appeal to a 'person' as the originator, interpreter or enforcer of both institutional and epistemological rules, it is not sufficient merely to be 'in' authority. Even bureaucrats who are 'office bearers' of authority are still, according to Weber, 'in need of specialised knowledge, though it is usually of an empirical character, developed by experience rather than by formal training' (1990:10).

It is the weakness of the trainer's position as 'an' authority that leads to a 'technical' pedagogy. This weakness is, however, implicitly recognised and compensation is attempted through the establishment of 'charismatic authority' that will obscure 'an' authority weaknesses and foreground 'personal characteristics'. This kind of authority is also viewed as the solution to 'in' authority problems or challenges outside the training room at the interface with the world of work.

Unless the issue of authority can be resolved in ways that are perceived as credible by both the learners and the trainer, the training process, be it technical, developmental or cognitive instruction, will never have the capacity to extend beyond the walls of the training room and training will remain a 'dummy' process. It must be borne in mind that in-house training does not carry formal accreditation. The ways in which students in schools and tertiary institutions put up 'poor' teaching and what they perceive as illegitimate authority because they want to pass the examination, does not apply here. It is also not a situation of voluntary attendance that characterises many other non-formal educational situations. Learners attend in-house training courses because they are sent by their managers. It interferes with their daily work routine and they often worry about work that is falling behind while they are in the training room. They do have an expectation that they are going to learn something that they can apply in their work situations and if they do not perceive the trainer as having 'credibility' of some kind, they feel that they are wasting their time.

Those trainers who are perceived to have charismatic authority obviously fare better at their task than those who are perceived to lack both work experience and technical know-how, even if it is just because, through

their charisma, they create an enjoyable atmosphere. But more than that, they stand a chance of convincing the trainees that the conflict of interest between organisational goals and personal aspirations can be resolved. It is this that trainers understand instinctively when they talk about 'personal credibility'.

5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter training has been examined as an educational activity. The trainer and the 'identity-making' processes of the trainer in personal and role terms have been the focus of discussion. What has emerged is that the conditions of corporate training allow trainers to shift between versions of the trainer role, without having to reconstruct their formal identity substantially. The language of 'andragogy', though widely criticised in academic literature, provides them with a specialist vocabulary that confirms their position as 'learning' specialists and compensates for feelings of inadequacy that arise from lack of work experience.

Their personal construction of identity, however, reveals that they perceive their procedural identity as inadequate to the task of resolving the conflict between organisation and individual in ideological terms. They see 'personal credibility' as the quality that allows them to convince their learners of the corporation's commitment to its employees. Training and trainers as people of 'integrity' are offered as symbolic demonstrations of such commitment. It is evident that they experience value conflict in personal terms, as indeed they must when they take on the task of presenting themselves and their practice as symbols of corporation commitment, particularly when their own mobility opportunities are limited and they have little authority or power to influence the contexts within which they and the trainees work.

What remains in the final chapter is to outline the new developments that will affect corporate training and to speculate about the potential for transformation that these developments might contain. The study will be concluded by considering whether the data offered and the arguments advanced have achieved the aims as they were originally stated.

Chapter 6

THE FUTURE OF CORPORATE TRAINING?

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1. INTRODUCTION

2. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE 90s AND BEYOND

3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENARIO

4. AIMS RE-VISITED

Chapter 6

THE FUTURE OF CORPORATE TRAINING?

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1. INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter two current developments that may affect the future and status of corporate training will be examined. The first one is the impact of information technology on the corporation's ability to make direct links between training and career development. The second refers specifically to the South African context and pertains to the pressure being applied by COSATU, the largest trade union body, to secure training opportunities for workers. The final section will refer to the aims stated in chapter one to determine whether these aims have been achieved.

2. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE 90s AND BEYOND

The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) has produced two comprehensive sets of documents (1983 and 1989) that provide guidelines for the construction of human resource development practice. (The South African version was developed by ESKOM and distributed by the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) in 1990.)

The aim of these documents - which start with strategic analysis of 'future forces' that will impact on human resource management and then offer prescriptions for trainer competency - can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand they attempt to raise the status and esteem of human resource practice, and on the other hand, they offer a framework for the advancement of ocupational self-interest.

The forces that are identified in the 1989 document as affecting human resource development work reflect the impact of globalisation on all aspects of managerial thinking:

1. Increased pressure and capacity to measure workforce productivity, performance, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency

2. Increased pressure to demonstrate the value, impact, quality and practicality of HRD services

3. Accelerated rate of change and more uncertain business environment

4. Increased emphasis on customer service and expectation of quality products and services from the workplace

5. Increased sophistication and variety of tools, technologies, methods, theories and choices in HRD

6. Increased diversity (demographics, values, experience) at all levels of the workforce

7. Increased expectations for higher levels of judgement and flexibility in worker contribution (specifically, for more creativity, risk taking, adaptation to change and teamwork)

8. Increased use of sytems approaches that integrate HRD systems and technology in the workplace

9. Business strategies that concentrate more on human resources and require strategic HRD actions

10. Changed emphasis in organizations from loyalty to merit, accountability, performance, and relevant skills

11. Globalization of business; increased and expanded international markets, joint ventures, overseas ownerships and competition

12. Increased need for commitment, meaningful work, and participation on the job by a larger proportion of the workforce

13. Increased use of flatter, more flexible organization designs; smaller self-contained work groups; and reduced staff. (McLagan, 1989:13-14)

What is significant is that the forecast, resulting from a survey of 800 peer-nominated American HRD practitioners, no longer reflects the traditional personnel concern with 'human relations'. The language of production management has been adopted in its entirety and the link between business strategy and the human resource predominates. The 1983 study made mention of, for instance, 'greater concern for the whole person (physical, emotional, spiritual) (McLagan *et al*, 1983:16) and included a whole section on the sociological trends that would affect the

workplace. The South African version follows its American counterpart closely but differs in its emphasis on the pressure emanating from the labour movement for participation in decision-making. It further acknowledges the pressure to develop a 'skilled, flexible and responsive work-force' and the need to 'acquire/retain skilled manpower' (SABPP, 1990:2).

Scrutiny of the American document in its entirety reveals the impact of advances in technology on the capacity of human resource development to promote people as a 'strategic resource' and to strengthen their claim of making a measurable 'bottom line' contribution. Training and development, organisation development and career development are identified as the three areas that take 'development' as their primary focus - but they are closely linked to organisation or job design, human resource planning, performance management systems and HR research and information sytems that will provide the mechanism for the integration of 'development' of the human resource with the business plan and the day-to-day activities of the corporation (ASTD, 1989:6). Sophisticated information systems provide the key link between long-term organisational planning, career and performance management systems, and individual training and development plans. It is worth quoting the introductory paragraph to illustrate the point.

> As the 21st century moves closer, organizational leaders are becoming more aware of the competitive advantage that competent, committed people bring to the workplace. The value of people's judgement, creativity and thinking has increased because the ratio of knowledge work to manual work is up, and continues to rise as technology takes over more and more routine and dangerous tasks. Meanwhile, competition and communications technology accelerate the rate of change. And customers demand low prices, high quality, relevant innovation and good service.
>
> At the same time workers' expectations are rising. In developed nations this takes the form of people's drive for fulfillment and influence through work. In both developed and less developed nations, pressure seems to be mounting to increase workers' share in prosperity and decision making. Thanks to advanced information technology, people around the globe have greater access to television and other media that reveal world living standards. When people know what is possible, their aspirations are heightened and this affects how they view their work and its place in their lives. (1989:1)

Information technology becomes the key device to promote 'global incorporation' both inside and outside the corporation but more than that, it becomes the master frame for the conceptualisation and control of 'judgement, creativity and thinking' as a human activity. What Rosen *et al* (1992), call the 'ideational control' of shared meaning systems is thus made possible by computer-based technology. Whereas a system of explicit rules under bureaucracy is primarily an indirect form of control, ideational control is an *invisible* control in that the operation of control systems is not readily perceived. The rationality of technology promotes standardised behaviour and because the rules are not visible, compliance is often unconscious. That which is fundamentally political comes to be perceived as natural and neutral so that consent is given and contestation is diffused.

The possibility of 'being noticed' through the use of computerised performance management systems that facilitates the 'tracking' process and makes it possible to implement individual performance appraisal systems throughout the organisation, strengthens the notion of *merit* rather than loyalty or long service as the basis for advancement and mobility. Computerised training records provide information at the time of performance appraisal so that indiviudal development plans can be negotiated. Computerised career planning systems keep information about individual career plans and confirms to the individual employee that the organisation 'cares' about her. Consent to the values and goals of the organisation may therefore be more readily given. It is information technology that enables the advocates of human resource management to claim that they can offer an integrated 'performance management system' to 'assure that individual and organisational goals are linked and that what individuals do every day supports the organizational goal' (ASTD, 1989:6).

These documents reflect the ideology of human resource management as a pervasive system of ideas. Companies and practitioners appropriate these ideas and the vocabulary enters the formal mission statements, irrespective of whether the company has access to such sophisticated computer systems. What strategic human resource management discourse therefore allows companies to do, is to pose the possibility of

meritocratic advancement without necessarily having the corresponding forms of work organisation of technology.

These documents also indicate clearly how the emphasis on 'learning' has impacted on the training role. The 1983 *Models for Excellence* outlines fifteen training and development roles, with 'instructor' described as 'the role of presenting information and directing structured learning experiences so that individuals learn', and 'group facilitator' as 'the role of managing group discussions and group process so that individuals learn and group members feel the experience is positive' (1983:16). The 1989 *Models for HRD* reduces the number of roles to eleven, with instructor/facilitator collapsed into one role. The description of this role is simply a combination of the previous two descriptions, but significantly omits any mention of the 'individual learning' or 'feeling'. The role of 'transfer agent' as 'helping individuals apply learning after the learning experience' (1983:16) is also dropped in favour of the role of 'organization change agent' as 'the role of influencing and supporting changes in organization behavior' (1989:49). Other changes refer to the expansion and merging of previously identified roles.

The implication of these role changes is that, increasingly, individual learning and organisational learning is being posed as synonymous. This trend is confirmed by the 1989 document's emphasis on organisation development and career development with less focus on individual training and development. Career development which was included under 'training and development' in the 1983 version by reference to 'current and future jobs' (1983:12), becomes a distinctive development area aimed at 'assuring an alignment of individual career planning and organization career-management processes to achieve an optimal match of individual and organizational needs' (1989:6). HR research and information systems is also included as a new area to assure 'an HR information base' (:6). The document lists 74 'key outputs' associated with HRD work, each with its accompanying 'quality requirements' (:16-38). 'Facilitation' is mentioned in three of the output areas as pertaining to 'structured learning events', 'group discussions' and 'media-based learning events' (:29-30). Two of the most contentious (in this writer's view) output areas refer to 'resolved

conflicts for an organization or groups' (:23), and pose 'individuals with new knowledge, skills and attitudes' (:31) as an *output* area.

Another new inclusion is a consideration of thirteen ethical issues. Here 'balancing organizational and individual needs and interests', 'avoiding conflicts of interest', and 'using power appropriately' (:40-41) are noticable. They indicate that the organisation and the individual are still, almost surprisingly, viewed as separate entities. Whilst 'resolving conflict' is an output area, 'avoiding conflict' is paradoxically an ethical requirement. (Later (:42) there is reference to 'significant and potentially damaging trade-offs between individual and organizational needs'.) It is also unusual for the issue of 'power' to be explicitly mentioned.

The study lists 35 competencies (:43-45) as areas of knowledge and skill that 'will enable people to do HRD work in a future characterised by new organizational challenges and by changes in the workforce and HRD tools and products' (:43). These competencies are grouped by content category, namely 'technical competencies' that refer to functional knowledge and skills; 'business competencies' that have a strong management, economics or administration base; 'interpersonal competencies' that require communicative ability; and 'intellectual competencies' that are knowledge and skills related to thinking and processing of information. The description of the last category already give an indication of the type of skills required here, namely: data reduction; information search; intellectual versatility, which is described as 'recognizing, exploring and using a broad range of ideas and practices, thinking logically and creatively *without undue influence from personal biases* (emphasis added); model building; observing; self-knowledge which refers to 'knowing one's own personal values, needs, interests, style and competencies and their effect on others'; and visioning (:45). The inclusion of 'intellectual competency' as a distinct grouping with its paradoxical emphasis on objective, computer-type thinking processes as well as subjective, psychologistic 'self-knowledge' provides perhaps the best illustration of the form or type of 'thinking' that the organisation requires at the individual level. This mechanistic approach is reinforced by the inclusion of 'adult learning understanding' as a 'technical competency' (sic),

described as 'knowing how adults acquire and use knowledge, skills attitudes; understanding individual differences in learning' (:43)

It is clear that the status of training and development in the corporation will depend to a large extent on its ability to prove to both managers and lower level employees that it makes a contribution to the 'bottom line'. Information technology will be a crucial mechanism to achieve the integration of individual training and development paths into a wider systems of both performance and career management.

3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENARIO

The most significant development that is likely to affect the future of corporate training and development in South Africa is the pressure being exerted by COSATU for industrial restructuring and integrated human resource policies. The principles that were endorsed by COSATU at the National Congress in July 1991 reflect the range of these proposals:

* Human resource development must be linked to planned economic restructuring and active labour market policies.

* Trade unions have a central role to play in human resource development. This role needs to be acknowledged in all forums reflecting on present and future human resource policy.

* Trade unions have a duty to address the effects of past discrimination on human resource development, including where poor general education acts as an obstacle to skill development. Both overt and covert discrimination and affirmative action strategies developed ...

* There must be clear articulation between formal education, an industrial training system and other education and training systems.

A future national training policy needs to include the following:

* All workers to be included in the system.

* Training opportunities should be continuous for all workers, i.e. throughout their working lives.

* Training should ensure employment security.

* **Training should be linked to broad skills bands determined at industry level, and the acquisition of skills must ne linked to pay increases. Most probably these linkages could be best given effect through industry skill-based grading systems.**

* **Training should provide all workers with a career path moving from broad and general skills to specialisation.**

* **Training should be modular and competency based within a national integrated framework.**

* **Training modules should allow workers to progress to national standards whilst obtaining particular workplace skills.**

* **There must be provision for recognition of prior learning skills, whether these were gained formally or informally.**

* **Paid time off should apply to both training and general education where this will allow advancement to higher level skills.**

* **The training of trainers must be a central part of the system and must allow a career path for trainers. (extracted from COSATU, 1991,:17-18).**

The emphasis on training and development as the mechanism that will provide a 'high skill' workforce is clear. Although these proposals have been more fully analysed from various perspectives elsewhere (see for instance Kraak, 1992a), it is their impact on current corporate training activity that will be briefly discussed.

It must firstly be noted that COSATU represents workers in industry. Whilst this seems to be an obvious statement, it is important to bear in mind that many of the large corporations in South Africa fall in the commercial sector. They will no doubt be affected by national trends and policies, but they do not form part of the system of industry training boards where tri-partite representation will be given practical effect. As there are very few South African companies that employ the 'high-tech' computerised systems that characterise post-Fordist production systems in advanced industrialised countries, the South African concept of Drucker's 'knowledge workers' tends to refer to clerical workers in the commercial sector in for instance, banks and insurance companies. The schooling system has traditionally provided the 'three R's' required as a basis for clerical work and these companies recruit only matriculants or

people with tertiary education. The notion of general basic education is therefore not one that is considered applicable. The point is is that there will be uneven acceptance and implementation of the COSATU proposals even if they are implemented at national policy level. What is significant, however, is that these proposals place a high emphasis on technical training within a far broader conception of the knowledge base that underpins technical skills. If this version of 'skill' is adopted in South Africa, it will change not only the direction and content of training systems, but also the skills profile of trainers, not only in industry but also in commerce.

The profession has long realised the need to regulate and protect its territory and in 1982 the South African Board for Personnel Practice (SABPP) was established to set standards for the profession. While this body has no legislative authority, it provides a national system of professional registration that is actively promoted by the Institute for Personnel Management (IPM). Its management activities include the following:

* [providing] the framework for accreditation of curricula of tertiary institutions
* guidelines for practical training of candidate practitioners
* ethical norms of professional conduct
* methods for attaining competencies required for registration
* evaluation of attainment of standards. (*SABPP News*, 1992)

If the COSATU proposals and the SABPP activities are interpreted in conjunction, it is clear that what is envisaged for the future is a national system of standards and of provision, that will pertain to both trainers and trainees. Whilst such a policy may pose a threat to practitioners who have traditionally functioned outside national systems of regulation, it poses the distinct possibility that the status of training and the status of training practitioners will be enhanced. A nationally-recognised and compulsory professional qualification will establish a specialist status, reinforced by external accreditation, that will promote the development of a recognised career path for trainers. What will have to be guarded

against, however, is that the present stratification that places technical training at the bottom of the training status ladder and industrial relations training at the top, is not reproduced in formal terms. The same emphasis on multiple entry and exit points that is envisaged for a national training system needs to apply to the professionalisation of trainers.

The pressure that is starting to be applied from the shopfloor for access to training will undoubtedly increase the emphasis on training, so that Rose's prediction of training becoming the political battlefield of the workplace will be realised in South Africa in the 1990s. Whether this battle will increase the 'real competence' that will transform forms of work design and organisation, will depend to a large extent on the capacity of the trade unions to enter into the training debate not only at a policy level but at a practical curricular level, as it is here that the political battle for hegemony will finally be won or lost. (The writer was, for instance, told about a firm that agreed to provide training to retrenched workers after extensive negotiations between management and the union. When the training department was informed that they had to provide three days of training to shopfloor workers, they scurried around frantically and, in the end, offered courses on 'time management' and 'inter-personal relations'.)

Whether 'mobility' remains a corporate myth or translates into a reality that is within the reach of all levels of workers and not only of those who have already had the benefit of education and training, is the challenge that faces industrial training in general and corporate training in particular, in the future. Accreditation that is recognised outside the particular workplace and establishes technical competence as the basis of authority and the requirement for promotion for both managers and workers, will be the key to such transformation.

4. AIMS RE-VISITED

The study has seeked to provide an interpretative framework that extends beyond the narrow conceptualisations of corporate training and the activities of trainers usually found in the literature. It has attempted to

explore human agency not as voluntary action, but as constituted through structure as both the 'medium and the outcome of the reproduction of practices' so that structure can be seen to simultaneously enter into 'the constitution of the agent and social practices' in the 'generating moments' of their constitution (Giddens, 1979:5). In doing so, a wide range of issues have been addressed and some areas have inevitably not received the attention that they deserve. It is hoped, however, that the study has succeeded in its aim of analysing the meaning of corporate training beyond its technical moment so that the political and ideological nature of 'meritocratic mobility' becomes apparent.

Corporate trainers and the meanings that they construct to cope with the ambiguity of their position and task have been the main focus of the study. The strain of the 'go-between' role is at its most forceful in the concrete practices of social interaction in the training room. Trainers may well draw on the impersonal authority of rules and procedures, but in the final instance they have to give an account of themselves and of their practices in personal terms. A sociological analysis of the 'incorporation' process as it applyies to trainers as employees (just as it applies to all other corporate employees), extends a static understanding of trainers as 'agents of management' and reveals the value conflicts implicit in their educational roles, task and functions. It is this understanding that will hopefully make a useful contribution to the debate about adult education as a 'contested practice'. It offers an explanation of a particular institutionalised form of practice that can no longer be relegated to behaviourist technicism. Its contribution to the achievement of the 'flexible specialisation' required for restructuring the economy in South Africa (and elsewhere), and therefore its impact on educational systems in general, is crucial.

In the final instance the reader will have to make her own judgement on the contribution that the study as a whole makes to the understanding of corporate training activity as a site of educational practice.

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PROVISIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did you get into the training field? Please sketch your full work history briefly.

2. Can you remember what picture you had of training at the beginning and has that picture changed over the years?

3. What appeals to you most about training now?

4. Is there anything that you dislike about training?

5. Do you or have you ever belonged to any professional organisations and what do you see as their value?

6. Do you view training as a career in itself or is it a stepping stone to somewhere else?

7. How do you see the role of the training department in your organisation?

8. How do you think management sees training?

9. How do you think employees see training?

10. How do you think the trade union see training?

11. How do you think trainers in general see training?

12. It has been argued that there is an inevitable conflict between people's personal aspirations and the organisation's goals. How would you respond to this statement?

13. Is there a direct link between training and advancement in terms of a personal development plan for each employee?

14. Is there anything else that you would like to mention?

18 September 1991

Dear

THESIS QUESTIONNAIRE

For the last couple of years I have been working on a dissertation in fulfilment of an MPhil degree in Adult Education. The provisional title is: Value conflicts implicit in the roles, tasks and functions of training and development practitioners in corporations.

The area of investigation is in a sense biographical as the concerns first arose as "gut feelings" during 9 years of work practice. My search for explanations for some of these concerns lead to formal study and now it is important to widen the investigation beyond personal experience.

This is where I need your help. Would you please complete the attached questionnaire in writing and return it to me as soon as possible. It is always easier to approach people where there is some personal connection as the response to a survey form received in the post is usually poor. In addition, would you please hand a copy of the questionnaire to one of your colleagues and ask them to do the same. At this stage I am not trying to do a national survey. A random sample will be sufficient.

The questionnaire consists of three parts. The first section deals with your personal profile as a trainer, the second section asks questions about the formal parameters of

your job and the third section asks you to share your own perceptions about your job

No person or organisation will be identified by name as the aim of the sample is to draw a general picture of perceptions about training practice.
I hope that you will find it interesting to ponder on these questions and I thank you for your time and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

JEANNE GAMBLE

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1 : PERSONAL PROFILE

(1) NAME:

(2) YEARS OF TRAINING EXPERIENCE :

(3) NUMBER OF TRAINING JOBS :

(4) FORMAL EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS :

(5) TRAINING COURSES ATTENDED WHICH HELPED YOU TO DEVELOP AS A TRAINER :

(6) PACKAGED TRAINING COURSES FOR WHICH YOUR WERE LEADER TRAINED, EITHER EXTERNALLY OR INTERNALLY :

(7) BRIEF WORK HISTORY : from first job until current position including time period in each job. Include all jobs even though they may not have been in training

SECTION 2 : YOUR JOB

(1) EMPLOYER :

(2) CURRENT JOB TITLE :

(3) PURPOSE OF JOB :

(4) ORGANISATION CHART : Please draw the boxes from the chief executive down to training. Indicate the main departmental divisons so that training's hierarchical position in relation to other departments and sections within HR becomes clear

(5) KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES : List IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE the key areas of accountability held within the job, i.e. those that are not delegated. Attach a weighting to each key area by allocating a percentage (to total 100% overall) that indicates the time spent on each area.

(6) TRAINER COMPETENCY : Consult the 4 lists given in Appendix A and circle the numbers of those items which would be requirements for your current job. The purpose of this question is to build up a picture of the competencies which apply to your training job with relation to the wider Human Resource field.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: THE GENERIC COMPETENCY MODEL FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS was published by the SA BOARD FOR PERSONNEL PRACTICE in January 1990.

EXTRACT: "Human Resource jobs and the meanings of Human Resource job titles are very diverse. For this reason our model does not present job descriptions or attempt to descibe individual jobs. Instead it presents lists of Human Resource application/experience areas and their associated outputs, as well as Human Resource education requirements (knowledge areas) and training requirements (skills). These lists can be used as menus from which to select outputs and comptetencies pertinent to specific jobs and individuals' unique needs." (p 3)

(7) AUTHORITY : Read the following definitions of authority which refer to the relation between training and the rest of the enterprise. Indicate in the boxes below the percentage of each kind of authority which is vested in your job. (to total 100% eg. if your job holds only staff authority you would indicate 100% in box 2)

FUNCTIONAL AUTHORITY (Megginson, 1982:42) The right given to staff personnel to demand compliance with methods, procedures, policies and timing of one specialised function of the organisation. The right to issue enforcable instructions on staff matters throughout the enterprise, in order to fulfil duties and responsibilities outside his/her own department. Functional authority gives the practitioner just as much power outside his/her own department as line authority gives him/her within the training department. These orders are enforcable.

STAFF AUTHORITY (Mathis & Jackson, 1983:26) The responsibility of acting in an advisory and supporting capacity towards the rest of the enterprise. This advice is not enforcable.

FUNCTIONAL AUTHORITY ☐

STAFF AUTHORITY ☐

(8) RESPONSIBILITY AND DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY : .

8.1 List the 3 most important decisions which you may take in the execution of your training job without referring to anybody else.

1.

2.

3.

8.2 Are there decisions pertaining to training which you cannot make as part of your job ? If so, what are these decisions and who makes them ?

1.

2.

3.

8.3 Do you have staff reporting to you so that you are responsible for the normal supervisory/management functions, eg. performance appraisal, selection etc, as part of your job ?

YES ☐ NO ☐

9. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT : What end results serve as the basis for measuring your job performance (eg. feed-back received from other departments, accuracy and timeliness of work submitted etc.)

1.

2.

3.

(10) MAJOR CHALLENGES : What is the most difficult part of the job and what makes it difficult ?

SECTION 3 :YOUR PERCEPTION OF YOUR JOB

(1) How do you see the role of the training department in the organisation - what role does it play ?

(2) If you had to make a forced choice between the following two stated purposes of training which one would you choose and why ?

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY or PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

WHY ?

(3) What appeals to you most about your training job ?

(4) What do you dislike most about the work that you do in training ?

(5) What power or influence do you think the training and development specialist generally has in organisations ?

(6) Are there any major conflicts or areas where such conflicts readily occur in your relationships with other departments or functions ?

(7) The following statements were made by a sample of trainers during a previous set of interviews. Please read the questions and the responses. Indicate whether any of these responses are in line with your own perceptions by placing a tick next to the relevant statement(s). Add you own comments of clarification.

7.1 QUESTION : How do you think management sees training ?

* They say it's 'nice to have' but it's not essential."
* As a necessary evil
* Something that has to be done to keep the workers happy
* As a totally positive force that has great influence on the company and its people
* It's something they send other people on - "not for me"
* Necessary - in terms of their image in the market place
* Very committed to training from the top down, but if budgets need to be cut, they cut training
* It is almost seen as a reward for good performance or a privilege

YOUR COMMENT:

7.2 QUESTION :How do you think trainers, in general, see training ?

* We are like Cinderella, because we are always left with the dirty work to do - we have to bridge the gap between performance appraisals and what actually happens in 'real' life
* We have to do a lot of 'selling' of company decisions and policies
* We're becoming more and more structured and more and more automated in what we do. There is something deep inside us that says it's wrong, it's not working but we don't know how to bring the two together
* The new school of trainer is trying very hard to really help people to be more effective in their roles in some way
* Some trainers see training as just going through a schedule of courses
* I see a lot of trainers very disillusioned with training

YOUR COMMENT:

7.3 QUESTION : How do you think staff/employees see training ?

* All they see is supervisors and managers coming on a lot of training courses. They see them developing but they don't see much going for themselves
* This company is showing how important I am by training me; this is my development; I am going to progress with this training
* In my experience people generally come into training situations feeling at best sort of neutral and at worst quite resistant
* I think the majority of them see it as a couple of days out of the workplace
* Normally they thoroughly enjoy it - they get involved and really participate

* I think staff see training as a right, as something they're entitled to, something they must have to recognise their worth and for there own progression On the other hand, it's something that doesn't really help in their jobs

YOUR COMMENT:

(8) How do you see the future of the training function in your organisation ?

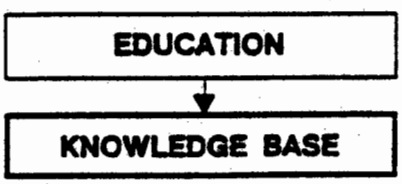
APPENDIX A

THE GENERIC COMPETENCY MODEL FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THESE LISTS COVER THE WHOLE HUMAN RESOURCE SPECTRUM. WE ARE TRYING TO IDENTIFY THOSE ITEMS WHICH APPLY TO TRAINING AND TO YOUR CURRENT JOB IN PARTICULAR. ONLY SELECT THOSE ITEMS THAT RELATE TO YOUR JOB.

1. **KNOWLEDGE BASE :**

   When we talk about knowledge we answer the questions "What education base do training and development practitioners require ?" and "What knowledge will enable people to do training and development work in a future characterised by new organisational challenges, work force changes and new training tools and products ?"



- **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

  1. **Industrial Psychology**
     Knowledge of theories and approaches regarding human and behavioural processes in work organisations; knowledge of appropriate methodologies to investigate problems of human existence and development in organisations.
  2. **Industrial Sociology**
     Knowledge of theories and approaches regarding group and social processes in work organisations; knowledge of social research to investigate social phenomena in work organisations.
  3. **Industrial Law/Labour Law**
     Knowledge of national/local legislation and legal requirements that govern the acquisition, management and disposal of Human Resources in work organisations.

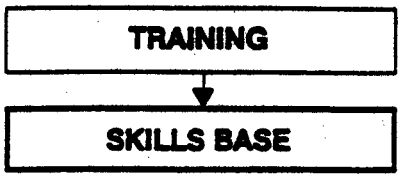
ntinues)

- **BUSINESS SCIENCES**

4. **Business Management**
   Knowledge of the key business processes that enable an organisation to function in a specified product/service/market context. This includes the key processes of finance, production, personnel and marketing.
5. **Economics**
   Knowledge of the various approaches/theories/schools of thought on how economic systems function and their corresponding policy implications.
6. **Accounting**
   Knowledge of the quantitative/monetary techniques for fiscal decision-making, planning and control, evaluation of performance and preparation of relevant financial reports for various stakeholders.
7. **Statistics**
   Knowledge of the techniques for scanning, synthesising and drawing conclusions from Human Resource data.
8. **Computer Systems**
   Knowledge of the functions, features and potential applications of electronic systems for the delivery and management of Human Resource information.

2. SKILLS BASE

When we talk about skills we answer the questions "What training base do training and development practitioners require ?" and "What skills will enable people to do training and development work in a future characterised by new organisational challenges, work force changes and new training tools and products?"

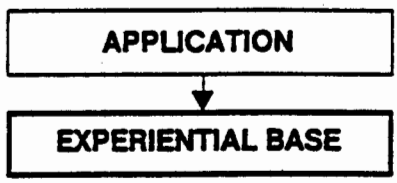


- **FUNCTIONAL**
  1. **Research Methodology:** Selecting, developing and using experimental, statistical and data collection techniques and methodologies for a scientific enquiry.
  2. **Measurement:** Collecting, processing, synthesizing and drawing conclusions from data.
  3. **Assessment:** Selecting, developing and using methods/techniques for appraising competencies, personality characteristics and job requirements.
  4. **Systems Design:** Conceptualising and developing systemic frameworks for Human Resource management, processes, procedures and practices.
  5. **Group Process:** Utilising group dynamics theory to facilitate task and maintenance behaviour, and optimise group outputs.
  6. **Mentoring:** Counselling individuals with a view to career development and performance improvement.
  7. **Consulting:** Analysing and diagnosing situations, and advising individuals/groups on appropriate courses of action.

- **MANAGERIAL**
  8. **Leadership:** Helping individuals/groups with task accomplishment by setting direction and gearing people towards achieving objectives by motivating and inspiring them.
  9. **Planning:** Formulating and prioritising objectives, and systematically scheduling the steps to be followed for their accomplishment within given time frames and resource limits.
  10. **Budgeting:** Allocating financial and non-financial resources required to achieve given business objectives within a specified period.
  11. **Communicating:** Conveying verbally/in writing the content and intent of a message in a manner understandable to the recipient/s.
  12. **Marketing and Promotion:** Positioning the function and its products and services to meet customer needs and gain maximum customer support.
  13. **Negotiating:** Reaching an agreement with another party/parties while effectively representing your party's special interest in the matter.
  14. **Change Management:** Utilising techniques and processes to facilitate adaptation to, and acceptance of, technological, structural, social and other organisational change.
  15. **Monitoring:** Utilising control systems to monitor deviations from plans.
  16. **Reporting:** Analysing a situation and giving an oral/written account of the findings to the recipient/s in conformance with agreed parameters.

3. **EXPERIENTAL BASE :**

Training and development practitioners deliver outputs across a broad range of application areas - on an employee, group and organisational level.



- **EMPLOYEE LEVEL**
  - **Deployment**
    1. **Recruitment:**
       Designing activities to attract job candidates with the right qualifications and characteristics to accomplish the work.
    2. **Selection:**
       Matching candidates to job requirements in order to select the most suitable person to be placed in a specific position.
    3. **Career Management:**
       Matching individual competencies and preferences with the needs of the organisation in order to develop realistic career goals and strategies.
    4. **Termination:**
       Dealing with employee separation, including the formulation of separation decisions and separation counselling.
    5. **Retirement Planning:**
       Administering retirement benefit schemes and providing retirement planning programmes.
  - **Administration**
    6. **HR Policies:**
       Formulating documents which set out managerial directives regarding Human Resource practices in the organisation.
    7. **HR Procedures:**
       Formulating documents which set out the manner in which Human Resource policies are to be implemented and controlled.
    8. **Job Evaluation:**
       Comparing jobs according to formal and systematic procedures to determine their relative contribution value within the organisation.
    9. **Compensation Management:**
       Developing, implementing, monitoring and continually updating extrinsic reward systems.
    10. **Employee Assistance Programmes:**
        Maintaining and enhancing the psycho-social well-being and quality of work life of employees.
    11. **Occupational Health:**
        Maintaining and enhancing the physical and mental health of employees in the workplace.

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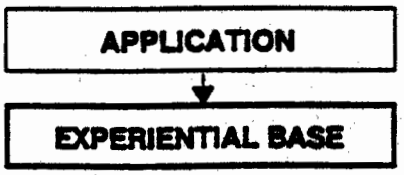

12. **IR Agreements:**
    Formulating documents which set out agreements reached between employer and employee groups regarding reward systems, conditions of employment and other matters of mutual interest.
13. **Disciplinary Procedure:**
    Developing, implementing and maintaining formal conflict resolution procedures for dealing with situations in which an employee is considered to be in breach of contract.
14. **Grievance Procedure:**
    Developing, implementing and maintaining formal conflict resolution procedures for dealing with situations in which an employee feels agrieved by an omission/commission on the organisation's part.
15. **Accommodation and Feeding:**
    Developing and managing facilities/schemes designed to provide housing and meals for employees.
16. **Recreation:**
    Developing and managing schemes designed to provide recreational facilities for employees.

- **Performance Development**

17. **Course Design:**
    Designing and implementing courses and programmes to meet the training and developmental needs of identified target groups.
18. **Induction/Orientation:**
    Designing and implementing information and orientation programmes for new employees with the purpose of integrating them effectively into the organisation.
19. **On-job Training:**
    Utilising on-site training interventions to develop employee job performance.
20. **Off-job Training:**
    Utilising off-site training interventions to develop employee job performance.
21. **Performance Assessment:**
    Measuring employee performance against agreed criteria in order to identify training and development needs, determine rewards or assess potential.
22. **Development Counselling:**
    Helping the individual to formulate an action plan aimed at meeting identified long-term development needs.
23. **Job Advancement:**
    Designing and implementing strategies and systems aimed at eliminating disadvantages and allowing employees to develop to the maximum of their potential.
24. **Educational Assistance:**
    Managing programmes designed to assist employees in the acquisition of formal educational qualifications.

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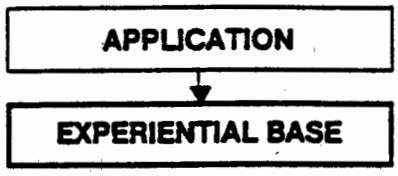

- **GROUP LEVEL**
  - **Intra-group Functioning**
    25. **Team Development:**
    Utilising group dynamics technology to facilitate team building and enhance group development.
    26. **Conflict Management:**
    Diagnosing the nature of conflict and selecting/implementing appropriate resolution techniques.
    27. **Participation:**
    Developing and implementing programmes designed to increase employee participation in the activities and decision processes of the organisation.
  - **Inter-group Functioning**
    28. **Matrix Management:**
    Facilitating the performance of inter-disciplinary teams and non-hierarchically structured workgroups.
    29. **Cross-cultural Environments:**
    Managing the assimilation process in multicultural environments and ensuring culture-sensitive/non-discriminatory practices.
    30. **Industrial Relations Structures:**
    Formulating structures to facilitate constructive employer-employee relationships and enhance employer-employee communication.
    31. **Trade Union Relationships:**
    Establishing effective working relationships and open communication channels with representative Trade Unions.
    32. **Collective Bargaining:**
    Facilitating negotiations between management and employee representatives concerning rewards, conditions of employment and other matters of mutual interest in the bargaining unit.

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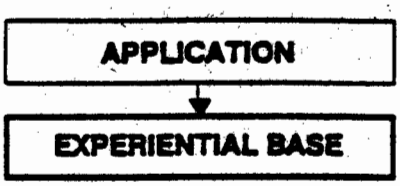
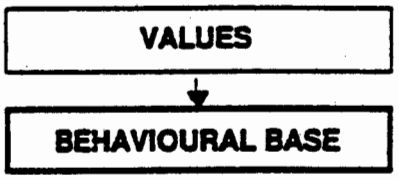


- **ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL**
  - **Corporate Strategy**
    33. **Business Planning:**
    Guiding management teams through processes designed to clarify the organisation's mission, objectives and strategies.
    34. **Manpower Planning:**
    Determining the short-, medium- and long-term manpower resourcing requirements of the organisation, and formulating plans to meet these.
    35. **Succession Planning:**
    Determining the short-, medium- and long-term key executive/managerial resourcing requirements of the organisation, and formulating plans to meet these.
  - **Corporate Structure**
    36. **Organisation Design:**
    Determining roles and relationships in the organisation and designing structures to facilitate effective organisational functioning at the various levels; i.e. corporate, divisional, departmental and unit.
    37. **Job Design:**
    Determining job content, responsibilities and relationships (including job enlargement and job enrichment) to facilitate organisational performance and enhance job satisfaction.
    38. **Resource Utilisation:**
    Managing available human, financial, physical and systems resources to optimise output.
  - **Corporate Functioning**
    39. **Corporate Values:**
    Defining the organisation's core values, converting these into behavioural norms and gaining commitment to their expression in the organisation's day to day activities.
    40. **Employee Motivation:**
    Developing and implementing integrated programmes designed to enhance employee commitment and raise employee morale.
    41. **Opportunity Equalisation:**
    Ensuring equality of treatment and development opportunity, and prohibiting any discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, sex and age.
    42. **Human Resource Surveys:**
    Designing research methodology and survey instruments to obtain feedback on employee attitudes and opinions regarding organisation-relevant issues.

4. BEHAVIOURAL BASE

Values determine the style or way in which we approach the challenges and opportunities in our field of work. People observe practitioners at work and draw conclusions about their values and style. They make the assumption that our values are congruent with our behaviour.



- **PROFESSIONAL**
  1. **Systemic Thinking:** Seeing the big picture; taking account of multiple influences and implications when making decisions.
  2. **Measurement Orientation:** Measuring wherever possible – and in qualitative and quantitative terms – the impact of one's actions and interventions.
  3. **Objectivity:** Managing one's personal biases at both cognitive and interpersonal levels.
  4. **Judgement:** Using insight based on experience to reach a considered conclusion.
  5. **Innovation:** Exercising one's creative faculties in exploiting opportunities and solving problems.
  6. **Assertiveness:** Expressing a firm viewpoint and/or taking definite action without losing perspective.
  7. **Accountability:** Accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's own decisions and actions.
  8. **Integrity:** Being honest and behaving in an ethical manner.
  9. **Confidentiality:** Respecting the premise that information furnished in confidence must be treated with extreme circumspection.
  10. **Flexibility:** Sensing when adaptation is required and being able and willing to adjust to changing situations.

- **INTER-PERSONAL**
  11. **Respectfulness:** Showing consideration and tolerance for the needs, opinions and values of others.
  12. **Recognition:** Reinforcing positive behaviour by acknowledging the accomplishments of others.
  13. **Responsiveness:** Ascertaining customers' needs and concerns and being willing to act on them.
  14. **Empowerment:** Helping customers to acquire the skills needed to implement Human Resource management practices competently.
  15. **Consultation:** Advising and guiding customers on possible interventions rather than imposing courses of action on them.

- **MANAGERIAL**
  16. **Customer Focus:** Ascertaining the needs and requirements of customers and striving to meet them.
  17. **Quality Focus:** Being oriented to doing the right thing right the first time.
  18. **Cost Focus:** Providing cost-effective, value-for-money products and services within budgetary constraints.
  19. **Results Focus:** Gearing all activities towards the achievement of outputs that will support the objectives of the business and contribute to its results.