EXPLORING MY ROLE AS HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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i.   Declaration

I, Jotsana Roopram, declare that:

i.   The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

ii.   This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination to any other university.

iii. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from others.

iv.   This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically indicated or acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:

a) Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;

b) Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and then indicated by complete references.

_____   <u>27/08/2012</u>

Jotsana Roopram   Date

ii. Dedication

This study is dedicated to my family:

To my beloved parents, Satish and Sheila: My deepest appreciation for the values you have instilled in me and the love you have showered upon me. You both have motivated me to spread my wings and reach for the stars.

To my three sisters: Sandhia, Savera and Rowena; whom I draw strength and courage from every day. You are my „learning heroines' and I am eternally grateful for the bond we share as sisters.

iii. Acknowledgements

Although I speak of this autoethnography as "my' story, I must acknowledge all those who have shared in my journey thus far and contributed to my life story. To Ruth Searle, my patient and tolerant research supervisor. Thank you for asking the difficult questions and jolting me from an abyss of complacency, mediocrity and safety. Your quest in challenging me to see beyond and above and reach higher understanding through your insight and wisdom has hopefully been fruitful.

To my eccentric and enthused mentor, John Ballam. Thank you for engaging me in conversation around postmodernism and everything academic. Your encouraging words have kept me afloat throughout this process and you have inspired me to think „outside the box' and be a better *everything*.

My heartfelt gratitude to all those who have sacrificed, fought and walked this journey *with* me…thank you.

Abbreviations

AD   Academic Developer

CL   Contract Lecturer

CHE   Council on higher education

DOE   Department of Education

HE   Higher Education

HEQC   Higher education quality committee

HOD   Head of Department

NHOD   National Head of Department

SAQA   South African Qualifications Authority

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

We are born into a world of stories, stories which allow us to make sense of the experiences around us. I could therefore think of no better way to capture and share this journey of self-discovery on which I have embarked, as an academic leader, than through the medium of autoethnography. Although I am fully aware that everyone, regardless of the field in which they find themselves, has their own stories to share, I am driven by a search for meaning and purpose in my chosen professional field of higher education, a field with an admirable array of characteristics, rules and eccentricities - very good indicators as to why I suppose I belong nowhere else in this vast world. Yet, I am here in the academic office of a tertiary institution, at the heart of the campus, making a difference to the world through engagement with a captivating range of people in the world of academia.

My journey through higher education thus far, which spans close to eleven years, has been nothing less than extraordinary. Perhaps, this is because of the people I have encountered along my journey, people who have inspired my very being - or because I have an inherent persistence to overcome the hurdles presented in my path, or maybe both? This incredible journey has headed a collection and accumulation of discoveries and experiences along the way, and my intention is to share these with you, through this academic endeavour. The focus of this study is to capture and explore both my personal and professional journey through my career as a Head of Department in a private higher education institution in South Africa.

My life in higher education began as a student of hospitality management; a field that captured my interest at a very young age. I was fascinated by the industry's alluring qualities, and discovered that the practical skills needed made it all the more appealing to me. Given that it is a vocational discipline, with a very specific and applied skill set, one could only pursue a qualification in this field at a private college or a technikon (a term used in South Africa to refer to a higher education institution focusing on vocational

education and now called a University of Technology), since vocational studies were not recognized as „academic' enough for universities. One of the requirements of this industry was a traineeship (internship) programme that required exposure to various departments in a hotel, ensuring a „real', authentic experience of the industry, with all its challenges. This experience is designed to provide students with the practical ability to reach their full potential in their chosen career paths and therefore consists of a very structured programme. In addition to this rigorous programme, passionate trainers are key to the overall development of students moving through the course, as anyone who has ever been exposed to the hospitality industry as a student, trainer or employee, knows that it is perhaps one of the most demanding and hands-on, yet exhilarating, industries in the world; certainly, for those who have a passion for being a part of it. Although my training experience in the hotel industry was invaluable, I was regrettably not fortunate to have encountered such passion from my trainers – there was clearly a lack of commitment to this endeavor, which I believe, in hindsight, is directly related to the notion that despite possessing knowledge in a particular area or field, one cannot necessarily impart this knowledge passionately and successfully, thereby creating a learning space for students of the trade. On completion of my training in the hospitality industry, I thus came to the realisation that hospitality training was the area in which I wanted to make a difference; this was the path I was meant to walk. Therefore, after a short stint in industry, following the completion of my qualification, I pursued a career in the training sector of the hospitality industry, which eventually led me to the world of education (this being the resulting „logical' step in my career path).

Equally significant in this decision to pursue a career in education and training was my father, who is my greatest inspiration. He was an educator at secondary school and impacted on my view of education from a very young age. As a child, I recall his sense of pride in the profession and I remember him saying that it was a profession that was "noble", yet sometimes overlooked. I would fervently listen to remarkable stories of his stimulating teaching activities in his class and this stirred awareness in me. Having the ability to impact on others' minds, while maintaining a social purpose, was appealing to me and resulted in the emulation of my father‚s ability and career choice. A belief that I still share with my father is that education empowers people to make a difference in

society, to support individuals to grow and develop the ability and opportunity to relate their learning and critical thinking skills to social challenges and problems outside of the classroom. Freire (1993, p.34) similarly points out that, "A humanising education is the path through which men and women become conscious about their presence in the world."

In addition to these influences, there is also a long and respected family tradition of many of my family members, both in my immediate (my mother) and extended family, embarking on educational career paths, and although this was not an expectation of me, it certainly became an inevitable step in my future. Educators in my family are held in high esteem and this subsequently impacted on my innate desire to pursue a career in education. Although there has been no conscious and deliberate pressure to steer me in this direction, the teaching profession inevitably became a part of my *self* and *identity*. In efforts to understand my self and identity more deeply, I have engaged with various views on the self, views offered by professionals from fields such as psychology, education and art; as well as others brave enough to share their understanding of the „self‟ through endeavours such as this one.

Further to this, I believe that learning is made possible through the training and teaching of others. Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007, p.8) define learning as the "conceptual and cognitive change as a result of direct and indirect interaction with a more knowledgeable and experienced other." *I* believe that learning is a continuous process of discovery, crucial to our survival and development and is the result of accidental and intentional stimuli in the environment, and impacts greatly, or shapes our viewpoints of, and reactions to life and its many components. Acquiring knowledge is vital to creating and maintaining a state of mind and quality of life. The notion of identity is a central factor in learning and transition. Wenger (1998, p.215) argues that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is carried out in the "service of an identity "and that all learning becomes meaningful in the light of individual identity.

In view of this, my passion for education stems from both the positive experiences I have had as a student of higher education, as well as the fact that I am born into a family of educators. It is safe to say that this career choice is „in my blood'. I believe that in addition to an innate passion (and a touch of insanity), one needs to also possess a specific type of personality, in order to fully function and successfully embrace life and a career in the field of education. Taking into account my own personality and those of others who have chosen this industry, I believe that this personality is one that is characteristic of great inner strength, compassion and empathy for the human race, an understanding of the various generations, and a realistic grasp of life and the world in general.

In order to continue on this journey of self-discovery, I have chosen to foster my learning through my commitment to share my life in academia thus far, which involves numerous activities, one of which is being present to the world, which I will describe in great detail. This will mean actively engaging with any and all relevant aspects of my professional life and accessing these experiences through the medium of writing. I have learned that writing requires discipline, serious contemplation and thought, and a repertoire of skills, which I believe I am still in the process of developing. As Chatham-Carpenter (2010, p.9) suggests, "Writing about your experiences is so tied to your life course that you have to be in a certain space to feel comfortable to write. Autoethnographers have to be willing to do the hard work of feeling the pain and learning through the process of writing, approaching autoethnography not as a project to be completed, but as a continuous learning experience." For purposes of clarity, the distinction between an autoethnography and a self-study needs to be acknowledged. Whilst there are similarities, a self-study involves practitioners studying themselves and their lived experiences in relation to their practice within their educational contexts, in order to raise particular questions and drive educational change, while an autoethnography involves researchers studying themselves and their lived educational experiences in relation to broader socio-cultural contexts and complexities, a process Hamilton, Smith and Worthington (2009, p.24) describe as "using an ethnographic wide-angle lens". My decision to pursue an autoethnography instead of a self-study was guided by the need to explore how I have changed and developed in the role of head of

department, and explore my immediate environment and how the issues that directly affect this environment, have impacted on me, both professionally and personally.

Although I was and still am a student in the public higher education sector in South Africa, it is important to note that I have only ever worked in the *private* sector. Having lectured at higher education institutions for six years prior to taking on the position of Head of Department at my current institution, I gained invaluable teaching and learning experience, which I believe is beneficial to my current role. The role of Head of Department at my current institution sadly denies me the opportunity to shape and mould the minds of young adults and experience more personal interactions with them, in a classroom environment. Instead, I engage with them from my perch behind an administrative desk. Like teaching and learning, academic administration, through a different lens and in a different space, also encourages students' overall academic and personal development and ultimately has the students' best interests at heart. I am still unsure of exactly when I realized that I was an administrator and not a lecturer, or if I have even surrendered to this reality yet. The interface between teaching and learning and academic administration has been a stimulating adjustment for me. Slowey (1995, p.23), believes that, "Those who swap roles and make the transition end up with new perspectives and outlooks." According to Del Favero (2006, p.283), a "dramatic shift in work culture is inherent in the transition from academic to administrative careers. As scholars, faculty is immersed in disciplinary cultures characterized by work values quite different from the culture of administration." As a novice academic administrator, I fully subscribe to this notion and resonate with Strathe and Wilson's (2006, p.11) view that, "Transition in changing roles poses challenges in moving into the first administrative position and the context for decision-making is more complex."

Being Head of Department requires that I be adept at navigating *both* academic and administrative cultures and the environmental complexities that these differences stimulate; and I have consequently been humbled by the experience of overcoming challenges faced in my new area of work. I shall no longer take for granted the grueling amount of effort and time involved in ensuring that an academic department functions successfully and efficiently. The experience in academic administration thus far has

given me new insight into the „behind the scenes' of an educational organisation, and, I must admit, I have a newfound respect for what I like to term „desk slaves in academia'. Being desk-bound in the administration office on campus, or wrapped up in the deadening weight of daily *"administrivia"* (Davies, 2006; Patton, 2007), is one of the most difficult limitations for me to embrace, having embraced a teaching and learning role prior to my current position of Head of Department. As Strathe and Wilson (2006, p.10-12) point out about academic administration, "There is limited individual work time, the time commitment to being present in the work environment is much greater and there is often limited time for reflection." With this in mind, however, teaching students in a higher education environment incited a passion in me, which developed into, and now exists as, a perpetual part of who I am - I must admit that sometimes, I yearn for that part of me to come alive again. I miss contributing to education through the medium of teaching and, although the administrative area of education carries an equal amount (if not more) responsibility and is equally challenging (but not as stimulating), I hope to one day return to teaching, with newfound knowledge and experience from „behind-the-scenes'. Crookston (2011, p.4) shares a similar sentiment, „Although I work differently as a department head than I did as a faculty member, I am enjoying the challenges of the position greatly. I enjoy working with the organisation's stakeholders to improve it, learning new skills, and meeting new people." I, however, continually use that integral part of me to guide me through my daily tasks of academic administration.

Upon reading about the experiences of other academic administrators, I encountered the following extract, which is fitting to my interpretation of my current job description:

> Some jobs invite us to do one thing and to do it well; we are only responsible for our own piece of the puzzle and need not worry about the rest. That is usually the administrator's job. Administration is often a very humbling task. The work asks us to tackle issues that we do not quite know how to handle, issues that take us far beyond our comfort zones. No, we do not know everything we wish we knew. No, we are not perfect. No, we do not feel worthy to make recommendations that could affect others' lives. But, with due humility, we also have to act… I often find myself, as an administrator, in

situations with students and colleagues that I would very much prefer to avoid… I have learned from experience that no matter how badly I might botch things up through direct confrontation, it will be better than how badly I might botch things up by avoiding it. Often this is not much consolation. At such times, I must rely not on my own inner resources but on the grace of the role itself. I remember that someone has asked me to serve in this capacity and appointed me to carry out the task.

Garrido, A. (2009, p.22-23)

In response to the above extract, this autoethnography will outline similar thoughts in detail. By reflecting on the qualities needed by an administrative manager and the daily decisions an administrator makes, aspiring administrators may better understand the mindset and decision-making process of the administrator in regard to all that an administrator deals with on a daily basis. In order to perform these tasks, Curren (2008, p.337), believes that a "good academic administrator should have a variety of desirable traits or virtues, such as stamina, administrative skills and public speaking ability", without which, "one would be impaired as an academic administrator".

It has been and still is interesting to note the difference behind the scenes of a higher education institution. As an educator, I have learnt to appreciate the effort and time that is invested in the administrative component of running higher education programmes successfully and I have come to the conclusion that neither is easier to manage or more important than the other. Therefore, this study will touch on the effects of globalisation on an administrative manager in higher education, explore the change in approach to administrative procedures when moving from the role of a lecturer to an administrative manager and share best practices about change management and challenges faced with regards to quality assurance, within my role as Head of Department. Senge (2000, p.383) says that "One key to learning is being able to identify and understand the conditions we work in so that we can help change them."

1.2 Background of the study

I believe that it is imperative to offer a context to the environment in which I fulfill my role as Head of Department (HOD). The institution at which I am currently employed is a registered, private institution of higher education, with various campuses nationally, all of which offer qualifications accredited through an overarching academic body and registered with the Department of Education (DOE). Each campus functions independently by means of its own campus management reporting lines. The HODs report to the campus Vice-Principal and the National Head of Department (NHOD). An HOD is allocated a faculty or department on each campus and, as HOD, is therefore accountable for the co-ordination and management of all academic processes related to the academic delivery and overall quality assurance of programmes within the department. As HOD, my responsibility consists of three main areas, which are academic management, personnel management and general administration; which will all be elaborated on later in the study. The NHOD is the link between the HODs at the various campuses and the faculty members of the academic body, who are responsible for the administrative areas of the programmes offered at the campuses, such as material and programme development and the design and development of assessments.

The HOD position at my institution differs considerably from one at a public institution. Traditionally, in public institutions (universities, technikons etc.), the role of Head of Department, in the conventional sense, involves tasks such as teaching, developing course material and assessments, the moderation of assessments within the department, managing the departmental budget, the sourcing and training of faculty members, pursuing research projects in their relevant fields of expertise etc. My position (and the functions within the position), is what may be described as more of that of a programme coordinator. This is largely due to the fact that as HOD at my institution, teaching is not a part of my portfolio, despite my prior teaching and learning experience and the desire to continue teaching. The core of my workload includes administrative tasks, such as managing and addressing student and lecturer queries, student support in all academic operational activities such as study material, student and programme

timetables or class schedules, preparing student academic reports, and maintaining student and lecturer records. Despite the image one conjures when one thinks of the position, „head of department', in reality, I am merely the „face' of the programme to students and lecturers, the „link' to the national office and the „programme administrator' to campus management. This „multiple reporting role', ostensibly like any other profession, offers its own challenges and rewards.

While this study is based on my reflections and experiences as a Head of Department in a private institution in South Africa, I do not function in isolation within my role and I have clearly not developed thus far within this position without impetuses. I have been shaped by various influences, which I find critical to incorporate in the discussion that follows.

1.2.1 Management theories and models of reflection

While still a student of hospitality management, I was exposed to the existence of a plethora of management theories with which I was required to familiarize myself for the purposes of development as a student in this area. Since then, several management paradigms emerged and in recent years, have continued to emerge, to support the survival of companies locally and globally and ensure that these companies thrive in the current and volatile market. As a manager in the field of private higher education, I have previously engaged with, and still refer to, tried and trusted management concepts, to function and develop in my role as Head of Department, and I will therefore refer to various theories in the field of management studies to support certain areas of this study. Since I am laying the platform for a reflective account, various theories of reflective practice offered by pioneers in the field such as Dewey (1933), Kolb (1984) and Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985), as well as contemporary theorists such as Moon (1999), will also be used as frames of reference.

1.3 Motivation for the research

Academic administration and academic management in institutions of higher education have not been given due recognition in the world of research - certainly not in South Africa. Having worked in teaching and learning and now in academic administration, or

as Clegg and McAuley (2005), Hellawell and Hancock (2001) and Huy (2001) term, a "middle manager", I feel it vital that I contribute to this area of research. With the use of my reflective accounts and the sharing of my own experiences as an academic manager, I hope to, through this effort, engage other managers in the field, who are also in the process of self-development within their roles. I believe that in doing so, I can encourage similar efforts of knowledge-sharing; with an overall objective of producing more information in this field and making this information available to those who wish to enter the area of academic management.

As I did not intend on focusing on any specific area in academic administration and management, an autoethnography presented itself as the most appropriate method of this undertaking of knowledge-sharing. As Wall (2006, p.2) points out, „The potential power of autoethnography is to address unanswered questions and include the new and unique ideas of the researcher which is inspiring to me as one who wishes to find their niche and make their own special contribution."

1.4 Importance of the study and objectives

My objectives include self-development within this role, through the process of self-reflection, as well as being able to provide other administrative managers in the field of higher education, both locally and globally, an opportunity to gain exposure to and an in-depth understanding of my experiences and subsequently to share their stories (through the rare genre of autoethnographies) on a platform that this study is contributing to. Reflective practice is central to my learning from experience and I hope that this process will essentially lead to and contribute to new perspectives on various issues and experiences that make up this research endeavor and my ongoing intellectual journey. The structure that I have created with my reflective practice includes recalling an experience, analyzing it with the use of a relevant theory and applying in-depth thought of its meaning to me and to my ongoing learning process, which ultimately sheds light for others, through potentially new learning processes and strategies that may be discovered in this process.

I am fully aware that criticisms exist on the practice of reflection and on reflective accounts being subjective. Hixon and Swann Jr. (1993, p.35) believe that many "harbor a deep distrust of the power of introspection." They pose an interesting question, which although simple, offers a deeper quest on which many people have indulged – "When people peer inward, what do they see?" I therefore do not deny that this is *my* story, experiences seen through *my* eyes and therefore is *my* subjective reality - this is the very nature of an autoethnography, the context of the research setting is my own and will therefore contribute to knowledge-sharing and a deeper understanding of an academic manager's reflections and experiences in present-day higher education in South Africa. Wall (2006, p.2), suggests that "An individual is best suited to describe his or her own experience more accurately than anyone else." Hernandez, Sancho, Creus and Montane (2010, p.10) confirms this idea by saying that "Autoethnography is not neutral but selects events and ignores others, and those it selects are portrayed under a specific and, of course, subjective light." The use of autoethnography is therefore vital, not only to my professional and personal growth in this capacity, but in the interest of knowledge-sharing, which is characteristic of academe. The „exposure' will hopefully provide an in-depth understanding of the nature of being an academic manager in the private sector of South African higher education, and I hope to motivate others to share their experiences and perspectives, using autoethnographies.

In addition to this notion, I attempt to explore the complexities around the space of experience that are *not* so visible. However, since higher education in South Africa has changed drastically over the past few years, my experiences are significant, in that I have gained valuable insight in working as a practitioner (both as an educator and administrator) in this dynamic field, which I believe will be beneficial to others in higher education. As Dyson (2004, p.190) points out, "I am not attempting to declare my emerging knowledge as scientific truth, or as a discovery beyond me, but rather as my creative construction of a reality, which I have lived." The challenges of my role as HOD, which I will elaborate on later in the study, include specific experiences I have had in my current institution; such as experiencing issues of power on campus, the effects of global changes on the roles of heads of department in private higher education institutions, the lack of accountability of those who work in private higher education

institutions, the difficulties managing the „contract lecturer' model in a private higher education institution and the subsequent „development' of a specific profile of student in a private higher education setting and the consequences of this.

1.5 Assumptions

- Having stated previously that I believe that this study will be beneficial to others, I assume that my story will resonate with other leaders and managers in the field of higher education, and that others can make connections to my role, the challenges faced within this role and that views and actions pursued to resolve the challenges faced, are viable to others in the field.

- Self-reflection will be a critical part of my development. I am hoping that this journey of self-reflection and learning will allow me to grow in a personal and professional capacity.

- What I describe as significant or important in the study actually *is*. Formative influences and current stimuli in my immediate and greater environment have shaped me in my role and will continue to do so in my pursuit of other academic management roles that follow.

- The development of my academic identity, through exposure to both the administrative and teaching and learning functions of a higher education institution. Henkel (2000) and Winter and Sarros (2002) say that we are influenced by traditional academic roles and contemporary managerial identities and the contradictions and conflicts that arise from these competing identity claims. Carnoy (2005, p.18) implies that globalisation, "changes the conditions of identity formation." He explains that "individuals in any society have multiple identities and today, their *globalized identity* is defined in terms of the way that global markets value individual traits and behavior." Stryker and Burke (2000) believe that roles are externally defined by others' expectations, but individuals define their own identities internally as they accept or reject social role expectations as part of who they are. Once an individual has accepted and internalized expectations for a role as part of his or her identity, that identity becomes a cognitive framework for interpreting new experiences.

1.6 Research questions

Having invested a lot of thought into what I wanted to share with the academic world, I inevitably gained deeper clarity on the „how' first. The questions that I endeavour to have answered and that will essentially form the basis of this study include:

- How have my experiences as an educator and administrative manager in higher education shaped my role and influenced my practice?
- How will the practice of self-reflection contribute to my role, experiences and overall professional development?

1.7 Structure of the research

The study will be presented in the following chapters:

1.7.1 Chapter Two – Review of the related literature

1.7.2 Chapter Three – Research design and methodology

1.7.3 Chapter Four – Research findings

1.7.4 Chapter Five - Discussion of results

I intend to foreground how academic leadership and management specifically are affected by global changes. The subsequent chapter is thus an in-depth review of the literature on management and leadership in higher education and the effects of globalisation, such as technology, on this field, both locally and globally.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Higher education in South Africa

For the purposes of contextualizing higher education in South Africa, I believe it imperative to provide a short historical background to the birth of this prominent and budding sector.

The inception of higher education in South Africa

According to Sehoole (2006, p.6), "The foundations of university education [in South Africa] were laid in the second and third quarters of the 19th century; the first of these institutions was the South African college, which opened in Cape Town in 1829." Kruss (2005, p.265), points out that this private institution was an "initiative of the elite". This institution and the institutions that followed were modeled after European universities, geared to meet the needs of the Europeans newly settled in South Africa at that time. White minority rule was a feature of the old South African regime, which severely disadvantaged the black majority, resulting in a racially divided higher education sector, with separate institutions for different race groups; „white' institutions being the better funded (by government), better resourced and therefore the most „able' to conduct and generate research. Thus, as Sehoole (2006, p.9) points out, "Long before apartheid was adopted as official policy in 1948, racial segregation had long been practised in South African public life and institutions."

Democracy was realised in 1994, allowing students of all race groups access to institutions of higher education. The new democratic government aimed at strengthening the higher education sector through the use of policies and regulations such as the 1996 National Commission on Higher Education, the 1997 Higher Education Act and the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education. This restructuring resulted in mergers of most of the public institutions of higher education and finally produced the three types of public institutions in existence today: „traditional' research-focused universities, universities of technology (previously known as technikons) and

universities that combine academic and vocationally oriented education. Sehoole (2006, p.1) says that, "Since the election of the post-apartheid government in 1994, South African higher education has been undergoing changes to rid itself of its apartheid past." Sanctions against South Africa had been lowered and the „outside' world was looking to once again invest in and trade with South Africa. This led to efforts to develop various sectors of the economy, and skills development became a national priority.

The demand for access to higher education grew significantly after 1994, and with these increased numbers of applicants and rapid expansion of enrolment figures in public institutions, growth in the private sector was substantial. The steady and expedient expansion of the private sector was due to the public institutions being unable to handle the sudden influx of students.

2.1.1   The private sector and its current function in the Higher Education system in South Africa

Private institutions of higher education were and still are regrettably thought of in a negative light due to several „fly-by-night' institutions, which, with their short existence, and the offering of qualifications that were not recognised in terms of their quality and usefulness in the workplace, brought about the disrepute of this sector. However, a quality assurance system was introduced in 2004 under the responsibility of the Council for Higher Education (CHE), which is the statutory advisory board to the government, responsible for overseeing and regulating both the private and public institutions. Through their implementation of policies and regulations for the purposes of quality assurance, institutions have since been required to adhere to a complex dual process of registration with the Department of Education (DOE) and the seeking of accreditation from the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) accredits programme offerings of all institutions of higher education in South Africa. The impact that the applied regulations have had on institutions in the private sector, particularly the one at which I am currently employed, has been the establishment of extremely rigid policies that need to be adhered to in the daily tasks that are performed by an administrative manager. The amount of „red tape' and the bureaucratisation of processes in administrative tasks have been employed to ensure

that, as a registered provider, stringent quality standards are maintained and the programmes offered by the institution are done so in an ethical manner. Therefore, in my role, I am required to be a „policy follower' and strictly comply with the policies and procedures determined by upper management, to maintain the values and ethics of a registered higher education provider in the private sector in South Africa. However, the damage caused by the existence of „fly-by-night' institutions to the private higher education sector's reputation and credibility in the South African market, has made it difficult for the private sector to shed this image; and I find myself often and unsuccessfully defending both the institution at which I am employed (despite it being a legitimate and fully registered one) and my policy-heavy practice, with colleagues at public higher education institutions.

Registered private higher education providers have a well-defined and sustainable niche and play a „demand-absorption' role in the current market. According to Fehnel (2004, p.368), private higher education serves as "additional access to higher education" in South Africa, and describes its role as "meeting the growing needs of human resource needs in areas that are critical to national development." By providing high-quality qualifications, well-resourced facilities and learning spaces for students, private providers have earned the respect and trust of their prospective „customers'. In recent years, the private sector of higher education institutions in South Africa has grown significantly. According to Varghese (2009, p.3), "Private higher education is one of the fast expanding segments of higher education in Africa. South Africa has the largest number of private higher education institutions", which has resulted in South Africa becoming a country where higher education is not a luxury but an expectation of all school-leavers, an idea that Marginson and Mollis (2001) discuss as a "transition from elite to mass provision". Subotsky (2003, p.23) points out that "The expansion of private higher education is a global phenomenon, generated on the one hand by the social demand for better, different and more higher education and on the other hand by the increasing penetration of the market into higher education provision. South Africa is no exception." Teferra and Altbach (2004, p.32) propose possible reasons for this, suggesting that "Private for-profit higher learning institutions provide high demand and relatively low cost, skill-based courses rather quickly. These institutions are free from

obligations that constrain other public institutions whose responsibilities span across wider and broader national objectives." Schwartzman (2002, p.9) confirms this by saying that "The main function of higher education institutions should be to educate the generations that go through their benches, and an excessive concern to respond to pressing needs that are the responsibility of governments and specialized agencies, can lead them to risk losing sight of their core responsibilities."

2.2 Trends and changes in South African higher education
2.2.1 Diversity and Culture

South Africa is a country inhabited by a wide array of nationalities, race groups and cultures. With eleven official languages and a rich cultural heritage, institutions of higher education have had to adapt to a changing landscape. Public higher education institutions have embraced this, imbibing the spirit of diversity and proudly demonstrating their unique South African footprint on their campuses, in their logos and their general approaches to providing students of higher education a truly South African student experience. „Diversity' and all related terms have become the nomenclature of South African life.

For students and academic staff of higher education in South Africa, this means cultivating a greater awareness, tolerance and acceptance of people from different backgrounds in our daily lives. As an academic manager, I have used this as a learning experience, to broaden my knowledge of the country and build on skills required to work with a diverse student body and colleagues. Van den Bergh (2008, p.7) confirms this notion by saying that "The world is in many senses becoming smaller and the boundaries between people, countries and cultures are becoming more and more diffuse. Traditional management approaches are often no longer sufficient to ensure success in intercultural interactions and in multicultural work teams." Kenny (2009, p.630) points out that "in the modern environment, academics deal with a greater diversity of students."

Knowledge economy and research quality

Globalisation has made possible the breaking down of barriers and the connecting of institutions globally, thereby facilitating the process of knowledge-sharing, producing new opportunities for graduates of higher education institutions and placing values on what Singh and Papa (2011, p.6) term, "global learning." This has placed pressure on institutions of higher education worldwide, as well as those in South Africa, to create a sustained knowledge-producing economy. Carnoy and Rhoten (2002, p.1-2) points out that "Globalisation is a force reorganizing the world's economy, and the main resources for that economy are increasingly knowledge and information." Teichler (2003, p.171) believes that "Higher education provides knowledge to students today who will make use of it in the coming three to four decades, and it might generate new knowledge with potential to shape the world of tomorrow." Wood (2011, p.1) says that "Today, possessing knowledge and having ability to use knowledge in a world-wide arena is critical to personal and societal advancement. Likewise, having a skilled and globally focused workforce is perhaps the most important ingredient to any organisation's competitiveness in a world where competitors can come from next door or around the world." Knowledge is critical to economic growth and knowledge production has therefore made every institution of higher education worldwide an international village, with a vibrant intellectual learning community. "Knowledge", according to McCaffery (2004, p.11), "is more than simply information or access to it. It is about how and why we access it, how we make sense of it and how we engage critically with it. In essence, knowledge is about understanding." Greater emphasis has been placed on research efforts through ventures at my own institution, which are in line with this notion, such as annual teaching and learning conferences that are intended to encourage the production of research and the sharing of research findings with other academic staff involved in teaching and learning. It is anticipated that through these efforts, knowledge-sharing of innovative research can help maintain our local and global competitiveness and make a greater contribution to a more effective knowledge economy. Despite both the local and worldwide efforts to increase access to knowledge, and to create knowledge, what is less clearly focused on is how quickly knowledge becomes outdated, so much so, that the knowledge students acquire and engage with in their

years of study at tertiary level, may be rendered completely redundant by the time they enter the job market.

2.2.2   The role of technology

Technology's role in the world today has had an immense impact on the way every aspect of life functions; technology has fundamentally changed the way we live and the way we do things, both in our social and professional spheres. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have virtually transformed the way we connect with each other and ultimately, the way we pursue and maintain social relationships. This innovation has had an immense impact on the way institutions of higher education connect with their students and has profoundly changed relations within professional spheres. The current student profile includes a generation of students that are techno-savvy. Recognition of this characteristic has led to various methods of communicating with students on our campus, for example, such as sms or instant messaging (not all students have the same calibre of mobile phone but every student on our campus has a basic mobile phone that features as their primary source of attaining up-to-date information from the campus and the world) and email (students check email on their mobile phones).   Kleinglass (2005, p.27) confirms that, "today's college students consider the Internet an indispensable tool for their educational experience and demonstrate the impact of technology each day by using technology tools to communicate with family, friends, and college professors." While I believe that technology has had far more positive influence on the world than negative, technology in higher education in particular, has sadly reduced ‚face-to-face' communication. This is certainly evident in the use of email and instant messaging, that have quickly come to replace the much craved face-to-face approach that is missing from customer-oriented or student-focused environments.

Learning spaces that include wireless internet on campus are an example of how institutions of higher education, including the one at which I am currently employed, have adapted to suit students' needs in a rapidly developing technologically-dominated world. Other examples include an academic management system or student portal that provides online access to student academic results, course timetables, student financial

statements, academic notes, messages from lecturers and other administrative staff, access to an online academic calendar and additional material available online. These are just a few of the technological resources implemented in the past few years to accommodate the changing student profile and the resultant global technology revolution. In light of this revolution however, even traditional teaching and learning practices and lecture room visuals have now been replaced by for example, power point presentations; technology, which I, as a student myself, find cold and distancing. In academic administration however, using technological resources to communicate with my students in my daily tasks and responsibilities is beneficial to me as I believe that this has enabled faster and more efficient communication with my students - communication being a key element in my position as head of department and in my relationship with students. Lowery (2004, p.91) says that "there is value in this type of communication…institutions can also take advantage of students' comfort with this type of technology to help make connections on campus." Kleinglass (2005, p.25) also believes that, "new dimensions are being created by the driving force of technology."

Technology in its advancement has made the world more efficient and resourceful through faster communication or instant knowledge exchange, making information older than twenty-four hours redundant. This has resulted in people in almost every field having to function at „superhuman' speed. The „superhuman' powers one needs to possess to not only succeed but also „exist' are astounding and these „powers' that administrative managers in higher education need in particular, are inconceivable. McCaffery (2004, p.283), when discussing management in academia, mentions the term "busy manager syndrome", which describes the pace at which academic managers work, in order to meet their countless deadlines. The impact of technology on administrative managers' roles, particularly, has meant a reshaping of our daily work structures and a massive adjustment of timelines assigned to various tasks. The following extract outlines the technological changes and its effects on higher education in particular.

The advent of the Internet has given rise to a widespread belief that the very definition of knowledge is about to change. We once viewed knowledge as a body of learning lodged in books and journals and governed by groups of credentialed specialists. Now, computer networks make a vast panoply of digitized information instantaneously accessible to anyone and everyone. To some observers, user participation, mass collaboration, and reliance on the „wisdom of crowds' suggest that virtual communities will challenge experts for the power to create and define knowledge. This democratization of information promises to fulfil longstanding prophecies of a „knowledge society' in which knowledge-producing capacities are far more widely distributed among organizations and individuals than in the past.

Such changes have coincided with a broader set of societal trends. Talk of „knowledge work', „cities of knowledge', and the „knowledge economy' reflects the relocation of many knowledge-producing capacities outside of universities and into zones of private enterprise. Economists now track the movement of knowledge through and among corporations and measure its impact on economic productivity with increasing precision. Management experts seek to harness the talents of knowledge workers roaming among firms in search of lucrative and personally fulfilling employment. Sociologists document the informal networks of skill and expertise that these workers spontaneously create. Meanwhile, universities, the traditional bastions of knowledge production, feel pulled in two directions. As research-driven anchors of the knowledge economy, they enjoy commanding influence in channelling new inventions, new workers, and new skills into the private sector, particularly in the science and technology fields. But at the same time they suffer from increasing incoherence in their mission as providers of higher education.

McNeely (2009, p.335)

One of the most distinctive experiences about working in higher education today is how different areas, such as teaching and learning and academic administration, have had to adjust, to suit the current student profile, the immediate environment, and the world in constant flux. The role of technology and the consumer culture in service delivery has led to institutions of higher education becoming more competitive in the market. The ever-changing world is credit to various trends, one of them being globalisation, which has resulted in advanced technology that has changed the way businesses function and has impacted on the mindsets of the general population. Education, and the way it is presented and offered, is vastly different to a decade ago, when I was a full-time student of hospitality. Both educators and managers alike now have to contend with an ever-evolving student body. Having the opportunity to embrace both these roles (educator and administrator) has motivated an in-depth enquiry into the management and leadership arena. My quest to further understand myself within the current higher education setting, homes in on McCaffery's (2004, p.73) thoughts on leadership – "If individuals are to be effective leaders, then they must, in the first instance, understand both themselves and the particular context in which they operate. And this is as true for prospective leaders and managers in HE as it is for aspirants in other environments." Understanding myself in relation to my environment has been both extremely useful for this particular study and imperative for my professional development. I have examined the campus at which I work as the „particular context' that McCaffery refers to, and have realized that the student profile that I referred to earlier and work with currently, is one that is generally more demanding in terms of requiring immediate information or immediate feedback to requests and enquiries. This self-indulgent, entitled attitude of the new student profile is a „game-changer', in that, new knowledge, fresh approaches and innovative ideas are required, in order to successfully manage and lead this student „type'. This means that management styles have had to change and continuously change, to adapt to and suit this changing student profile. However, I believe that the „entitled student' attitude, adopted by most of our students on campus, is more a characteristic of a private higher education institution rather than a public institution. This is undoubtedly due to private institutions being far more expensive and thus more suited to the affluent. This comes with its unique set of challenges as expectations of

students and parents are higher and there is a constant demand for increased value for their exorbitant course fees. This directly impacts on all aspects of my work as a Head of Department and the work of other staff members (both on campus and at National Office level), who find ourselves „running circles around' the demanding requests imposed on us.

2.3 The effect of globalisation on management and leadership in higher education

Management and Leadership has become one of the fastest growing academic fields in higher education - there is a vast amount of literature in these areas, as well as the effects of globalisation on managers and leaders and many documented challenges which I have engaged with thus far. Jansen, Hansen, Matentjie, Morake, Pillay, Sehoole, and Weber (2007, p.157) point out that the "study of educational change has established itself as a respectable field of inquiry. "Taylor (2006, p.251) says that this change impacts upon both "managers" and "the managed". According to Leaming (2003, p.226), "Leadership is one of the most studied fields; yet, there is so much to learn." I believe that a clarification of the terms, „manager' and „leader' are critical, before we move any further in this discussion. The distinction between a manager and a leader, according to Batista-Taran, Shuck, Gutierrez and Baralt (2009, p.15), is that a manager "creates order and consistency"; while a leader "produces change and motivates employees." These are useful descriptions, as I believe that the term „manager' is used to describe someone who adopts a specific, rule-oriented approach to the corporate model and a leader inspires others through their broader vision. My interest in this area stems from my current experience as a Head of Department, a position that is solely administrative in nature. As an administrator, I believe that I am able to (and sometimes have to) adopt characteristics of both a manager and a leader, as it is essential to my department and to the people that work in it. Ramsden (1998, p.106) points out that "The department chair has to be a good leader in order to run an effective department."

Leadership is a broad term and concept – the essence of which means different things to different people. An interesting view of „leadership' is offered by Harris (2009, p.10) who says that "Leadership can emanate from those without formal title or role" as leadership is "primarily about influence and change." From the varied views, it is evident that the terms „leadership' and „leader' are context-based and will differ across organisations. In institutions of higher education, the term „academic leadership' is used to describe faculty heads, department chairs or heads of department, educational or academic administrators etc. These positions all play a vital role in the academic leadership of an educational institution. Yielder and Codling (2004, p.319) propose that "The academic leadership role and the management role require aspects of "leadership", which in this sense is not something that can be written into a job description as a "function." This is in line with my view that leadership cannot be taught or learnt, but is rather an intrinsic characteristic that can be further developed through experience. According to Strathe and Wilson (2006, p.15), "Academic leadership is not at the end of a pathway; rather it is in the middle – a place to which one goes to and comes from." Morris and Miller (2008, p.10) adds that "The skills needed for leadership are no different in higher education than they are in business." "Leadership is a skill that is learned through experience and training" (p.17).

The effects of globalisation on organizational structures in higher education and, subsequently, the effects on the roles of managers and leaders, have become a significant part of literature. Whitchurch (2008, p.377), makes the point that "As higher education institutions have expanded and diversified to meet the demands of contemporary environments, so too have their workforces, and in particular, their professional staff." Yielder and Codling (2004, p.315) say that "The management and leadership of tertiary education institutions have been the subject of increasing uncertainty as institutions have grappled with the profound external changes that influence the way they function." The implications of a changing environment on academic identities is an area discussed in-depth in the literature (Henkel, 2000; Becher and Trowler, 2001; Kirp, 2007; Barnett and di Napoli, 2008; Bosetti, Kawalilak, Patterson, 2008) and is of greatest relevance to me presently. The role of Head of Department places me in an administrative space within a commercially driven

environment that imposes bureaucratic restraints on me within this role, through its policy-heavy culture. This is guided by the drive to improve profitability rather than develop an academic discipline or provide academic leadership to students, although there has been an emerging recognition of the need to take care of students more holistically. The concept of revenue versus educational values is intertwined in private higher education institutions and this is where I feel the direct impact of globalization on my role – the confines of the academic office and the heavy administrative workload erodes the time I could be spending engaging with students more. Instead, my time with students is inhibited, resulting in short and sometimes even impersonal exchanges; a far cry from the level of engagement I crave and find so rewarding. Fletcher (2007, p.303) says that "The role of the educational professional is continuing to evolve as a result of the impact of globalisation and educational policies introduced and being introduced to accommodate the needs of educational provision within a global market."

Since the term „globalisation' refers both to global processes and outcomes, there has been considerable confusion around this contested concept (McCaffery, 2004). Having engaged with an extensive number of texts on, and encountered various definitions of, globalisation, my basic understanding of this concept is that it is the internalisation of production and consumption, resulting in powerful forces of change that impact every other sphere of life. According to Cheng (2001, p.8), globalisation is the "transfer, adaptation and development of values, knowledge, technology, and behavioural norms across countries and societies in different parts of the world." She lists characteristics of this „phenomenon' as "growth or global networking (e.g. Internet, world-wide e-communication, and transition portation), global transfer and interflow in technological, economic, social, political, cultural, and learning aspects, international alliances and competitions, international collaboration and exchange, global village, multi-cultural integration, and use of international standards and benchmarks". These universal change driving forces that have resulted in global transformation have not spared South Africa (Mapuva, 2010; Marginson, 2007) and its results are a shift from collegialism to managerialism (Parker and Wilson, 2002). This „shift' is a reality I contend with on a daily basis and have found (and still find), the most challenging part of my role as Head

of Department. The impact of this shift can be felt in the constant tug-of-war between maintaining educational values and improving the bottom line.

Many issues on globalisation and its effects on higher education management and leadership have emerged, one of the issues being the rapidly changing world, which has inevitably affected higher education in the form of market demands on the curriculum of higher education qualifications. A result of this issue is frustration and angst among management in higher education, both locally and globally. Whitchurch (2004, p.1), Jo (2008, p.1) and Grummell, Devine and Lynch (2009, p.2) discuss the commercialisation of universities and the frustrations of teaching and non-teaching staff (management) at tertiary level, who are required to juggle administrative and managerial responsibilities in this ever-changing environment. Experiences of managers caught in the midst of these changes are described at length in their work. The changing face of management in universities and colleges, both in the public and private sector is highlighted throughout their articles. According to Whitchurch (2004), Jo (2008) and Grummell *et al* (2009), managers' key performance areas have changed drastically, as have tasks that managers are required to complete as part of their new or changing roles.

As a result of globalisation, enhancing the „student experience' has been prioritised (Small, 2008) and academic work is "changing and fragmenting". (Blackmore and Blackwell, 2006, p.373). Winter (2009, p.123) says that, "As universities shed their collegiate skins and take on more corporate customer-focused suits, academics are being called upon to „operate within more open and contested arenas', not to rely on assumed rights, and get used to managing a „greater variety of relationships within and beyond the academic world' (Henkel, 2000). Blackmore and Blackwell (2006, p.375) point out that "many faculty feel they carry an unreasonable burden because they are required to be increasingly expert in teaching, research, administration and a range of other duties simultaneously." According to Gordon and Whitchurch (2007, p.139), "Globalisation has changed individual expectations and work styles - approaches to work and working life are changing." Zulu (2007, p.39) confirms this by saying that "Today, the new demands placed upon academic managers require that they combine

intellectual competence with the managerial ability of corporate executives." Winter's notion of institutions having to "shed their collegiate skins" is indicative of my experiences as Head of Department, where the workload demands have continuously increased and become more diverse. It has been extremely frustrating to experience, as inevitably, all changes have fallen and continue to fall on the shoulders of the Heads of Department, who are lumped with greater responsibilities and duties, adding to an already overworked schedule.

Schwartzman (2002, p.9) poses some thought-provoking questions, which lay the platform for the discussion on how globalisation has influenced the institutions of higher education: "What are the new realities and opportunities to which higher education institutions have to face and respond? The usual answer is to mention the requirements of the "knowledge economy" (Pillay, 2011, p.3) or "knowledge society" (McCaffery, 2004, p.12) and globalisation. What are, more precisely, the knowledge requirements of the knowledge economy, and how can higher education institutions respond to globalisation? What are the possible roles of public and private higher education to meet these requirements? Varghese (2011, p.9) highlights this concept by saying that, "Globalisation, technological changes, the rise of the knowledge economy, and changing skill requirements in the labour market seem to influence changes in the landscape of higher education worldwide."

The impact of globalisation on the field of education has been widely discussed both locally and globally and has been the emphasis of countless conferences, seminars, academic articles and has even been included in the curricula of various programmes, in recent years. Bloom (2002, p.2), implies that globalisation is "making higher education more important than ever before and that higher education, in turn, can be a vital tool for helping developing countries to benefit from globalisation." He states that "globalisation has been facilitated by these advances in information and communications technology, which, coupled with the increasingly refined international division of labour, have meant that new ideas are quickly brought to fruition and new technologies developed, and superseded, more rapidly than at any other time in history." Batista-Taran, Shuck, Gutierrez and Baralt (2009, p.15) says that, "Due to

globalisation, companies are changing their structure and competing in a bigger arena. Over the years, these organisations have changed their views and have added employee development and performance management as a strategic business priority to set them apart from their competition."

Globalisation has impacted on other areas of higher education as well, such as the operations of a higher education institution and the way higher education is viewed. Tierney (2007, p.1) says that, "A social activity such as education has no borders: students are able to take classes virtually anywhere in the world – in person or online. Relatedly, the second trend pertains to technology and how it impacts the academic institution… A college or university is less of a physical place today. Technology has been a central engine of globalisation and it will continue to transform how we think about teaching, learning, and research. These notions are confirmed by Mapuva (2010, p.391), who states that, "This borderless world is typically referred to as the global village where distance and space disappear." Changes, effected by the onset of globalisation, according to Kwiek (2001, p.31), "requires a totally new language". Fletcher (2007, p.304) proposes that, "Globalisation and education needs to be viewed as a whole unit and not as a member state joining another state and being part of an economic community."

One of globalisation's many effects has resulted in changed perceptions of higher education, which Wood (2005, p.345) calls a "higher education factory", and what Van der Walt, Bolsmann, Johnson and Martin (2002, p.11) term "university marketization". This is largely due to higher education being increasingly viewed by students, parents and the general public as „goods' which they purchase and teaching as a „service' that is provided to these „consumers'(Potts, 2005; Melewar and Akel, 2006; Sarrico, Rosa, Teixeira and Cardoso, 2010; Flavell, Jones and Ladyshewsky, 2008). Bearing this thought in mind, the higher education „industry', both locally and globally, is thus able to accommodate larger numbers of students than ever before, changing its very nature and function. Marginson and Mollis (2001, p.12) provide a sharp overview of this and point out that "Globalisation has immense implications for education." One of these implications that they discuss is how drastically the "world-wide number of foreign

students has grown. Online education, crossing national borders, hastens the cultural inter-penetration of nations and education institutions." The transition from elite to mass provision resulting in fierce competition among institutions is also evident. The concept of Wood's (2005, p.345) "higher education factory" echoes my angst around the consequences of the „swiftly pushing students through the system' dilemma, which I elaborate on, later in the study.

Another emerging and highly debated issue is „academic capitalism', which is described by Ntshoe, Higgs, Higgs and Wolhuter (2008, p.395) as the „impact of global markets on higher education institutions.' "Do universities exist simply to meet the needs of modern capitalism…?" asks Morley (2001, p.132). Taylor (2006, p. 271) offers an opposing view and describes the embracing of such changes by stating that „the emergence of more professional management, both within academic positions and in administrative services was warmly welcomed.' This response indicates that there are mixed views on the effects of change on management and their roles in higher education institutions, that have surfaced from the literature reviewed thus far, in particular, the academic administrator.

Ntshoe *et al* (2008, p.392) says that "The higher education sector has undergone significant changes in recent years due to the influences of global competition, new managerialism, neo-liberalism ideologies, and these changes are likely to influence higher education well into the twenty-first century." These changes have directly impacted on the roles of management in institutions of higher education in South Africa. The reactions and attitudes of management towards these changing management roles in higher education, features in the study to follow, as I plan to explore both the challenges and benefits of being a manager in an institution of higher education in the present day. The insights achieved by reviewing this literature have broadened my knowledge of the current issues, arguments and opposing views on the changing face of higher education, and the most affected individuals – managers, academics and leaders.

Within the conceptual framework of globalisation and capitalism and the impact of these concepts on higher education (such as global competition and the increasing demand for higher education), the terms „new managerialism' and „academic capitalism' have emerged and are defined by Ntshoe *et al* (2008, p.394) as „changes to the type of work done by academics' and „changes in organizational and management practices'. Global competition and the increasing demand for higher education have resulted in significant changes to the academic profession in the twenty-first century due to globalisation and its effects. According to Carnoy (2005, p.3), globalisation is "driving a revolution in the organization of work, the production of goods and services, relations among nations and even local culture." He believes that the two main bases of globalisation are "information" and "innovation", and that these are "knowledge intensive". He further states that, "If knowledge is fundamental to globalisation", then "globalisation should also have a profound impact on the transmission of knowledge." Fletcher (2007, p.306), argues that, "When considering the impact of globalisation upon the educational professional, the management of knowledge has introduced the notion of „intellectual capital'. This capital places the educational profession within a global market that must now trade through a new form of currency – education." This has placed even greater pressure on the educational profession and has brought about a fundamental change that has increased managerial responsibility.

Wood (2011, p.1) poses the following questions, in view of the debate on globalisation and its influence on higher education: "What are institutions of higher education doing to create an environment that nurtures promising individuals and allows future knowledge to compete globally? How are institutions responding to the needs of students, faculty and their communities such that each has the ability to prosper in the interconnected milieu of the 21st century? Do the leaders of such institutions profess a common body of thought, wisdom or insights with respect to higher education and globalisation?" The effects of globalisation on higher education in South Africa in particular are a fundamental focus in my study, and I will respond to these questions and discuss the effects of globalisation on my role specifically.

One of the effects of globalisation is higher education's move to develop a business ethos and emulate values and ethics of the corporate world. As Molesworth (2009, p.285) proposes, "The role of the university is driven by market desires" and "increasingly intense global competition in higher education activities." (Havas, 2009, p.426). This is a useful framework for my study as this concept can be adopted in my discussion of my experiences of working in an environment that is not built on educational values alone, but one that is market-relatable and adaptable to change in the external environments, such as the economy. These factors directly impact on my own values and role in the current higher education environment, and are therefore an essential part of my autoethnographic study. Teferra and Altbach (2004, p.34) describe the "emergence of private higher education as a business enterprise", as a "growing phenomenon." This statement is pertinent to my position, as my experience thus far has been gained in the private sector specifically. Although the development of institutions as business enterprises is manifest in the public sector, it is far more evident in the private sector. Naidoo and Jamieson (2005, p.270) highlight this view by pointing out that "The student-consumer thus emerges as the focus of competition and a modernizing force that will bring about increased efficiency, diversity and flexibility to the higher education sector."

Geiger (2006, p.71) points out that "academic knowledge is cumulative, an incremental contribution, which should be grounded on previous work in the field. To offer anything new to the field, one must know what is already there. Hence, knowing the literature in the field is not a perfunctory exercise, but a fundamental feature of academic knowledge."

The term internationalization has also become a key concept in higher education today. Sehoole (2006, p.2) says that "internationalization has become an important issue in the development of higher education." Teferra and Altbach (2004, p.25) says that, "In virtually all African countries, demand for access to higher education is growing, straining the resources of higher education institutions. Students have had to be admitted into institutions originally designed for fewer students and enrolments have escalated." This could be accredited to higher education becoming a necessity rather

than a privilege, as it was in previous years. The increased demand has prompted the sprouting of the private higher education sector, especially in South Africa, to accommodate the growing number of students entering the higher education sector, making it a financially viable „business', with a continued promise of potential „customers' currently and in years to come. The rapid growth of the higher education sector has ushered in change and new challenges.

A common body of literature exists on challenges faced by heads of department in the academic arena in the present day. These challenges include universal changes brought about by capitalism and technology; the lack of training and support provided to heads of department in educational institutions worldwide to cope with these changes and the uniqueness of challenges faced by heads of department in either private or public higher education institutions. Smith and Hughey (2006), Potgieter, Basson and Coetzee (2011) and Wolverton and Ackerman (2006) discuss the countless challenges faced by the world of higher education, due to the technological and cultural revolution consequent to globalisation. Potgieter *et al* (2011) discuss the specific effects this has had on the roles and responsibilities of heads of department. Cutler (2008), Whitsett (2007), Stanley and Algert (2007), Morris and Miller (2008) and Slowey (1995) make the point that while department heads are a vital and vibrant part of the leadership in an academic institution, they are often taken for granted and are rarely given formal management training, instruction or acknowledgement. This reality confirms that while the responsibilities of academic managers and leaders in higher education institutions grow, the demands and skills needed for these roles are also on the rise. Although there is a vast amount of literature in this area already, perhaps future research could look at what can be or is being done to support and „up skill' department heads by bridging the gap between institutional expectations and their current skill sets.

Another highly researched area is the role of the head of department, which has been described as misunderstood and underestimated, in terms of the unrealistically heavy workloads and the introduction of a range of tasks expected to be completed in limited time, as a result of global changes such as internationalization. The academic leader is among the most misunderstood management positions in the modern world (Gmelch,

2004; Napier, 1996; Morris and Miller, 2008) and the academic department chairship in particular, is unique and challenging as this position requires that both the faculty and administration camps be embraced. Morris and Miller (2008, p.16) says that "With the many responsibilities that are requested of department heads, stress and burnout are issues they face on a regular basis." Stress initiated by the unreasonable expectations imposed on me and other heads of department in my institution by the bureaucratic structure has come to be a characteristic of the head of department role. I find myself inundated with numerous spreadsheets, detailing budgets and profit, in addition to the daily requirements of managing an academic department. I have a continuous feeling of „being pulled in all directions' and this has sadly become the norm of the job, intensified by the greater push towards the commercialisation of private higher education institutions.

In the chapter to follow, I will discuss my research questions and objectives and how these have guided and shaped the methods I have employed and subsequently the design of this research study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

With the study's focus on a singular perspective, elements of Kolb's (1984) and Gibb's (1988) models of reflection, as well as more contemporary research, such as Moon (1999a) and (1999b), will form the reflective framework which will guide this study. Common features of these frameworks include the stages of „having an experience', „reflecting on the experience' and „learning from the experience' – these are the elements that will form the working framework that will assist me in analyzing my data. I believe that in order to learn something valuable from an experience, one has to navigate through the stages. We have to consciously think about our experiences and examine them, then reflect and make sense of them, in order to be able to use or apply what we've learnt from the experiences for present and future actions. Moon (1999b, p.63) lists possible outcomes of reflection as "critical review" and "self-development", which are the ultimate goals of this autoethnographic study.

3.2 Research questions

1. How have my experiences as an educator and administrative manager in higher education shaped my role and influenced my practice?

2. How will the practice of self-reflection contribute to my role, experiences and overall professional development?

3.3 Objectives of the study

My objectives include self-development within the role of Head of Department, through the process of self-reflection, as well as being able to provide other administrative managers in the field of higher education, both locally and globally, an opportunity to gain exposure and an in-depth understanding of my experiences and subsequently to share their stories (through the rare genre of autoethnography) on a platform that this study is contributing to. The process of self-reflection will be pivotal in my exploration

and deeper understanding of my role within a private higher education context. Self-reflection is critical to the process of „self-understanding', which I hope to attain, in order to improve in my role as Head of Department. Leaming (2003, p.1) describes self-understanding as a "lifetime process, ongoing, recursive and flexible." Maydell (2010, p.2) adds that "It may come as only natural to employ various theoretical concepts and arguments in order to better understand the nature of self-engagement with a research topic. It seems that for an autoethnographic project, as an ultimate study of self, it is quite appropriate to engage with deep philosophical questions of the nature of self and the position of self in relation to others."

The study is set within the conceptual framework of globalisation and the impact of globalisation on higher education. I believe that this is crucial to my study as global competition and the increasing demand for higher education have resulted in significant changes to the academic profession in the twenty-first century. The impact of globalisation on higher education in South Africa is a fundamental topic in my study, and I will discuss the effects of globalisation on my role specifically.

3.4 Research design and methodology

This study lends itself to the postmodern paradigm as the research is exploratory and based on reflective practice and narrative inquiry, which Trahar (2009, p.4), regards as the "most appropriate methodological approach, because I was investigating meanings of experiences but, at the same time, the research process itself was a series of experiences, a journey." Despite the limited research in existence on heads of department functioning in private higher education institutions in South Africa, I will attempt to strengthen this particular field, using autoethnography as a methodology. Autoethnography as a research method is self-focused and context-conscious. According to Keefer (2010, p.207), "Autoethnography is increasingly used as a research method of inquiry, pushing the qualitative boundaries by focusing on a phenomenon in the life of the researcher as the central aspect of study." As Wall (2006, p.146) affirms, „Autoethnography is grounded in postmodern philosophy and is linked to growing debate about reflexivity and voice in social research.' Austin and Hickey (2007, p.2), proposes that "it has really been with the unfolding of the postmodern era and the

ascendancy of the tenets of post-structuralist theory that the power of the individual, the significance of the "new" evidentiary sources and forms of representation and the settling in of identity as the lynchpin of socio-cultural research that accompanied these that has brought the new ethnographies into prominence and relevance." Maher and Tetreault (2001, p.22) believe that, "Postmodern thinkers have seen knowledge as valid when it takes into account the knower's specific position in any context." Starr (2010, p.4) says that, "As a qualitative research method, autoethnography is more firmly rooted in the postmodern where the individual's study of one's self within a culture replaces the researcher-as-observer stance present in more traditional ethnoghraphic forms." Wall (2008, p.39) proposes that "Emerging from postmodern philosophy, in which the dominance of traditional science and research is questioned and many ways of knowing and inquiring are legitimated, autoethnography offers a way of giving my voice to personal experience to advance sociological understanding."

Autoethnographies are a fairly new genre in the world of academic research and are therefore highly controversial in terms of accepted academic research and practice. According to Wall (2006, p.2), "the research community is relatively comfortable with the concept of reflexivity, in which the researcher pauses for a moment to think about how his or her presence, standpoint, or characteristics might have influenced the outcome of the research process." However, new methods, such as autoethnography, which Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011, p.1) describe as both "process and product" and which Wall (2008, p.38) describes as "intriguing" and "promising", are founded on postmodern ideas, which "challenge the value of token reflection that is often included as a paragraph in an otherwise neutral and objectively presented manuscript." Despite these notions, there is still a lack of this type of research study, where the researcher's experiences serve as the data in the study. Hayler (2010, p.7) says that "autoethnography has increasingly become the term of choice for a range of methods of research, analysis and writing that employ personal experience as a way of investigating and understanding the sub-cultures and the wider cultures of the societies we live and work within." Atkinson (2000, p.327) believes that, "Theorists and others challenge us to rethink our approach to both education and research, and to question

the certainty with which to set out to seek the truth." These ideas are in keeping with Hart's (2004, p.31) belief that postmodernism is a "celebration of difference."

The value and authenticity of the data being the researcher's own experiences, rather than analytical, numerical data, has been questioned in various sources on the topic. Hayler (2010, p.5) points out that, "As more traditional research approaches and notions of knowledge are questioned and sometimes perceived as less-reliable or less-certain than they once were, there has been a growing interest in and support for the study and examination of one's own experience as an empowering way of examining and learning about constructions of identity." The „power' of the autoethnographic method is thus fitting for this purpose. Although I have encountered a few autoethnographies in the field of education, as far as I am aware, autoethnographies specific to the field of private higher education in South Africa are uncommon. I therefore find it beneficial to capture this journey that I am on, so that I may reflect and consequently grow, professionally, as well as in a personal capacity. This is founded on the notion that there is a direct link between reflective writing and the development of critical thinking (Cise, Wilson and Thie, 2004). I also feel an overwhelming sense of identification with the words of Carolyn Ellis, one of the pioneers of the autoethnographic genre of research. In her 2004 book entitled, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological novel about Autoethnography*, she says "The autoethnographic, reflexive approach as a method of enquiry clicked with something deep inside me" (p.316).

According to Duncan (2004, p.3), "In the 21st century, ethnographic approaches are being acculturated into a postmodern academic world. The desire to discover and make room for the worldview of others suits a postmodern sensitivity, in which no one right form of knowledge exists and multiple viewpoints are acknowledged and valued. Wall (2006, p.1) confirms this by stating that the "essence of postmodernism is that many ways of knowing and inquiring are legitimate and that no one way should be privileged." Wall (2006, p.5), proposes that the "aim of qualitative inquiry is to connect with people on the level of human meaning." Dyson (2004, p.189) says that, "Autoethnography combines the methodology with the writing of the text which explicates the personal story of the writer with the encounters and experiences of the culture in which the study

takes place. It becomes an appropriate approach because the author and the researcher is both an insider and an outsider within the culture that is being documented and the researcher's hand, or voice, is revealed up front." This notion of complete exposure of self, although a bit unnerving, is I believe, beneficial to my professional development and could serve as fundamental to others in industry. I will argue that my own experiences, through reflection, can make a worthwhile contribution to my professional development, as well as to other managers and academic heads in the higher education field.

The term, autoethnography, was coined by anthropologist, Karl Heider in 1975 and has its roots in anthropology. Heider first used this term while studying the Dani people and published an article entitled, "What do people do? Dani Autoethnography" in 1975. Soon thereafter, David Hayano, in 1979, modified the term to refer to cultural studies, where the researcher is a full insider by virtue of being „native' and, as a result, has an intimate familiarity with the group that is being studied. It took many years for the specific term, „autoethnography' to take root, and one of the most definitive and frequently cited books about the topic is Autothenography/Ethnography, published in 1977, edited by Deborah Reed-Danahay. This research method emerged during this postmodern era, where it gained relevance. Ellis (2004, p.50) affirms that reflective writing started in the 1970's, where there was a shift from „…participant observation to observation of the participant.' Reflection in the field of education is an increasingly popular practice, as reflective practice has been identified as a key developmental stage in the area of teaching and learning. Spry (2001, p. 713) believes that „Reflecting on the subjective self in context with others is the scholarly sagaciousness offered by autoethnography.' Connecting the personal self to the social context through autoethnography enhances "the representational richness and reflexivity of qualitative research" (Humphreys, 2005, p. 840). Through autoethnography, the qualitative researcher is able to utilize the non-traditional research practice of telling her or his "relational and institutional stories" in order to reclaim a marginalized and self-reflective space in the research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). One of its core strengths, within an evocative sense, is to have the reader reflect inwards within herself/himself and then move back outwards again to view the experience as ethnography (Ellis, 2004; Humphreys, 2005; Richardson, 2000).

The genre of autoethnography does not exist and thrive without its share of criticisms. Autoethnography has been criticized for being self-indulgent, introspective and individualized (Holt, 2003). Autoethnography as a research practice has risen in popularity over recent years, particularly in providing insightful and illuminative accounts of individuals' experience of traumatic events such as illness, disability, depression and grief. Claims to an empowered sense of self only tell one part of a complex and emotionally draining research process; autoethnography can also provide its author with more questions than answers and leave open-ended or ambiguous conclusions (Pearce, 2010).

Carolyn Ellis, the pioneer of the autoethnography genre of research, together with T.E Adams and A.P Bochner, published an article in 2011, entitled "Autoethnography: An overview", in which they defended the research method, by saying that "Different kinds of people possess different assumptions about the world – a multitude of ways of speaking, writing, valuing and believing – and that conventional ways of doing and thinking about research were narrow, limiting, and parochial. Autoethnography, on the other hand, expands and opens up a wider lens on the world, eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research." Reed-Danahay (1997, p.3), suggests that an autoethnographer is a "boundary-crosser", with a "dual identity". Tompkins (1989, p.32) says that "The personal voice is ridiculed as being soft-minded, self-indulgent and unprofessional whereas the academic voice is exalted as the voice of reason, objectivity and rigor."

Delamont, (2007, p.2) sees texts which focus on the author himself or herself as "entirely pernicious" and "essentially lazy – literally lazy and also intellectually lazy." Autoethnography is antithetical to the progress of social science, because it violates the basic tasks of the social sciences, which are: to study the social world – introspection is not an appropriate substitute for data collection; to move their discipline forward (and, some would argue, change society). Similar views are expressed by Atkinson (2006) who implies that research is supposed to be analytic, not merely experiential; and that autoethnography is all experience and is noticeably lacking in analytic outcome. Maydell (2010, p.8) says that the "insider/outsider dilemma" is one of autoethnography's "many

methodological challenges", while Pathak (2010, p.1) believes that while the process of autoethnography "disrupts the traditional academic voice, it carries with it various pitfalls", which, he believes, include sliding into "memoir, and at worst, narcissm." Roth (2005, p.10), says that autobiography and autoethnography, "could easily lead us into the mires of fuzzy thinking, will-of-the-wisp inspiration and self-congratulatory, feel-good accounts, and lead to ideology, delusion and conceptual blindness". According to Manning (2010, p.11), "other commonly used pejoratives label autoethnography approaches as therapy, fiction, journalism, anti-theoretical and victim art."

Going into this project with these strong criticisms in mind, I still resonate with the benefits of this research method, and like many literature advocates for the method, I am determined to attest the notions made against it. As Pathak (2010, p.1) states, „The process of autoethnography disrupts the traditional academic voice." Starr (2010, p.4) further proposes that, „Because autoethnography revolves around the exploration of self in relation to other and the space created between them, disciplines like education are ripe grounds for autoethnographic study because a social construction of knowledge, identity and culture is inherent."

I will use a semi-structured interview based on literature research, with an organisational development consultant, who is also an academic developer at my current institution, and my „self-appointed' workplace mentor. The interviewer, familiar with the specific Head of Department job description, will design probing interview questions based on these areas in my role that I hope will open up spaces and discussions that I will be able to reflect on in detail. The interview will be conducted by my mentor on campus, who will be the interviewer while I will be the interviewee. Feedback from this interview will be used towards identifying areas of my role, which I plan to use, to self-reflect, for the purposes of this autoethnography. I believe that this interview is crucial to my research endeavour as it will contribute to its validity, and allow me to critically examine my role more effectively. In Carolyn Ellis's interview with Mitch Allen in 2006 on methodological tools in autoethnography, Allen (2006) says that "an autoethnographer must look at experience analytically; otherwise, you're simply telling your story. Why is your story more valid than anyone else's? What makes your story

more valid is that you are a researcher. You have a set of theoretical and methodological tools and a research literature to use. That's your advantage. If you can't frame it around these tools and literature and just frame it as „my story', then why or how should I privilege your story over anyone else's?" Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011, p.6) agree with this view and state that, "autoethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature to analyse experience but also must consider ways others may experience similar epiphanies."

3.5 Limitations

Criticisms by the academic community against autoethnographies as a method of research are common and the use of the *self* as the source of data has been criticized for being self-indulgent and narcissistic (Sparkes, 2000). Sparkes (2000, p.22), further states that "The emergence of autoethnography and narratives of self has not been trouble-free, and their status as proper research remains problematic." According to Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011, p.10-11), "Critics want to hold autoethnography accountable to criteria normally applied to traditional ethnographies or to autobiographical standards of writing." Consequently, autoethnography is dismissed for social scientific standards as being "insufficiently rigorous, theoretical and analytical", not fulfilling scholarly obligations of hypothesizing, analyzing and theorizing." Although I acknowledge both the opposing and supporting views of this method and I am aware of the fact that there are more criticisms against it as opposed to favourable opinions, I endeavor to continue sharing my experiences as an academic manager in the field, which has changed significantly over the past few years. The task of justifying the study will thus be a challenging one. Further to this, the nature of the study's topic lends itself to rich, descriptive data, which will have to be concise, due to the maximum length requirement for this submission. Due to the time constraints I have worked with, various issues that I would have liked to explore further were omitted, an example being the issue of gender in private higher education. I have found this to be a fascinating concept as the senior management of the institution that I am employed currently at is majority female – this is an inverted model in comparison to the management structures in public higher education institutions and perhaps an area for future research and studies.

The study design was also limited by the lack of time - I could have pursued this study through a variety of other research strategies such as narrative enquiry or self-study using different data collection methods. However, due to the time constraints, I was limited to the use of the journal and interview as my primary data sources. Another limitation in the study and one that could be regarded as a conflict of interests was to be interviewed by my mentor at work. Although my mentor has been my confidante and professional champion throughout most of my time as Head of Department, my mentor was still an employee of the institution at the time the interview was conducted. Although all efforts were made on my mentor's part to conduct an authentic interview, the delicate issues that surfaced made me wary of divulging more than I needed to (or would have liked to), for purposes of this study. In hindsight, it would have been more appropriate to have been interviewed by an external person (from another institution), who without a context or historical familiarity, would have enquired or probed to possibly produce different results and data.

3.6 Data design and production (collection)

Only recently did I discover autoethnography and learn more about how writing practices might be transformative and therapeutic for both writers and readers. As a result, for the focus of my dissertation, I chose to use the medium of autoethnography. Autoethnographic studies lend themselves to a qualitative approach to research, as they constitute words as data as opposed to numerical data in quantitative studies for instance. Autoethnographic data provides the researcher a window through which the external world is understood, its intentions are to connect self with others, self with the social and self with context but this does not necessarily mean „self in a vacuum'. Austin and Hickey (2007, p.3), describes the autoethnographic field of research as that of "self in which techniques of data collection and recording are reconfigured to account for this inward investigation of the self." One of the key instruments in my reflection process and used for the purposes of data production is a reflective journal, which I am currently maintaining. The journal will serve as the primary source of data as it encapsulates my experiences through the process of memory recall, which is one of the most powerful tools in an autoethnography and a vital research method in this genre.

Austin and Hickey (2007, p.5) says that "Memory has been described as the fundamental medium of ethnography and is an essential core material for the reflexive processes." In memory work, instead of taking experiences as evidence, Stephenson (2005, p.38) believes that "experience becomes the thing to be investigated. The notions of both memory as a psychological capacity and one's life story as linear, relatively coherent sequence of events are deconstructed." Furthermore, "memory-work is an attempt to work with experience in such a way as to question the connections between experience and selves or subjects, to simultaneously envisage experience as socially produced and amenable to reinterpretation" (p.34). Hayler (2010, p.1) points out that, "while we must live our lives forwards, we can only understand them, and therefore ourselves, backwards. The links between the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves and our own identities seem clear, but the power of narrative memory comes not from precision or accuracy but from how we relate to our constructions and re-constructions of the past." As Dyson (2004, p.193) says, "Herein lies the beauty of this methodology and its unleashed power in education."

Therefore, my data production plan is established on memory recall, experiences, documents such as performance reviews and a professional reflective journal, which I have been diligently maintaining, for the purposes of this study. The notion of memory, although powerful, can also be "fallible", according to Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011, p.9), who further state that "it is impossible to recall or report on events in language that exactly represent how those events were lived and felt". In light of this however, I have implemented the use of a tool such as my reflective journal, to assist with providing as accurate details, as possible. The journal entries are a significant part of the study in terms of the reliability and rigour of events recorded and reflected on, as they have been inputted according to the dates they occurred, leaving little room for inaccuracy in recalling specific details of my memories and events that transpired. According to Boud (2001, p.10), "journal writing is intimately associated with learning and can enhance and promote reflection and reflective practice." Moon (1999a, p.191) describes a common purpose of journal writing as a way to "encourage the development of what is called professional practice." The act of „journalling' is not new to me, I began „journalling' during adolescence - writing down my feelings, thoughts and fears gave me comfort and

meaning during those trying formative years. Through the years, I have continued to write as a form of reflection and perspective, and still do so today. I believe it has been beneficial to my personal and professional development. McCaffery (2004, p.297) uses the term "learning log", to describe the journal I will be using for this study. McCaffery (2004, p.297) says that these personal journals are "underrated" and "underused", but are now recognised by professional bodies as a "powerful means of sustaining professional development", by providing a record of responses to three basic questions: "What did you do?", "What did you learn from it?" and "How might you use this now and in the future?" Hubbs and Brand (2005, p.61-62) describe a reflective journal as a "paper mirror", saying that it is a "vehicle for inner dialogue." They further state that reflective journaling can help one "progress through Kolb's four stages of experiential learning. In stages one and two, the student's journal entry may begin with a description of, and subsequent reflection on a specific experience. In stage three, the student may explore explanations or questions regarding the meaning of the experience. Finally, in stage four, the student concludes the entry by applying new meanings, interpretations, or understandings of the event." Hubbs and Brand (2005, p.62) believe that "reflective journals used in this way create effective learning conditions that can result in the types of meaningful or purposive learning that was put forth by Dewey and Kolb." It is important to note that the reflective journal I used for this study was started before the study began and was initially maintained for a different purpose. The journal served as an outlet for me to vent about my daily frustration and stress, a free and safe escape. The journal contained detailed and uninhibited entries of what I thought and how I felt at the time, about events at work. When I decided on the topic for this study, I discovered that the journal would be a rich data source, and since identifying the journal as such, my entries became somewhat „tamer' or more restrained in nature. I believe that this is due to the idea that data in the journal would be made „public', revealed to the world. Having observed the change in the depth of the entries, an interview as an additional data source was included in the study to supplement the journal data (even though both the journal and the interview data contain common threads.) The journal entries however, remain a powerful illustration of my personal and professional growth through the years. When I read the earlier entries now, with fresh eyes and new perspectives, it

is remarkable to see how those entries, although written from a place of great emotion and expression still resonate with me now and how it will remain a developmental timeline of an evolving practice and a powerful representation of who I was then.

Although the validity and reliability of such sources have been debatable, I maintain that the data employed is for the purpose of my own development and will therefore be authentic and trustworthy. As Smith (2005, p.73) points out, „Autoethnography allowed my personal experiences to become valid data. I was able to research, explore and use a relatively new genre for the purposes for which it was intended.' Given the nature of an autoethnographic study, the self constitutes the field, or as Duncan (2004, p.4) succinctly says, I write, "from my position at the centre of the design enterprise." This autoethnography will expose and explore my beliefs and practices in higher education, and due to the sometimes explicit nature of the data, ethical clearance (Appendix A) was acquired prior to this undertaking. Names of institutions and positions within the institution were changed, in order to exercise discretion. In addition to this, the editor of this study (employed by my institution) was required to adhere to a confidentiality agreement, given the sensitivity of the emerging data. Mizzi (2010, p.9) says that "an encounter can be experienced from various perspectives." Autoethnography helps to "unravel these perspectives in order to understand what is shaping the researcher's practices, anxieties and beliefs." In light of this statement however, my heavy reliance on personal data proved to be awkward, as sensitive details about the issues that surfaced, limited me from divulging excessive details (despite the steps mentioned earlier, to conceal the identity of the institution at which I am currently employed.) I was subconsciously mindful of the study eventually being shared with current employers and colleagues and therefore grappled with the „tellable' from the „safe space' of my journal, of attaining a balance between „too much' or „not enough', bearing in mind throughout this journey, that a level of professionalism and allegiance still and consequently needed to be maintained. Although this may be regarded as a weakness of the autoethnography methodology, through the use of the tools and methods employed (as mentioned earlier in this chapter), I ensured that the fundamental areas of the issues I raised, were brought to the forefront. Although there were several other issues on the Head of Department role and the institution that were raised very strongly throughout

this process, the fundamental areas mentioned earlier, surfaced more often and proved to be more relevant to this study, as they were more focused on the management and leadership elements that warranted further discussion and analysis.

The following chapter will explore the research findings from my data production and collection.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Data production

Although I have engaged in reflective practice and referred to texts for the purposes of this journey, I found it necessary to view my practice through different lenses. I have elected to be interviewed by a respected colleague and mentor at work, who, through this exercise, intended to further develop my understanding of my role, so that I may subsequently reflect on areas that have lay undiscovered until now.

The questions were designed by the interviewer (a teaching and learning specialist on campus), and probes specific (and sometimes sensitive) aspects of my role, which have assisted in opening up discussions on areas that I will reflect on. The experience of the interview has driven my growth and development in the reflective area of my role, as it highlighted certain views that I was unaware of prior to the interview.

In addition to the self-interview, my data sources also include:

- Reflective journals that I have maintained for the purposes of this study, and
- Performance review documentation that is designed to clearly outline development and growth within my role.

Lillis (2008, p.358), states that there is a "strong interest in context in academic writing research, which has led to researchers moving away from a sole focus on the collection and analysis of written academic texts." Denshire (2006, p.10) also proposes that "The contexts that a writer finds herself in necessarily impacts on her writing." The most widely adopted additional method is that of the interview, or more precisely, talk around texts. The interview, consisting of twenty two questions, was conducted on campus and was recorded, using a digital recording device. The transcription of each question and response are attached as an appendix and the subsequent reflections of the areas that emerged from the interview, as well as areas emerging from my journal and performance reviews, are discussed in this chapter. As performance reviews are regarded as official staff development documentation belonging to my institution, these

were not included as an appendix. However, the actual performance review questions have been rephrased and the data has been examined and discussed, for purposes of this study.

4.2 Findings

The interview data, journal entries and probation review were examined, identifying issues or areas that were relevant to this study, the research questions that guided it and its conceptual framework of globalisation. The areas that were identified from the data include the characteristics of an effective manager and leader, the divide in higher education (public and private) and the challenges faced by higher education staff due to globalisation (the role of technology, academic capitalism and increased workloads). Once these categories were identified, the data was examined and reflected upon, using Kolb's (1984) and Gibb's (1988) models of reflection. An example of this process is the analysis and discussion of the thirty-day probation review, which is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. The probation review revealed a gap in my initial understanding of the role of Head of Department and the responsibilities that go with it. The probation review required that I think about my initial experiences in the role – this helped me to recognize that the role was "more administrative" than I anticipated. The review exercise revealed that this was the point at which I acknowledged how bureaucratic the work environment was and this is reflected in most of my journal entries, where I express dissatisfaction in functioning in a highly technical, policy-driven environment. The journal entries and interview data were analysed using McCaffery's (2004, p.297) questions on reflection: "What did you do?", "What did you learn from it?" and "How might you use this now and in the future?" The issues that emerged from the data were therefore examined and prompted a discussion of how these incidents and my reactions to them, may serve as valuable to me in my present circumstances and in mapping my journey forward.

The interview data brought to the surface, various issues, that I have engaged with in my role as head of department and emerging practice, and will explore in the discussion that follows. It is interesting to note at the outset of this discussion that what is immediately striking from my responses in the interview are my underlying (and subtle)

personal stances on academia, which have also been reflected in my journal. This has evidently been influenced by my experiences in the field and the cultural climate and context in which I have functioned thus far. Although the interview had a flowing rhythm, the ideas that emerged are conspicuous, merely by their absence and the tone of my responses and vocabulary seem evidently confined or restricted. This is perhaps due to the thwarting notion of an interview, the idea of „opening doors' and confronting unknown territory; a part of the study that I did not have any control over.

To freely engage with the questions and the resulting responses was the initial aim of the interview – to widen the lens through which I view my practice in academia and the extensive world within which I exist. However, through the process, I established that the emerging key notions were actually the ones that lay hidden, even though they evidently play a pivotal role in my psyche. In addition to this observation, the interview data highlighted how I have been powerfully „drawn' into the *alternate* world of private higher education, where my expectations of higher education in general and my perceptions of the industry have become somewhat tainted by the allure of the „privatedom' bubble. What seems to have emerged is how I am inadvertently consumed by my institution's educational values and ethos, that in my cocoon, I seem almost isolated from the higher education world at large, that the walls that exist are imaginary „boundaries' between „us' and other institutions of higher education, public and private.

4.3 Discussion of findings

Distinguishing between a leader and manager was a challenging exercise in the interview as there is contention surrounding these two roles. My interpretation of the two roles was based on my previous experience (in other institutions) of working with managers who had limited leadership qualities and vice versa. At this point, I had also reviewed literature pertaining to management and leadership, for the purposes of this study, which clearly influenced my response in the interview. The terms „manager' and „leader' incorporate various functions that I am expected to perform in my role. As McCaffery (2004, p.281) says, "To succeed as a leader and manager you must master a whole variety of different skills and competencies." Further to drawing on past experience, I listed *"leadership skills"* as a competency in the interview. This clearly

indicates that I believe that it is a necessity for a department head and that one needs to not only manage an academic department but also lead it. Davies, Hides and Casey (2001, p.1027) proposes that, "The general consensus appears to be that there are elements of the leadership genre that are inherent, but that a larger percentage can be learned." This has led me to contemplate the development of management and leadership skills of heads of department at my institution – how much is learnt through structured training and how much is learnt through trial and error or actual experiences? Will formal training in the head of department role help develop leadership and management potential? Will it help identify future leaders? These questions are similarly reflected in a probation review, that all campus employees, including heads of department, are expected to undergo, after their first thirty days in the position. The purpose of this review is to assess performance and orientation which includes adjustment, familiarisation and acclimatisation to the company during the initial stage of employment. It is at this stage that one's expectations and initial concerns are discussed and job-specific training areas are identified. This serves as a platform for management and employees to ascertain what formal training is needed for further development and growth.

From my own thirty-day probation review, two questions are of significance to this discussion. The first question asked how one's job compares to what was expected. My response indicated that it is a lot *"more administrative than I expected"*. My expectations prior to taking on the role were clearly not in line with how I felt a month into the role and were based on how overwhelmed I felt by the number of administrative tasks required of me and my perceptions of what a traditional academic HOD role was. In retrospection, my subconscious comparisons to the structure of a traditional HOD role began here, and have impacted on my views and beliefs of the role. Another question asked what job-specific training had been received and what further training was required to perform effectively. Although I believe that in hindsight, this question was asked rather prematurely in the developmental stage of an HOD's employment (as it is challenging to ascertain at this stage what training is required or appropriate for one to perform effectively, due to a lack of understanding of the role) my response was that I completed the compulsory two-day HOD training workshop, which focused on policies and

procedures (compliance training), and which I believed was sufficient enough for me at the time to carry out my designated duties and become immersed in the campus and company culture. When I review this now however, thorough skills-based training would still not have adequately prepared me for the reality and the expectations of the position, although specific areas of training such as time management, student disciplinary procedures and interviewing skills would have been somewhat beneficial to my professional development, as I did not realise at that stage, the immense amount of responsibility an HOD is required to shoulder whilst in the role. Therefore, I believe that although no amount of training could sufficiently prepare a HOD for the role, more intensive management-specific training should be implemented in the period following the probation review, to improve morale and lower turnover of heads of department at my institution and the likelihood of developing senior management and leadership potential will thus be greater.

Although my response in the interview measured the roles of leaders and managers according to their functions within an organisation, I believe that these roles are actually blurred in my role as head of department. This is mainly due to the fact that the head of department position at my current institution is considerably different to the more traditional role of a department head at a public institution, in terms of the duties and responsibilities within the portfolio. The power dynamic (of the public and private HOD) differs greatly and there has been debate among heads of department at my institution regarding this notion. This power dynamic is inevitably influenced by the highly bureaucratic environment in which I work and could (and does), in many ways, hinder the management and leadership development potential of heads of department at my current institution. Being an overseer of processes and procedures, masked as an HOD, with no power or ability to initiate any change but rather, merely expected to comply with and implement policies (and not swim against the bureaucratic tide), is rather frustrating. Quotations from my journal, such as *"The „powers that be' over-rid' my decision as HOD"* and *"I felt useless, powerless, deflated"*, reflect this thought accurately and suggests that even though I may be „Head' of department, in the greater scheme of things, this is merely a title and that I am a strategically placed administrator who is ultimately „managed'. The predicament that surfaces is being caught in the

middle of effecting strong educational values in my department and engaging in unethical acts of convenience, with a smokescreen of being „student-centred'. This is reflected in Winter's (2009, p.123) view, that "academics are being called upon to operate within more contested arenas", and as a result, institutions of higher education have to function in a „corporate' setting as opposed to an academic one. A consequence of this reality is discussed by Zulu (2007, p.39) who says that "new demands placed upon academic managers require that they combine intellectual competence with the managerial ability of corporate executives." These challenges, as indicated in the literature, have had direct impact on my role as Head of Department, resulting in my frustration in this situation. My personal value and belief system has been eroded by the overwhelming expectations to act in the best interest of the bottom-line and not in the best interest of the student, as indicated in the journal entries mentioned earlier.

A quotation from my journal, where I mention that *"We have lost two true leaders"* is indicative of my overall view of what a „true' leader is or should be. I reflect on this in my journal because I believe that a leader that makes a member of a team feel valued and provides the space and opportunity for self-development are essential characteristics of a *true* leader; characteristics that not every „manager' possesses. My view of what a „true' leader is has also been influenced by changes in management, both in past institutions and in my current place of work. In the interview, I refer to this point, when I say that, *"The environment in which I work is spirited, positive and encouraging and having management's trust in me, to complete areas of my work without active supervision reassures me that my capabilities are not being overlooked and my development in this role is viewed as significant…I have grown so much under their wings"* I have experienced various management styles of supervisors; some that have boosted my self-development and potential, and some that have encouraged mediocrity through micro-management, conformity and obedience. I believe that a „true' leader possesses characteristics of the former; a true leader is one that subtly but intentionally develops others as potential leaders, through knowledge-sharing, encouragement and collaborative and sometimes even unconventional methods of problem-solving and crisis management. As mentioned in my interview, *"A manager can „manage' without*

leadership." Due to global changes, this is now the reality in the field of higher education, which has had to transform and adapt to these changes by placing greater emphasis on managers to „manage' by focusing on increasing the student numbers and improving the bottom line. „Leading' and developing a team towards excellence has become less important as the key work performance areas and professional growth of those employed in higher education are now directly linked to the company's overall profit. The success of a private higher education institution in South Africa for example, is determined by the number of students registered at the institution and not by the caliber of students that enter the work force after successfully completing their qualifications. Institutions of higher education have had to contend with functioning like businesses in other industries, in order to survive in a highly competitive arena.

Consequently, global competition in the field of higher education has influenced a push towards improved product knowledge and increased quality. "Quality seems to not only be an elusive concept, but also a complex one that can be perceived in very different ways" (Sarrico, Rosa, Teixeira and Cardoso, 2010, p.39) The concept of how I measure quality in my role surfaced as an interview question and while attempting to measure quality in my role, I identified the areas in which I believe quality can be quantified. In doing this, I have subconsciously organised my key performance areas, which are quite varied in function. My response in the interview was that "*I measure quality by stakeholders' needs being met and their expectations being exceeded*." This view is congruent with that of my organisation's vision of being „customer-focused' – the push towards treating students and their parents as „customers', being directly linked to the nature of private higher education institutions and global trends in higher education.

Apart from the stakeholders that I work most often with, I have a reporting line that extends our campus management. With the institution having other campuses in South Africa, standardisation of the delivery of the programmes is policy. Each campus is required to maintain standards that are decided upon by our overarching academic body. In order to achieve this successfully, each campus HOD reports to a National Head of Department (NHOD), who is responsible for quality assurance for each faculty. The NHOD is responsible for the tasking of a considerable number of the projects I work

with on a daily basis and manages the processes involved in the detailed delivery of each programme in my faculty on campus. I also measure quality by the meeting of these deadlines timeously and the success with which I achieve the national projects assigned to me. In addition to this, student satisfaction is dependent on various aspects of their experience; the contact they have with me, being critical in this area. Being an HOD in an environment that views students as our „customers' places great emphasis on our interaction with them and the speedy responses and solutions to their queries. De Jager and Gbadamosi (2010, p.253), put forward the notion that, "Service delivery and customer satisfaction in an education environment is dependent on personal interaction between students and staff. Students therefore are expected to view any dealings with staff, irrespective of the nature of the dealing, to impact on their experiences of service delivery. The quality of the overall experience for students is crucial to the success of programmes because, among others, it ensures continued students patronage." This is especially true at the institution that I am currently employed at, where financial incentives are directly linked to the „rollover numbers' or the number of students that return for another semester of study. Service delivery thus plays a fundamental role in the measurement of quality in my role as HOD, which I should have elaborated on in my response to this question. "The multidimensionality of quality in higher education is also due to the different dimensions associated with fulfilment of higher education's mission, namely the quality of inputs, outputs and processes, which have to be combined with the demands put forward by students, universities and society each time one intends to assess quality." (Sarrico, Rosa, Teixeira and Cardoso, 2010, p.40)

In my journal, I express very strongly that *"HODS are scapegoats for anything and everything that goes wrong in administration."* I believe that in an educational institution, quality should be determined by the accuracy, competency and detail of *every* experience, starting with the „front of house' employees, who ultimately make the first impression and set the tone for either a strong and sustaining relationship, or a substandard one. Obtaining minimum entry requirement documents from potential students, forms part of a student's first encounter with an institution. One of the ways potential and current „customers' (students and their parents) measure quality in

institutions of private higher education is to determine the value for money they receive for the tuition fees they pay. Value for money in private higher education institutions can be perceived as „services' such as additional student support, a variety of extra-curricular activities and social events and a greater sense (compared to public institutions) of „accountability' to the „account payers'. Students and their parents are heavily reliant on the institution of choice to advise them on whether they are in possession of the correct minimum requirements to pursue studies towards specific qualifications – if the institution fails at providing the correct information at this very early and crucial juncture of the relationship, the repercussions of this that later surface (as referred to in my journal), can result in long-term damage to the reputation of the campus and the institution as a whole. In the current competitive market, a lack of training and general lack of attention to detail can result in activities such as these and ultimately exposes an accountability issue (among staff) in the registration process; issues that may prove costly and risky, in terms of efforts made on the institution's part, to draw students and their parents in, giving them peace of mind and comfort in knowing that they are investing in and placing their trust and futures in an educational institution that is meant to demonstrate competency and knowledge. The ramifications surrounding students, who are not in possession of the correct entry requirements but were permitted to pursue qualifications, are both frustrating and unprofessional, as often, this is discovered when students have reached the midpoint of their qualifications and rectifying such errors, impacts both on the students and the institution. Accordingly, I believe that quality should be the adopted „attitude' of *every* staff member of an institution (and not just a select few) involved in the process of shaping the lives of our „future'.

It is important to note in the discussion around achieving quality through increased product knowledge, that HODs at my current institution do not require teaching and learning experience or even an educational background, although I feel very strongly that prior exposure to education would be an advantage to the role. In the interview, I seemed to have placed great emphasis on the „teaching space' or teaching portfolio that is absent from my current role – I believe that this is influenced by my prior lecturing position, which I still maintain my passion for and yearn to return to. The lack of the

„lecturing' activity in my role as HOD, hinders my managerial role as I am viewed as having no genuine understanding when engaging with lecturers in my faculty, as I have not *experienced the environment* in which they lecture, which is the physical lecture room. Familiarity with a similar environment could assist in understanding the intricacies of a work environment such as this one, and could impact positively on HOD retention rates, as well as „customer' service within the role. Powers (2006, p.1) points out that, "Much of the management of higher education is in the hands of people who never intended to be administrators." "Accidental administrators" is the term he uses to describe those whose objectives were not to enter the field of higher education or higher education administration, but did so as a viable employment opportunity. I believe that this statistic, as well as the push to employ qualified „managers' rather than educational specialists in administrative roles, contribute to the „lack' of, or „poor' management and leadership we see in institutions today, consequently leading to the lack of the development of potential of those with experience in the field. Involvement in the teaching and learning area is not required of me as an HOD at my institution, but given my previous experience; I still crave the teaching and learning space and therefore make great efforts to engage with this area. In the interview, I mention that my experience as a lecturer has *"helped in my understanding of the academic environment"* – it has shaped my understanding of higher education from the perspective of students and lecturers in a classroom environment, and whilst I appreciate exposure to the administrative area of higher education, I mention the importance of maintaining the connection in my interview, when I highlight that *"It is crucial for an HOD to be able to share the teaching space"*. Although I am a firm believer in this, working in a business environment does not encourage much „crossover'. Hellawell and Hancock (2001, p.189), makes the point that, "The HOD at least still has to have „subject credibility' in the eyes of the members of that department if he is to offer academic leadership as well as exert managerial control." Zulu (2007, p.40) says that, "As academic leaders and managers in their department, the position of HODs as first line administrators makes them the key link between the administration of the institution and department, academic staff, support staff and students."

In a private institution such as the one I am currently employed at, it can be argued that the institution is not steeped in academic disciplines, like public institutions are. This is mainly due to the „lecturer' profile being vastly different to lecturers at other institutions. Contract lecturers (CLs) are required to be present only for their contact time with students, have reduced administrative workloads, are remunerated per hour and their driving purpose is the student pass rates for the specific modules that they facilitate. In addition to this, the CL model is not limited to a specific faculty or discipline, but based on their relevant qualifications, they can lecture across departments and disciplines, which have reinforced the teamwork factor among HODs, both on campus and across campuses in the same region. One might argue that this sort of arrangement (or corporate compromise) may result in CLs not being seen as „academics' as the level of investment in the student can be called into question. The notion of „contract versus tenured' lecturers brings to the foreground the expectations of the different models – by CLs not possessing the academic freedom to influence the curriculums they lecture and having to work strictly within the constraints and boundaries of the academic programmes, are they simply deliverers of „the word' and „producers' of students who are work-ready and geared for the competitive working world? Since CLs fulfil roles in the relevant industries, are they merely the link between industry and education? The challenge of working in a *"policy-driven and bureaucratic environment"* was discussed prominently in the interview. An environment such as this one is heavily influenced by business decisions and goals to get maximum yield from an employee in their specific area of work – a clear distinction between departments is thus enforced and maintained, despite some employees having an overlap of knowledge and skills. In the interview, I mention that, *"At a private institution, the business ethos has great influence on how I function in this environment."* The bureaucracy and red tape is suggestive however, of the effects of global changes on higher education. In South Africa, particularly, the skills shortage has prompted a greater push towards preparing potential workforces that will be capable of competing in a global arena. Institutions have to therefore function as a business in order to survive in what has become a highly competitive market. The notion that global change has influenced private higher education institutions and the staff that work in them, is discussed by (Small, 2008), who says that academic work is

"changing and fragmenting" while Yielder and Codling (2004, p.315) further argues that "institutions have grappled with the profound external changes that influence the way they function." The literature supports the view that although the business model adopted by private higher education institutions imposes a more „clinical' working environment that prioritises profit over the student experience, it is nonetheless a reality which is faced, not just at the institution at which I am employed, but worldwide by the private higher education sector.

In light of the business ethos adopted by institutions of private higher education, a sensitive issue was uncovered further on in the interview, which I grapple with, quite often in my role as HOD. Further to the interview, I have numerous entries in my journal regarding the registration of students into programmes that students showed very little interest in, at the career advisory stage. This is of grave concern to me and to departments on campus that are directly affected by this, such as the student support department, who have to deal with the backlash of such activities. Students who are *"nudged"* into programmes that they are not particularly passionate about, but are convinced that they could „grow' into it, based on their academic performance at secondary level schooling, or general hobbies and tasks, eventually and inevitably perform poorly, are demotivated and discover (usually in the middle of the semester), that they are not suited to the programme. The time and effort that academic staff (HODs, lecturing staff and student support) then invest in trying to rectify the action in the best interest of the student is great and ultimately has detrimental effects on the students' confidence and endeavours in future studies. Having said this, I understand (but do not condone) the position of the marketing team who indulge in such „numbers-driven' activities, that are deemed necessary for the „bottom line'. Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006) discuss the use of business and marketing activities in a higher education environment and propose that "research is needed to examine the notions of: ethical perceptions, personal and moral philosophies, ethical values and social responsibilities of those involved in managing the marketing of universities, particularly the internal marketing issues."(p.334). I identify with Slowey's (1995, p.58) view that "Some heads of department, particularly those who have been in the same institution for some years, experience a tension between their perception of the university or college

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mission and their own sense of collegial values." Schwartzman (2002, p.10) shares a similar sentiment by saying that **"Higher education institutions, public or private, to work well, should become moral and cultural institutions, transmitting values and attitudes, not by ideological or religious indoctrination, but by the living example of their academic staff."** The bureaucracy of a business-style environment can be linked to the concern I have around students being recruited onto programmes not relevant to their career goals and interests; where registering a student is a "*business transaction*". The focus on student „numbers' is not specific to the private sector of higher education in South Africa and calls into question, a highly debated issue of integrity and ethical standing in the field of higher education as a whole, an issue that is an unfortunate reality that I contend with, on a daily basis; and which I have reflected on in my journal. When discussing one of the many unethical dilemmas I find myself struggling with in my role, I mention that *„the powers that be considered letting the student pass the module without fulfilling the requirements correctly'*. This is sadly the reality of a „commercialised' environment, where students are ushered out of the system, as merely „numbers', where no values, educational or other, are employed; either for the purposes of fairness to students involved or the integrity of the staff members. In my interview, I mention this when I say that "*the values of education come second.*" This immediately and irreversibly lowers the bars of integrity and quality; where future incidents of a related nature will be served with a similar „solution'. This issue is explored in the literature by Teferra and Altbach (2004, p.32), who mention how "private for-profit higher learning institutions provide high demand and relatively low cost, skill-based courses rather quickly." This is an accurate description of the private institution at which I am employed – „turnover' of students is the „for-profit' approach which the institution adopts to survive in a highly competitive environment.

The local and global public-private divide in higher education has formed a critical part of this study and I have engaged with numerous texts on this debate. My views on the issue are in keeping with various researchers in the field, such as Comm (2005), Palihawadana (1999), Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006), who all propose that private providers meeting a specialised demand are often highly responsive and provide credentials in areas that the public sector does not. Private providers are less restricted

both in their resources of revenue and in their freedom to spend it. This increased level of competition in the education environment has led to private institutions of higher education (and increasingly in public institutions as well) adopting business model environments; employing efficient management techniques to improve the efficiency and quality of services. I highlight this point in my interview, where I mention that *"the private sector has a very strong business ethos and public institutions are beginning to adopt the business model because of the competitive market."* This transformation allows for a competitive edge in an industry where marketization plays a fundamental role.

Schwartzman (2002, p.4) says that "The private sector has developed to respond to these situations, opening up elite institutions in niches left empty by the large public institutions, and providing mass higher education when the public sector is more closed. In practice, in all countries, public and private institutions provide both elite and mass higher education, but in different degrees." Morris and Miller (2008, p.2) highlights the "unique place" that private colleges have in the higher education industry, and points out that these institutions are "fully committed to the education of the whole person". Morris and Miller (2008, p.32) says that, "Being smaller allows for some unique opportunities than larger research institutions cannot offer. Private colleges have a distinctive niche that they fill in terms of to the educational needs of students. Opportunities outweigh the challenges in private institutions; however there are some challenges that need to be addressed in order for the private institution to survive." In light of this, a significant consideration in my current work environment is the profile of students at my institution, who are characteristic of private higher education. This is crucial as although I indicated in the interview that this environment, with all the benefits of the smaller classes, additional support services etc. adequately prepared the student for the working world, I failed to discuss the negative impact of these offerings to students entering the corporate environment. By offering these additional „value-adds' within a „bubble' (which accurately describes our campus environment), we are in essence creating and nurturing a very specific profile of student, who may have to *adjust* to the „limitations' of the world outside the campus. By providing the already „advantaged' student from the middle to upper income sector of society with added benefits of a sheltered academic

experience, are we then not creating a „monster' – a student with unrealistic expectations of the world they are inevitably going to enter? This is often a lament of the contract lecturers on campus, who often feel (and openly express) how the expectations of them to „spoon-feed' students to meet academic requirements will inevitably be frowned upon or met with disagreement from the industries the students intend to pursue careers in, as the general attitude of entitlement among students is being encouraged. I reflect on this in my journal, when I mention that students abuse their privileges and "*feel entitled, like the world owes them something*." If students are not allowed to leave without some sense of responsibility for their own actions and lives, can we really term what we do, „education'? Are we being fair to them when we permit a false sense of reality to be established and nurtured when we send them off unprepared into the unknown, with them believing and expecting that potential employers will welcome them with open arms, offering similar safety nets and empathy? I believe that education is not merely the qualification a student leaves the institution with, but also, „education' in „other aspects of life on campus and activities and responsibilities outside of the lecture room that contributes to their development as well-rounded citizens. Community engagement is key to this development and as Fong (2002, p.8), says, "The postmodern challenge is whether the academy is now willing to bear responsibility again for educating students to respond to the moral and political dilemmas of our time. I believe that teaching our students to negotiate issues of ethics and citizenship must be part and parcel of a liberal education." Institutions of higher education around the world have made efforts to engage students in the „public good' and although it has become a norm for institutions to do so, the question around this issue that remains is, „what is the real purpose of such endeavours?' Do these endeavours get misconstrued for giving in to market forces rather than instilling values of community and humanity in our leaders of tomorrow?

Regardless of the challenges faced in private higher education in South Africa, there are highlights that motivate and inspire me to tirelessly go on; one of them is graduation, an occasion that signals accomplishments (for students and staff) and new beginnings. A reflection from my journal expresses a sense of reward in bearing witness to my students' graduation ceremony – "*I watch them with a sense of pride…it makes my*

journey worthwhile." Although this comment describes my elation at students turning a new page in their lives, the demanding and laborious process of graduation (prior to the actual ceremony) confirms that, the graduates are after all, merely „numbers' that have gone through the system. This unfortunately casts a shadow on the traditions and customs of a time-honoured ceremony that is meant to honour one's achievements and sacrifices. My sense of pride is met with mixed feelings once I return to my desk and face the reality that the process of getting more numbers through the system for the following academic year, begins again. I mention this in my interview, when I state that "*it is sometimes difficult to recognize students as individuals*." This tainted view of the succession of students' qualifications is influenced by the frustrations I express throughout my journal, where I mention for instance, that I "*doubt the system*", and although my journal entries may appear as statements and outbursts of negativity and cynicism, they are regrettably veracities I contend with in my role.

One of the reasons why I found physical work space, an interesting area of discussion in the interview, is because my views on HODs are based mainly on the traditional roles of HODs at public institutions. From the literature I have engaged with thus far, public institutions in the past and in present-day, have various campuses (or are multicampused institutions), each offering specialisation programmes, located in the same vicinity but more often, a considerable distance from each other, as opposed to one main building. Heads of Department are not situated on the same campus and there is very little (if any) contact with each other, resulting in reduced association and communication with each other and in their tasks. Hellawell and Hancock (2001, p.186), confirm this by saying that, "The members of the traditional „collegium' in the universities of yesteryear were indeed usually housed together, and it is obviously difficult to have faculty, for example, working collegially if some of its academic tutors have no physical proximity with each other. It may not be possible for all staff of a faculty to work collegially together because of the physical separation." Private institutions seem to have retained the ideal of one campus, with all faculty members working in the same environment, sharing best practices and contributing to the philosophy of teamwork and interconnectivity. Being a member of the academic team on campus has confirmed the benefit of working in a team, as a team. This is evident,

both in areas that I have reflected on in my journal, when I say for instance, that "The environment that is created is a collaborative one, open to the sharing of ideas, experience and knowledge", and in the informal „colleague-training' which I have taken the initiative to carry out with the appointment of a new HOD in our team. Being a tenured HOD has resulted in the setting of certain precedents, which through the training activities, is shared with new team members and also opens the doors to fresh perspectives and new systems from younger staff entering the team. I mention this in my journal, when I comment on how *"rewarding"* it feels to be able to *"assist the new HOD".* The feeling of reward stems from my yearning to „teach'; an opportunity to connect with this part of me that has lay dormant for so long. The physical work space also lends itself to a collaborative work environment, where „learning' and sharing is reciprocal and assistance is mutual. The team-oriented approach to the department I work in has prompted a greater understanding of myself personally and professionally in the HOD role. As Leaming (2003, p.225) points out, "In the academy, teamwork is essential."

Perhaps this stems from my belief that an HOD in a public institution is the „ideal' or what I aspire to be. This is possibly because public institutions have always been held in high esteem due to the key differences between the two sectors and the resulting perceptions of society in regards to this. I comment on this point in my interview, when I state that the *"private sector has had (and in some instances, still does) a very negative reputation."* The key difference between these two sectors is the business ethos that has been adopted by private institutions (although the public sector is also moving towards this type of model through their recently adopted research-driven agendas). This has impacted on the drive for numbers, a priority of the private sectors for years. The drive for student numbers has changed the „feel' of higher education as a whole. This push towards research-driven institutions is in line with the notion of globalisation and its effects on higher education and begs the questions: Are we (in private higher education) preparing students solely for the job market or are we (in public higher education) developing knowledge? Has the purpose of higher education then changed? Do public and private institutions have different goals and agendas? How has the academic manager had to adapt, to suit the new research-driven institutions? What kind

of knowledge are we producing and what calibre of students are we sending out into the world?

It is evidently clear that the interview exposed issues that I would, under normal circumstances, not have encountered in this journey of self-reflection. I have, in hindsight, considered the repercussions and the reality of processes that I administer with confidence, on a daily basis. This has made me interrogate the „real' environment I work in and the influences on this environment. One of the questions in the probation review is pertinent to this notion as it probes whether a head of department's expectations prior to employment are similar to the actual role. From my own probation review, it emerged that my initial expectations, before employment as head of department commenced, was significantly different to what my actual tasks and responsibilities were – this is perhaps due to my perceptions of what a head of department at a public institution is tasked with and that I assumed this role would be similar in nature. In the interview, I similarly mention that "*At a public institution, an HOD's experiences may be shaped by the ethos of their institution, such as their strong teaching and learning ideals*." The head of department model at my institution however, is actually a glorified programme co-ordinator/administrator, which seems to be a more fitting description of the role. My purpose in the head of department role has therefore also been called into question as I trudge forward in the quest for improved quality and higher integrity. Slowey (1995, p.58) believes that "The problem for heads of department begins with the inadequate definition of the role."

My reflective journal has been maintained over a period of two years. Some journal entries are attached as an appendix and highlight similar concerns that surfaced in the interview process. The reflective journal has served as a tool of development and growth in my professional life as a head of department, as it has encouraged my open and free expression of issues pertinent to my role and to the tasks I encounter in this role, on a daily basis. Hubbs and Brand (2005, p.70) offer an interesting comparison of a mirror to a journal, when they say that, "As a glass mirror reflects a visual image, the paper mirror reflects students' inner worlds and making of meaning." This resonates with the reflective entries in my journal as through the process, I have contemplated and

evaluated not only my actions and experiences, but my character too. As Leaming (2003, p.1) says, "Academic deans and department chairs – and all leaders – must come to terms with and accept who they are."

In the final chapter to follow, I will discuss the results of my study and offer some concluding thoughts.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This study is an account of my experiences, as I have perceived them within my role as Head of Department. The purpose of this research was to take an inward glance at this role and reflect on and examine the unique requirements and challenges of being in this position. An autoethnographical perspective lends itself to taking a look at a specific role, such as this one, from inside the researcher's point of view. This personal account will allow educational peers and colleagues an opportunity to reflect on their own current or future careers and assist them in growing and developing their own understanding of the complexities, challenges and celebrations associated with their chosen professional positions or fields. The journey of reflection has felt like what Manathunga, Peseta and McCormack (2010, p.40) describe as a "balancing act", a "process of choosing what to move from the private to the public." This has been an incredible challenge as I have, in this process, for the purposes of authenticity, shared my innermost thoughts and vented about my deep-seated fears about everything that means something in my chosen path.

Since few studies have been conducted on Heads of Department in private higher education institutions, the goal of this research has therefore been to add to the limited body of knowledge, from the unique perspective of an autoethnography. I have used this emerging field of autoethnography to provide the basis of this qualitative study and, through this method, I have probed the research questions that guided this study. It is thus my hope that readers of this research will find their own storyline through my lived experience and perhaps enhance their own practice. Studies that are introspective and focused on the „self' have gained credit and recognition as „academic' in recent years. This will hopefully encourage and increase the use of the medium of autoethnography among academics.

Several realisations have emerged from this study thus far and have prompted the following thoughts and recommendations:

- Having embraced autoethnography as a research method has confirmed that, despite resistance against this method, it has nevertheless been a highly involved and fulfilling process which has encompassed cathartic feelings and introspective actions.

- Exploring the intricacies of the HOD role has been critical in identifying areas of development and of concern that I will pursue in the future, to enhance my current work. The exploration of the role has also made possible the identification of aspects that other HODs or education managers in the education sector may pursue for further study and analysis.

- Further to this, I have reached a greater awareness of how globalisation has opened doors to increased communication and knowledge sharing among public and private higher education institutions, which I believe can benefit the higher education sector in South Africa specifically.

- I have concluded that although the role of „HOD' at my institution „works' for the specific demands and requirements of my institution, given the highly administrative demands of this position, a more intensive and sustainable induction and training programme should be implemented to outline specific expectations of the role and its impact on the institution and its roleplayers; and curb turnover among HODs nationally.

- In addition to this, the HOD role should incorporate an opportunity to engage further in teaching and learning, through the addition of a teaching portfolio. I believe that this will have a two-pronged benefit to the role. Firstly, an education background and prior experience in education will be a pre-requisite to the HOD role, serving as an advantage to the specific institution, through greater product knowledge and improved performance and productivity. Secondly, this can result in a deeper engagement with lecturers that fall within the HOD's portfolio, allowing for greater management and leadership potential to surface, thereby

opening doors to promotion and other growth opportunities in either the teaching and learning or administrative management areas of the academic institution.

Although my reflections have led to a clearer definition of my role and although I resonate with the implementation of various policies and procedures within my institution, there remains critical areas that need to be addressed such as the lack of career guidance offered to students at the registration point and the „bubble' that has been created by the nature of my institution. Greater communication among institutions will allow for more significant knowledge-sharing, which could lead to academic and community engagement benefits to students and employees alike.

These realisations have been critical in furthering my professional development, through a deeper understanding of the role of head of department at my institution - this is evident in the development of my character and has resulted in my inevitable growth and development within my role as Head of Department. The trials and multi-faceted demands placed on me during this process were integral parts of my journey. What therefore transpired out of this undertaking was the making of new meanings around being a Head of department and around higher education in general.

The experiences of actively engaging with both the teaching and learning and the administrative areas in higher education have resulted in my inevitable resonance with questions posed by Korthagen and Vasalos (2005, p.52) on professional identity – "What kind of practitioner do I want to be? What is the subject of my work? What do I deal with as a practitioner? Which services do I provide? Upon which values, beliefs, paradigms and theories do I depend when I build knowledge and solve problems?" These thought-provoking questions serve as a reminder to "take stock of experiences and how they shape who we are and what we do." (Starr, 2010, p.4) I am therefore reminded that I am doing work that is of value, work that ultimately contributes to a society that recognises these efforts as noble and constructive to the understanding and development of humanity as a whole. Kelley, Macrae, Wyland, Caglar, Inati and Heatherton (2002, p.785), puts forward a thought that I would like to conclude with, "An impressive human talent is the ability to reflect on past experiences and to project the self into imagined futures."

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF
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13 September 2011

Miss J Roopram (207527595)
Centre for Higher Education Studies
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Miss Roopram

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0851/011M
PROJECT TITLE: Exploring my role as Head of Department: An autoethnography

In response to your application dated 7 September 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.
PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Mrs R Searle
cc: Mr N Memela/Mrs S Naicker, Faculty Research Office, Edgewood Campus

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Appendix B: Transcribed data from self-interview

1. Interviewer: What are the main responsibilities of your role?

I manage the academic delivery of various programmes in my department, which include student, lecturer and parent queries, I liaise with the student support team, to develop and support students in their academic careers and to support and develop lecturers. I also source lecturers for my department.

2. Interviewer: Out of those responsibilities that you just mentioned, what is the most strategic part of your role? What is your value-add to this campus?

I believe that I have good problem-solving skills which I put into use in my department quite often.

3. Interviewer: What management skills or competencies do you deem vital for the role of Head of Department?

Management and leadership skills are the most important skills needed for this role as I am responsible for various people in my department such as an assistant, lecturers and students. Therefore, leadership skills specifically are very important. Communication skills and interpersonal skills are also vital as I deal with so many people on a daily basis (members of staff, parents etc.)

4. Interviewer: How would you distinguish between management and leadership?

I don't believe that every manager is necessarily a leader or has potential to be a leader. A leader is someone who can inspire others to discover their own potential and develop them to reach their potential. A manager can „manage' others without leadership.

5. Interviewer: In your role, name an instance where you developed someone?

I am in the process of developing my assistant for a Head of Department role, in many ways, I develop students and I have some impact on the development of new lecturers too.

6. Interviewer: What are some of the challenges you face in your role as HOD?

I have found that the environment in which I work is policy-driven and bureaucratic. The academic processes sometimes restrict our abilities to assist students with their specific needs and circumstances. Being bound by so many processes and policies, it is sometimes difficult to recognize students as individuals. This institution, being a private environment, is business-driven. I feel that this is made priority and the values of

education come second.

7. Interviewer: You commented on the commercial aspect of the institution. What are some of the negative aspects of this, that is of concern to you?

At the registration stage for example, the process of registering students for various programmes, is viewed more as a „business transaction', rather than advising students on what's best for them, based on their specific abilities. Students are „nudged' onto programmes purely based on business and not on the students' passion and intended career path.

8. Interviewer: How has your previous exposure to teaching and learning experience influenced you in this role?

It has definitely helped in my understanding of the academic environment and given me the ability to view the students and lecturers from „the other side' of things. I have greater empathy towards challenges faced by lecturers.

9. Interviewer: From an administrative point of view, has your previous experience helped you understand how the student-lecturer-administrator interface works? If so, how?

I have found that at this institution, there is a clear divide between administration and teaching and learning, which makes me, appreciate the administrative area so much more. At my previous institution, there wasn't such a clear distinction between the two and lecturers carried the burden of administrative tasks in addition to their teaching and learning activities.

10. Interviewer: Do you think that the clear distinction between the two departments is helpful to an academic environment such as this one?

Yes, I definitely find that it makes the general functioning of academic processes more efficient – we are able to have a faster turnaround time on processing student results for example. Having definite roles with very specific tasks (for lecturers as well as administrators) allows for timelines to be adhered to. This also relieves the pressure off lecturers, who are able to focus on their teaching and learning and allow for time-consuming administrative tasks to be carried out by someone else.

11. Interviewer: How do you feel about the public/private divide in higher education?

Having been a student in the public sector but only having worked in the private institutions, I have been exposed to both worlds. I feel that the private sector has a very strong business ethos but has been trying, in recent years, to instill in their institutions, strong teaching and learning values. The public sector is doing just the opposite –

public institutions are beginning to adopt the business model because of the competitive market. The private sector has had (and in some instances, still does) a very negative reputation.

12. Interviewer: Do you think this is a positive or negative thing?

Although I understand how competitive the market is, I hope that both sectors will eventually adopt similar viewpoints and allow educational values to be their priority. Being in the field of educating young people, I believe that institutions of higher education should not be placing „business' over the values of developing young peoples' careers and lives.

13. Interviewer: With the more privatized models, do you see any greater benefits to the student experience?

A private environment means smaller student numbers; which makes the offering of a number of services possible. At this institution for example, the student support team is able to work with students successfully and ensure progress through their studies. Students get individual attention due to the size of the student population on campus. Community engagement and outreach programmes are also made possible, which I believe, are vital to the development of students into „well-rounded' citizens. These community engagement efforts are incorporated into our programmes so students are exposed to it throughout their time here. Better campus facilities are also offered to our students.

14. Interviewer: Students at private institutions, at this one for example, are governed by very strict rules and principles that don't allow certain behaviours etc. Do you think this prepares them better or worse for the working world?

I think that students who successfully complete their studies with us, having gone through the system, are better prepared for the industries they enter. With the programmes that I manage in my department, industry employers have commended the institution on the calibre of students they employ. Students are prepared for the working world as they have been exposed to values; ethics and rules that are required in their chosen fields through real-life situations created on and off campus in their work integrated learning activities. Students are geared for industry and when they do eventually enter the working world, they know what to expect and it's not a shock to their system.

15. Interviewer: How would you measure quality in your role?

I work with various stakeholders in my role, such as students, their parents, lecturers etc. I measure quality by these stakeholders' needs being met and their expectations being exceeded, resulting in their satisfaction.

I also measure my role on consistency – consistently achieving excellence or a specific standard I have set for various tasks performed in my role.

Being regarded as reliable and responsible by my colleagues and management is another indicator that I am achieving certain standards within my role.

16. Interviewer: Would you say that student results or academic performance have any bearing or reflection on the way you manage your department?

Yes, but my department and the way I manage it, is not done in isolation. I function in an environment where my department works closely with other departments and the student support team. The environment that is created is a collaborative one, open to the sharing of ideas, experience and knowledge. I am responsible for sourcing lecturers and „flagging' at risk students - lecturer development and the support of the students academically etc. are made possible by the „community' we are privileged to have on campus, who are all involved in ensuring student success rates.

17. Interviewer: What do you think the differences are between the function of your role and that of a HOD role in a public institution?

Heads of Department at public institutions are required to maintain their teaching and learning knowledge and expertise through lecturing (if even it is a reduced lecturing load). Although they perform various administrative and management tasks in their roles, they engage with students and lecturers in the „teaching' space. As a HOD at this institution, I engage with students and lecturers from an administrative perspective, in an office environment. I feel that sometimes, my desk is viewed as a „physical boundary' that prevents conversations and reaching higher levels in the relationships I share with them. I think that it is crucial for a HOD to be able to share the teaching space so that I can manage and motivate my lecturers with greater understanding that comes with similar experiences, and be more effective in helping „at risk' students timeously.

HODs in the public and private sectors have their own, unique challenges. Another difference is our mindsets and how much our environment influences this. For example, at a private institution, the business ethos has great influence on how I function in this environment, the values and belief system I have or have to develop etc. At a public institution, a HOD's experiences may be shaped by the ethos of their institution, such as

their strong teaching and learning ideals.

18. Interviewer: What are some of the things that appeal to you in your role as HOD?

Although I have a number of policies and procedures that I must contend with on a daily basis, I enjoy not being micro-managed by upper management. I feel that this has greatly impacted on my productivity and satisfaction in my daily work life. The environment in which I work is spirited, positive and encouraging and having management's trust in me, to complete areas of my work without active supervision reassures me that my capabilities are not being overlooked and my development in this role is viewed as significant.

With regards to students and lecturers in my department, I am still very involved in the teaching and learning aspects that they are engaged in, which I thoroughly enjoy because I can draw from my previous experience and it doesn't rule me out of returning to this area in the future.

19. Interviewer: Would you describe the department you work in as team-oriented? If so, does this benefit you in your function as HOD?

Yes, there are four department heads that I work with on a daily basis, as part of the academic operations team. We all work towards common goals and none of us work in isolation to achieve these goals. I feel more motivated when working as part of a team. Each HOD in the academic operations team has their own, unique strengths, which are used to develop each other through the sharing of ideas and assisting each other through our daily tasks. We also work closely with other departments such as the student support team, marketing team, the finance department etc. to ensure students' and other roleplayers' satisfaction.

20. Interviewer: What are some of the skills/competencies you have achieved so far in your role?

In my role, I have developed management and leadership skills, administrative skills, communication and interpersonal skills, crisis management and problem-solving skills and time management skills.

21. Interviewer: What are some skills/competencies you would like to further develop in this role?

I would like to further develop my management and leadership skills.

22. Interviewer: The academic office in which you work is an open-plan office, with all the Heads of Department and your assistants functioning in this environment. Do you feel that this hinders you in your work or has it been helpful in your daily functioning?

I think that there are pros and cons to the office arrangement. When I first started here as HOD, I found this environment very intrusive on my personal space and not conducive to the functioning of a HOD. This was because I field various queries from students, lecturers and parents, that are personal in nature and therefore has to be treated as confidential. These discussions sometimes occur at my desk, which, in an open-plan environment, is not always suitable. However, we have managed to work around these issues, by making use of our private interview rooms for example. Due to the collaborative nature of our team, the open-plan environment is well suited to our department.

Appendix C: Excerpts from journal

Friday, 28 January 2011

"I'm grappling with an issue that I hoped I never had to face here – a group of students was allowed to resubmit a project because they did not adhere to the initial deadline. The „powers that be' over-rid' my decision as HOD and allowed students to all re-submit, which is unethical and unfair to other students in the class, who worked to deadline. I am constantly reminded that not everything is „black and white' but I struggle to see how some don't know right from wrong – we work with policies!!! This has impacted on national results stats but more importantly, students have now found the loophole they need to abuse the system…"

April 2011

"It's always rewarding to see students graduate. I watch them with a sense of pride, knowing, that even my efforts (as minimal as they were) behind the desk have contributed to their achievements. It's exciting to think about them entering the world with hope and their dreams alive, starting a new adventure. It makes my journey worthwhile…"

Wednesday, 8 June 2011

"Today confirmed why my decision to not have children of my own was the right decision. My greatest fear is that they would end up abusing their privileges and feel entitled, like the world owes them something. I wish some of my students would realise how much their parents sacrifice for them, it's a mystery to me how they can squander their precious time and parents' money away, with no appreciation or even acknowledgment of those less fortunate, who would give anything for the shot they have…"

Thursday, 05 August 2011

"Today, for the first time since I started here as HOD, I felt useless, powerless, deflated… Although I fight to keep my spirits up, the fact that I am fighting a losing battle has reminded me that I am at the mercy of the ones with power. Despite how passionately I feel about this, I have to surrender to the fact that it's never going to change… what's right sometimes doesn't matter, but I refuse to follow the currents of convenience."

Tuesday, 10 October 2011

"We lost two true leaders in the past month, both of whom I aspire to and look up to. It's rare to look up to your managers/bosses and also feel valued in a job. If I am ever given

the opportunity to manage a campus in my future, I have a good idea of how to earn staffs' respect – it's amazing what listening to the people that you work with and acknowledging them as „people' can accomplish. I feel sad but grateful that I have grown so much under their wings. Although change is scary, I hope it's a positive thing. New beginnings…"

Monday, 16th January 2012

"There aren't many things that frustrate me more than injustice and immoral, unethical practice, especially in the world of education! A student was considered (almost accommodated) for passing a module, by fulfilling the requirements incorrectly (not following policy). The „powers that be' considered letting the student pass the module without fulfilling the requirements correctly. This is unfair to other students who have to work hard and do things the right way and it sets a precedent for students who want to play the system. This is just wrong! Luckily, I had the conviction to take this further and the student was set on the right path, but the fact that this was even entertained makes me doubt the system and the morals of the people that matter, people that should be setting an example to all staff in an environment such as this one."

Tuesday, 13 March 2012

"I feel like I have fulfilled my purpose today. It's actually rewarding when you've spent this much time in a job and finally, tenure is acknowledged through helping others. I have learnt so much from assisting the new HOD – it's keeping me on my toes, reminds me that I still have the patience and passion, makes me feel alive! I miss that so much sometimes…"

Tuesday, 15 May 2012

"Today, I was made accountable for a part of the registration process that I have no involvement in whatsoever. Students who do not meet the minimum entry requirements (relevant high school pass) are allowed to register for programmes and HODs were informed today that we are solely responsible for this even though we only check these documents about six months after the student has been integrated into the campus and programme – students and their parents are then informed of the fact that they can't continue any further in their studies but it's too late for them to receive a full refund on their fees that have been paid up front.. Where is the integrity in the system??? I find this shocking as it feels that HODs are scapegoats for anything and everything that goes wrong in administration. Should the people responsible for registering these students not be accountable for this, since HODs are accountable for their actions in their own departments? This is where the buck stops!"

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