



Phases of institutional research development: Two South African Research Management Cases

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Background to the research



- Increased emphasis on research
- Differences in institutional mission
- Mergers and reconfiguring of the South African HE landscape
- Research management

Purpose of study

- Postulate phases of institutional research development

Case institutions




- Technikon
 - Founded 1925
 - Mission of teaching adjusted 1993
 - Managerial
 - Low research activity – 8 publication units per year (1997-2001)

Case institutions



- University
 - Founded 1967
 - Teaching and research mission
 - Managed by academics for academics
 - Highest per capita research output in South Africa 2001 (0.89 per academic staff member)
 - Average of 300 research outputs per year (1997-2001)

Method

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- 2 exploratory cases at polar type institutions
 - 20 unstructured interviews (12 initial and 8 follow-up)
 - Senior managers (co-constructed a new reality)
 - Researcher was participant observer
 - Unstructured interviews with a schedule

Method



- Analysis – manually on Atlas.ti
- Miles & Huberman transcendental analysis
- Rigour
 - Verification of data by participants
 - Field notes (observational, methodological, theoretical)
- Researcher subjectivity
 - Audit trail (electronic and manual system)
 - Peer debriefing (verification of findings and discussions with colleagues)

Findings



Management philosophy

P 7: (126: 127)

“. . .you can't just let individual pockets of people continue doing what they are doing, without aligning it to some kind of coherent strategy.”

P 4: (125:127)

“. . . this is how a university functions . . . you [an academic] are here . . . you have the space and the freedom to express yourself, according to your needs, within the broader context of scientific practice.”

Findings



Performance management and career advancement

P11: (227: 229)

“ . . . every person has a timetable and each of my heads of department, each member of staff, will have a little roster.”

P 5: (197:198)

“ . . . I [a researcher] am busy with science and you are not going to influence me in the practising of my science.”

Findings



Academics' mindset towards research


P 7: (27: 29)

“Remember people came into this institution as teachers, of vocational orientation. That's what you were employed for.”

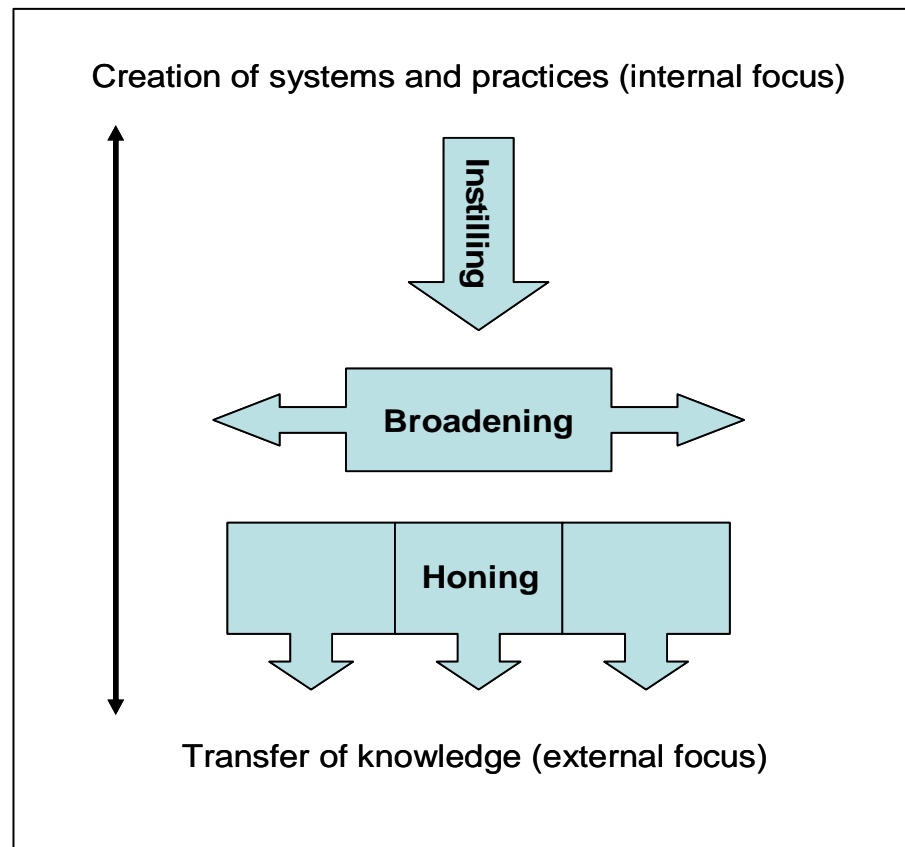
P 1: (101:101)

“And if you cannot publish then you aren't an academic. End of story.”

Findings

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- Prolonged lack of emphasis on research
 - Degree-awarding powers of the technikon
 - Centralized research management
 - Researcher development philosophy
 - Measures of research output
 - Postgraduate students

Phases of institutional research development



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