

**A MODEL FOR THE EVALUATION OF ABET
PROGRAMMES**

by

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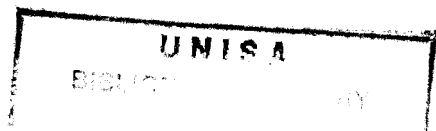
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to KB, Naa Getty and Akos for their love and support; and to Peter and May, my earthly parents, who sacrificed a lot for my education.

Deo Gratias.

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ABSTRACT

This research project focuses on a model designed for the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes. In the light of rapid changes in the socio-economic and political contexts in Africa and particularly in South Africa, this study examines adult basic education and training, which has become acknowledged as an indispensable tool for the transformation and development of societies. Since 1994 education has become a constitutional right for all citizens of South Africa. In an attempt to offer basic education and training to all adults many institutions and departments have established ABET programmes offering adults the skills they may need in order to contribute to the development of their communities. The lack of guidelines for instructing, assessing and evaluating ABET programmes prompted the choice of research topic.

The study begins with a review of relevant literature pertaining to the field of adult education and also provides a general discussion on didactics as it is relevant to adult education. The study proposes a model for evaluating ABET instructional programmes. Focus group discussions are employed as a research tool to validate the proposed model and its accompanying guidelines. The study reveals that, for ABET instructional programmes to be outcomes based, relevant, conducive to critical thinking and creativity and productive of meaningful assessment, a model for evaluating the programmes' performance in these areas is essential. Based on this pre-supposition, the study proceeds to develop a model for the evaluation of ABET programmes. It draws on literature pertaining to educational evaluation in general and extrapolates the findings to construct a model appropriate for evaluating ABET programmes.

In the field component of the study, endeavour is made to validate the model according to the perceptions of a sample of ABET practitioners. In-depth focus interviews are conducted to validate the various components of the model. In conclusion, the study recommends further research into the didactics of adult education and training (ABET) in order to improve adult education practices.

TITLE OF THESIS

A MODEL FOR THE EVALUATION OF ABET PROGRAMMES

Key terms employed in the study

Model for evaluation

Simplified structure

Instruction

Assessment

Basic Education

Adult Education

Adult Basic Education

Adult Basic Education and Training

Study Programme

Distance Education

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, I will be proposing a model for evaluating Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes. In order to arrive at the model, I will give consideration to the general tenets of ABET and the general principles underlying modes of evaluation issues, which will be further developed in subsequent chapters. The guidelines for instruction and evaluation included in the model will be validated by a limited empirical study. The first chapter begins with an elucidation of the setting for ABET in general but with special reference to South Africa. The discussion on the setting will focus on the role of governments, non-governmental organisations and employers in using ABET to improve the lives of our citizens.

1.2 THE SETTING

The urgent need to improve the quality of life of all citizens through the provision of quality education in all forms (i.e. formal, non-formal and informal) is of national importance to most developing countries.

Therefore, in planning strategies to foster national development, create equal opportunities for economic growth and to meet the basic needs of the people, (especially in rural communities where the majority of the population lives) various governments of emergent and developing countries put much emphasis on Adult Basic Education and Training (eg literacy, numeracy, skills training, family planning, and environmental and health education). The reason is that adult education – whether in literacy, numeracy or skills – is sine qua non to individual and national development. As Abiose Cole (1979:29) rightly puts it, “In the particular context of Africa, the chance of many citizens to contribute to nation-building in either family or village, in productive employment or in civic matters is, regrettably, hampered by illiteracy and poor basic education. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect adult educators to endeavour constantly to reach the poorest

and least educationally privileged members of society, bearing in mind that without their involvement society will progress, if at all at a very slow rate.”

A country may be described as developed when the larger part of its entire population can read, write and calculate, and when its human resources are well developed and put to the maximum use for the benefit of all citizens of that country. Indeed, the level of literacy in a country is one of the important indicators of development. Training, no matter how rudimentary, in reading, writing and numeracy, would do more to help the rural, non-literate adult understand (and manipulate) his or her environment than any other factor.

Through adult education, the non-literate adult could embark upon some income-generating venture, calculate his or her income, read local literature, understand, analyse and sometimes question government policies, read road signs and medical instructions, interpret the Bible or the Quran better, initiate and participate in development projects in his or her community, and become an active citizen.

In the light of this, it is imperative for any government wishing to address the socio-economic inadequacies of most individuals and communities in a developing country to opt for comprehensive programmes in Adult Basic Education and Training.

In South Africa, for instance, the historic inadequacy of school education has resulted in a situation where the majority of the adult population both in and out of formal employment has had inadequate education or no schooling at all. Abiose Cole (1979) appropriately puts it thus, “The need for educating adults to play meaningful roles in their societies became pressing after the achievement of political independence and the consequent need for rapid changes in the social and economic structure”. Most probably it is for this reason that the new government of South Africa has made the education of adults in particular a priority in its Reconstruction and Development Programme throughout all the provinces of the country. Indeed, the urgent need to provide adults with basic education and training is enshrined in the National Department of Education’s policy document on ABET (1997:7).

Realising the need for literacy and numeracy, many non-government organisations such as mining corporations, churches, communities, women's groups and some educational institutions in South Africa have either started adult basic education and training programmes for their employees, or encouraged them to undertake part-time courses in order to upgrade their skills. Most employers in the country have come to accept the fact that literacy may not only contribute to increasing productivity but also enhances and improves the safety of workers in the workplace. The presentation of literacy and numeracy classes by mining companies to their employees in recent times is a case in point. Many adults either denied themselves or were denied access to formal education during their youth, for political or sociological reasons. These adults now hail as steps in the right direction the efforts of government, NGOs and other employers to empower them through adult basic education and training.

To meet the demands of adult learners, many adult teaching and learning centres have been opened in communities throughout the country, where afternoon and evening classes are held, from Monday to Thursday during school terms, for beginners and learners with some degree of literacy. Adult learners converge on these centres to register for literacy, numeracy and skills-training classes. To facilitate this process, the National Department of Education Policy on ABET (1997:28) outlines unit standards for four different levels in a variety of learning areas. Although the levels are characterised by various unit standards and specific outcomes, in the following section consideration is given to the way in which the four ABET levels are accommodated within the broad parameters of a curriculum. In this overview the role of government, NGOs and employers in using ABET as a tool for improving the lives of many people, particularly in South Africa, has been briefly discussed.

1.2.1 Curriculum design and contextual consideration for ABET programmes

A curriculum may be described as a planned teaching/learning activity or programme for which an educational institution is responsible. A curriculum thus

deals with all that is considered necessary to be taught to learners by an educational institution. Farrant (1988:24) rightly points out that "curriculum represents the distilled thinking of society on what it wants to achieve through education. It tends to mirror society itself, reflecting its aims, values and priorities. It spells out clearly the knowledge society considers important and useful".

Touching on the need for diversity in the curriculum, Hinzen (1987:72) succinctly argues that "Education and learning far from being limited to the period of attendance at school, should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means and give the opportunity to all people for full development of the personality". This is a true recognition of the need for lifelong learning for all people.

Although much could be discussed here on the matter of curricula, the curriculum for ABET programmes must be contextualised. This researcher views a contextualised curriculum as a type of curriculum that takes into consideration the particular needs, situation or condition in which learners find themselves. Bhola (1997:46) appropriately says "the new conceptualisation of ABET will not censor 'adult literacy' out of its discourse, but will indeed make it central to all ABET. It will thus include the adult education needs of all the people – urban and rural; men and women and youth – and put modernisation in proper balance with democratisation". The curriculum for ABET programmes should be inclusive or comprehensive. That is, it should be broad enough to cover the learning needs of its clientele. Reporting on a successful ABET project for unemployed women Brine (1996:129) says "basic education needs were addressed within this vocational structure. For instance, 'book-keeping' required calculator and number skills; producing a business plan required literacy and written communication skills; co-operative working required verbal communication and negotiation skills". Adult learners come from various backgrounds have diverse experiences and learning needs, and may find themselves in different situations. They may need not only literacy skills (ie reading and writing) but also, in most cases, practical skills for survival. A situation or context of this nature calls on ABET providers and practitioners to adopt a more holistic approach to curriculum

development in order to provide participants with learning activities which will serve their felt needs and suit the context of their lives. Bhola (1997:49) aptly states: "those living and working in the culture of adult education should design and implement curricula from life as lived by the people and as lived over the whole span of life". It is for this reason that any learning programme for adults should take into consideration both the needs and the circumstances of the participants.

In considering the realities of the South African situation practitioners of ABET should design dynamic and developmental curriculum which may take into consideration current issues in the country. As noted by Bhola (op.cit) practitioners "will perhaps be offering a hundred thousand discussion groups every evening on topics of child care, women's health, alcoholism, AIDS awareness, environment, crafts, entrepreneurship, micro-management, local self-governance, reconciliation and on the topic of the rape epidemic because a million mothers, sisters and daughters of the nation are being raped every year".

Thus Adult Basic Education and Training programmes must be shaped to fit the social situation or context of their clientele. As Motala (1995:170) puts it, "the curriculum envisaged in the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) system must be based on learning which is relevant to the needs of the individual, communities and the society as a whole". Adult learners need to learn skills that are relevant to their everyday lives. As observed by Gelderblom and McKay (1995:48) "Learning needs are often linked to the areas in which the learners live". Adult learners in rural areas might need skills that are related to their lives and environment. It is therefore imperative for income-generating skills such as sewing, knitting and gardening to form part of their curriculum. Such practical skills could make adult learners self-employed as they could sell their products and services for a living. In addition to teaching with a view to the development of income-generating skills, the National Department of Education (1997:30-31) outlines unit standards for many areas of learning. This includes the teaching of language, literacy, communication, mathematics, literacy, human and social sciences, natural sciences, technology, economic and management sciences, life

orientation and arts and culture. These learning areas are often catered for in the Department's adult learning centres.

The adult learners who attend courses at learning centres may either have missed formal schooling or only had the opportunity of attending for a short period. Many of them may be parents and breadwinners (or are supposed to be) for their respective families. It is therefore appropriate for an ABET curriculum to include practical life skills. Thus in order to design an appropriate curriculum for Adult Basic Education and Training programmes, the adult educator needs to do a contextual analysis of the individuals, groups and community for which the programmes are meant. Such an analysis may not only assist the adult educator to understand the various groups (eg youth, women or church organisations) in that community but should also be helpful in assessing the learning needs of those groups. Practitioners in ABET programmes should not impose specific curriculum on learners as that might lead to failure of the project. Van Niekerk (1996:37) rightly says "ABET programmes tend to fail when they are designed by a controlling group as a benevolent gesture". It is indeed crucial for the adult educator to understand the needs, as well as fears, of those for whom the Adult Education Programmes are designed. Gelderblom and McKay (1995:65) rightly suggest that "as an ABET practitioner you need to understand the context in which people live since these may affect the arrangements you teach". Once the various stakeholders are known and understood, the adult educator may find solutions to problems that might otherwise jeopardise the programme at a later point.

The learning needs of adults in a rural community may be different from those living in an urban community. For instance, while adult learners in a rural community would like to study practical skills in, say, brickmaking, building, carpentry, sewing, knitting, gardening, poultry farming, literacy and numeracy, their counterparts in urban areas might like to acquire skills in hairdressing, co-operative skills (to pool resources as in a stokvel), communication and planning skills to deal with people in business, or skills for small scale business management. The core curriculum of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) (literacy and numeracy) should be supplemented with a variety of other important

learning programmes such as family planning, child care, environmental education and primary health care. These supplementary learning activities, apart from meeting the needs and expectations of the adult learners, could also help control population growth, decrease the infant mortality rate and develop an awareness of health and environmental matters. The above are usually defined as non-formal education, falling outside of the mainstream formal ABET programmes. However, there is a necessity for articulation between formal and non-formal programmes. The extended benefits of education are noted by Oxfam International (1999:21). According to Oxfam, "Education, particularly, education of girls and women, greatly enhances the ability of households to manage health problems, improve nutrition, ensure more effective diagnosis, and demand timely treatment". In other words, the more educated the mother, the healthier she and her child are likely to be.

In order to avoid imposing a particular curriculum on adult learners (something which could later jeopardise the Adult Basic Education and Training programme) the adult educator should involve, or consult with, the various groups in his or her community before designing an all-inclusive curriculum for a teaching /learning programme.

Involvement of interest groups in designing an Adult Basic Education and Training programme could not only make the curriculum all-inclusive but might also make the adult educator aware of tensions and doubts that need to be addressed before adult teaching/learning activities can be successfully implemented. A curriculum design which is based on contextual considerations therefore stands a good chance of laying a solid foundation upon which Adult Basic Education and Training programmes can be built.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

1.3.1 Observation from experience

The adult learners who gather at Adult Basic Education and Training Centres in most parts of the country to attend lessons come to the learning environment with a

wealth of life experiences, a high self-esteem, enthusiasm, self-motivation and high expectations. They have particular learning goals and in most cases need assistance toward the achievement of those goals. Since the adult learner has a learning goal it is likely that he or she will exhibit a higher level of learner participation although, like any other learner, the adult may have an individual learning style and problems. Adult learners are “volunteers” in learning (ie unlike children, for them the learning activity is not compulsory). In the words of Abiose Cole (1979:40) “adult education is usually a voluntary activity. Adult learners are under no compulsion to participate in a programme and they come to class or course (or listen to a radio series) at the expense of alternative uses for their leisure time (going to a pub or a football match or staying at home to chat with friends)”. They, therefore, do not require any educator control or authority as may be found in the formal education system. Unfortunately however, most of the facilitators of adult learning in the country are either trained or untrained primary, middle or high school teachers whose teaching methodologies are based on inappropriately pedagogic approaches. Since most of them are formally trained to teach children, they may lack the methodology for handling adult learners or classes. By implementing teaching styles, behaviours, methods and strategies which are not suitable for adult teaching/learning situations, educators might cause many of these “volunteers” of learning to abandon their studies altogether, resulting in non-achievement of teaching / learning goals.

It has also been observed that despite the much effort made by government to establish ABET firmly in this country, programme evaluation in that field has not been adequately addressed. It is believed that efforts in that direction can boost or contribute enormously to the establishment and practice of ABET in South Africa.

1.3.2 Assumptions underlying this study

From experience based on a number of years spent working as an adult educator, and from a detailed perusal of the pertinent literature, the researcher posits the following assumptions:

- that a model for instruction and evaluation of Adult Basic Education and Training programmes could assist both training institutes and ABET practitioners to serve their clients better
- that a model of instruction which includes multi-media design would not only enhance teaching but could also help learners to understand learning content better
- that instruction and evaluation methods and strategies that take into account the age, responsibilities and experience of adult learners might not only help learners to remain on course but could also assist them to achieve their learning goals.
- that the training of most of the educators who currently handle adult learning programmes in South Africa is not primarily geared towards preparing them to teach adults. Consequently they lack the skills needed for teaching and handling adult learners
- that students of Adult Basic Education and Training programmes are often motivated and have immediate learning needs to fulfil. Hence facilitators need to use appropriate teaching and evaluation methods or strategies that could assist learners to achieve their immediate learning goals.
- That a model for evaluation of ABET programmes could assist and guide practitioners in doing their work well (as educator's of adults).

1.3.3 The Adult Basic Education and Training Institute at the University of South Africa

In an attempt to help address the inadequacies in the provision and implementation of adult education, the University of South Africa set up an Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) in 1995. This Institute undertakes certificate and diploma training courses for practitioners of adult education, for example, community educators, literacy teachers, skills trainers and so on, throughout the

nine provinces of South Africa. The Adult Basic Education and Training Institute at the University of South Africa offers practitioners and prospective adult educators in South Africa the opportunity of studying various aspects of adult teaching methodology and the organisation and management of adult education programmes.

The Institute aims at equipping Adult Basic Education and Training practitioners on the certificate and diploma courses with teaching skills based on popular adult-education methodologies, which make use of modern multi-media instructional techniques. The certificate and diploma courses offered by the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Institute consist of modules, and the study guides are written in a learner-friendly manner (easy to comprehend) so that any average adult distance education student will be able to understand and carry on with the course. In all the provinces there are participants of the ABET courses teaching at many of the centres where rural adult learners undertake formal and informal courses on a part-time basis. Among the facilitators handling these adult classes there are also trained and untrained primary, middle and high school teachers who teach children on a full-time basis.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In view of the situation described, and basing his ideas on his experience as a trained adult educator who has personally handled formal adult classes at some teaching /learning centres and who is currently involved in training facilitators for ABET programmes the researcher came to the conclusion that there was a lack of guidelines for instructing, assessing and evaluating ABET programmes. Therefore the problem to be examined in this study can be expressed as follows:

THERE IS A LACK OF GUIDELINES FOR

- **INSTRUCTION IN ABET PROGRAMMES**
- **ASSESSING IN ABET PROGRAMMES**

- EVALUATING IN ABET PROGRAMMES; WHICH IS HAMPERING TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ABET STUDY PROGRAMMES.

1.4.1 Research questions

In finding a solution to the problem stated under section 1.4 above, the study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Will a study that offers guidelines for instruction and learning be of any value to ABET course providers, trainers and facilitators?
- Will the design and implementation of suitable assessment guidelines improve the quality of instruction and learning in ABET study programmes?
- How does assessment happen in ABET study programmes?
- Which aspects of ABET training programmes need to be assessed in order to give stakeholders feedback?
- How will the evaluation of the ABET programme as a whole improve the quality of training (instruction) and learning?
- How effective are the training strategies (eg distance education mode plus minimal face-to-face tutorials) employed by ABET course providers?
- How feasible will it be to train facilitators of adult learning programmes through the distance-education mode of instruction?

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

In the light of the problem stated under section 1.4 above, this study is aimed at:

- Providing a model for assessing learners in ABET programmes.
- Providing a model for evaluating ABET programmes.
- Providing guidelines for instruction in adult basic education and training (ABET) programmes.
- Helping policy makers, ABET Practitioners, NGOs, politicians and all stakeholders in ABET to realise the importance of effective training of educators who are implementing the ABET study programmes.
- Finding out (through a limited empirical study) whether the opinions expressed by students on the ABET instructional programmes correspond to the problem stated under section 1.4 above.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

The present study is concerned with the provision of a model for the evaluation of ABET study programmes. In view of this, the researcher limited his investigation to instruction, assessment and evaluation as obtained at the University of South Africa ABET Institute.

The researcher's focus on the Unisa ABET programme in developing his model was due to the following reasons:

- This particular programme has trained more practitioners than any other programme in South Africa. It is therefore pertinent for a study of this nature (ie providing a model for evaluation) to assess its impact.

- On the assumption that all ABET study programmes in South Africa face similar problems and have similar goals, needs, aspirations and characteristics, it was felt that the results of this study could be utilised by other institutions offering similar instructional programmes.
- For these reasons, the researcher limited this study to the Unisa ABET study programme.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

It is necessary to elucidate the main terms and concepts, which feature in the title *“A Model for evaluation of ABET Programmes”*, as well as others used by the researcher in this text.

- “Model” as used in this study refers to a simplified description of a proposed structure of a phenomenon on a smaller scale.
- “Evaluation” as used in this study refers to the process of finding out, appraising, examining or judging the value, the effects, worth, quality, degree, condition or outcome of particular instructional techniques on learners. Thus “evaluation” as used here involves judgement of quality or worth of instruction and learning.
- ‘Programme evaluation’ as used in this study refers to the process of finding out, appraising or judging the quality or worth of an ongoing project.
- “Adult basic education” as used in this study refers to a level of education that is similar to the first years of the formal school system. In South Africa this would be up to grade 9. Basic education includes literacy and numeracy (ie the skills of reading and writing, and calculating figures).

- Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is the term used by the National Department of Education in South Africa to describe adult basic education where education and training have been integrated. There are four ABET levels, which correspond to grades nine of the formal school system as obtains in the National Department of Education policy on ABET (1997:30).
- “Training” as used here refers to a situation where individuals or groups of people are given instruction and practice in a given skill or subject to enable them perform particular duties or tasks better.
- “ABET practitioner” as used here refers to someone who is involved in the teaching of ABET projects.
- “Assessment” as used in this study means the process of measuring and describing the value of something in order to know its real value or effect.
- “Multi-media” as used here in this study refers to the application or use of more than one medium in a teaching/learning environment. Freysen and Briel (1989:3) for example define educational media as “any persons or objects that are used deliberately to put across (communicate) learning content in the didactic situation”.
- “Adult Education” as used in this study refers to what UNESCO in 1976 at its 19th Session on Recommendations for the Development of Adult Education held in Nairobi, Kenya, described as “the entire body of organised educational process, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, college and universities as well as in apprenticeship whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social,

economic and cultural development". Thus, to put it briefly, adult education refers to all learning activities or experiences designed for adults, irrespective of methodology, content or level. UNESCO (1976) elucidates further that "Adult education, however, must not be considered as an entity in itself, it is a subdivision, and an integral part of a global scheme for lifelong education and learning. The term 'lifelong education and learning', for its part, denotes an over-all scheme aimed at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system".

- "Facilitator" as used in this study refers to a person who guides adult learning and makes it as easy as possible.
- The term "adult learner" as used in this study refers to an independent, mature individual who is undertaking a course of study either to acquire new skills or to improve upon existing ones.
- "Adult educator" as used in this study refers to a practitioner of adult education or someone involved in the education of adults, either formally or non- formally.
- "Distance education" (ie distance teaching and learning) as used in this study refers to what Keegan (1991:43) describes as "... that field of educational endeavour in which the learner is quasi-permanently separated from the teacher throughout the length of the learning process; a technological medium replaces the interpersonal education, the teaching/learning process is institutionalised thus distinguishing it from teach yourself programmes, two-way communication is possible for both student and the teacher thus distinguishing it from other forms of educational technology".
- "Empirical investigation" as used here refers to a research study undertaken to discover new knowledge and to determine the effectiveness

or viability of a strategy through experimentation, testing, interviews and experiential participation.

- “Literacy and numeracy” as used in this study refer to the ability to read and write, and to count and calculate.
- “An approach” as used here means a particular way or method of doing something.
- “An instructional or course design” as used in this study refers to a plan, an arrangement, a pattern, a sketch or drawing showing how a course would be taught to adult students in order to achieve intended goals.
- “N G Os” in this study stand for non-governmental organisations such as a church, community, women or youth bodies that offer some training for their members.
- “Informal education” as used in this study refers to what Coombs and Ahmed (1974:8) describe as “the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitude and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment at home, at work, at play, from the example and attitudes of family and friends, from travel, reading, newspapers and books, or by listening to the radio or viewing films on television.

Generally, informal education is neither organised nor systematic, yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person’s total lifetime learning – including that of even a highly “schooled” person”.

- The term “non-formal education” as used in this study refers to what Coombs and Ahmed (1974) describe as “any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the

population, adults as well as children. Thus defined, non-formal education includes, for example agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, occupational skills training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes and various community programmes of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, co-operatives and the like”.

- As used in this study, “continuing education” refers to the type of education adults undertake from time to time after initial training or education in order to upgrade or sharpen existing skills. Under continuing education, learning is seen as a lifelong activity. In the light of rapid changes in the contemporary world, no knowledge or skills can stand the test of time. Hence the need for continuing education.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into six chapters with the following content:

- Chapter one is devoted to the general orientation of the study. It therefore sets the stage and contains the introduction (the setting), the background to the problem (awareness of the problem), statement of the problem, research questions to be answered, the aims, objectives and the importance of the study, an explanation of concepts and terms used in the study and delimitation of the study and chapter divisions.
- Chapter two gives a review of adult education and suggests some strategies for ABET delivery. The discussion therefore covers the nature and scope of ABET, a brief historical perspective of ABET, the purpose of ABET, basic tenets for teaching adults, and the need for a multi-media approach to ABET delivery.

- Chapter three deals with evaluation of educational programmes. It discusses types and levels of evaluation, some pertinent reasons for evaluation, evaluation in distance education programmes, the criteria for evaluating distance education programmes, and the principles guiding the conducting of successful evaluation in adult basic education and training programmes.

- Chapter four provides a model for the evaluation of ABET programmes. It therefore discusses guidelines for effective teaching in ABET programmes, guidelines for assessing learners in ABET programmes, guidelines for evaluating ABET programmes themselves, and offers checklists for teaching, assessing and evaluating ABET programmes respectively.

- Chapter five focuses on the research component of the study. It therefore discusses the research design, data gathering instruments (rationalisation of sample and sample selection, use of documentation, interview schedules and interviews) a pilot study and the fieldwork (ie the research project), and reports on the results of the project.

- Chapter six discusses conclusions emerging from the study, and makes some suggestions and recommendations for the future role of Adult Basic Education and Training programmes in South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWING ADULT EDUCATION: SOME STRATEGIES FOR DELIVERY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the need for adult basic education and training (ABET) was discussed. The chapter also outlined the problem to be addressed in this study and referred to the relevant curriculum which could enhance the developmental role of ABET. In this chapter an attempt will be made to review the development of adult education in general, and discuss the nature and scope of adult education, the values of ABET, the basic tenets for ABET instruction and a multi-media approach to ABET delivery.

2.2 NATURE AND SCOPE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN GENERAL

As mentioned in chapter one in this work the author uses the generic term; Adult Education to include both aspects of what others describe as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). In this study the author conflates the terminology unless he wishes to refer to the concepts more narrowly. As Hely (1962:35) argues, "The use of the term Adult Basic Education to describe one small division of a whole lot of activities was to create confusion as to the importance UNESCO attached to Adult Education and the type of activities which came within its scope". In reality and practice it is more than just a marginal aspect of education in general. Concurring with Robert Blakely, Hely (1962:61) has this to say: "In complexity adult education traverses every degree from the most simple to the most advanced. In purpose adult education traverses every degree from education as an end in itself to education solely as means to other ends".

The scope of adult education is thus very wide. Adult education is an all-embracing term that covers all organised provision for the education of adults, whatever the level, motivation and purposes. Adult education is quite flexible in the way it is organised. It covers all voluntary activities and programmes. For example periodic seminars or conferences on health, development projects, community education, leisure, agricultural extension, family planning, child care,

skills training (eg poultry keeping, carpentry, painting or sculpture), literacy, numeracy, civic and environmental education, cultural activities (traditional songs, dirges, drama or dances), family life education and further training for adults – all fall within the domain and scope of adult education.

Kaye and Harry (1982:11) describe adult education as “the provision of educational facilities and resources outside the context of both the formal schooling system and the professional/vocational training sector, for educationally and socially disadvantaged adults”. Adult Education in the view of Kaye and Harry (1982) “should provide what is needed to help people live better lives and enable them to make full use of existing social, economic and educational facilities as equal members of society”. Thus adult education should equip adults with practical skills which can make them active members of their communities.

Writing on its scope and nature, Grattan (1971:3) points out that adult education is “all activities with educational purpose that are carried on by people engaged in the ordinary business of life”. Grattan (1971) mentions, inter alia, that the initial points in these definitions are that “the activities be purposefully educational, that they be engaged in by adults and that at the same time the adults also be engaged in their ordinary routine. The description also suggests that there are no limitations on what subject matter adults may study and (that) how they deal with the subject matter can be equally various, the way being wide open to experimentation. Adult education is thus a highly fluid, flexible, multifaceted operation in all its aspects. Its activities may therefore range from vocational, recreational, informational and liberal to political endeavours of adult members of society.

In view of the broad coverage of adult education activities, Bown and Tomori (1979:17) echo the issues mentioned here:

“Education has to increase men’s physical and mental freedom – to increase their control over themselves, their own lives, and the environment in which they live. The ideas imparted by education or released in the mind through education, should

therefore be liberating skills". Adult education thus covers a wide range of educational activities that could assist the individual adult to become a liberated and fully developed citizen of his or her community. In South Africa ABET includes all that has been referred to above. The difference here is that education and training are integrated into one system (National Department of Education policy document on ABET 1997:3).

2.3 A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ADULT EDUCATION

2.3.1 Adult education during ancient times

Adult basic education as a practice and discipline existed in ancient times. It is therefore not a new endeavour. Tracing the origin of writing, Grattan (1971:27) says, "The art of writing first appeared in Mesopotamia and spread from the Indus Valley. It developed to meet the needs of the account keepers in the Temples. Literacy spread most widely where a large trading class developed, for this class early discovered writing to be useful in keeping account and conducting communication". In Athens and Rome where the percentage of literate citizens is believed to have been quite high, oral modes of communication played a very large role in adult education. Talk, both informal and purposive, is and always has been a pedagogic instrument (mode of instruction) of immense significance to adult man. To many adult minds, talk is the most significantly educative of all forms of communication (Grattan 1971:25).

Adult education occupied a unique and important position in ancient Jewish and Greek education systems. Touching on the existence of adult education in ancient Jewish times, Smith (1965:6) restating Morris (1937) says, "The Jewish synagogue was the first school of adults". Smith (1965) further reports that among the Jews "popular education began with the teaching of adults gradually extending down until after six or seven hundred years it reached the child". This is a pointer to the fact that among the ancient Jews adult education preceded childhood education. In his book, *Temporal Andragogics*, Venter (1988:36) describes adult education provision among the Romans as early as 500 AD.

Grattan (1971:27) argues that “from a historical stand point, the importance of religious instruction and religiously motivated instruction in adult basic education cannot be over stated. Moses was certainly a teacher transmitting to the people the Ten Commandments and a considerable body of Law besides. The same is true later of Jesus and his disciples and great successors like Paul ...”.

Indeed, as noted from Biblical stories, Jesus Christ was an adult educator par excellence. His disciples were adults whom he trained, educated and prepared to be the foundation stone of his new movement – Christianity. Venter (1988:36), for instance, mentions that “Christians erected schools of their own, with the result that three institutions for adult education came into being”. These were the Catechumenical, Catechetical and the Episcopal schools. All the pupils of the catechumenical schools were adult converts to the Christian faith whose instruction in Christian life and doctrine was undertaken by the bishop himself (Venter 1988). This type of adult basic education was most relevant to the needs of the Jewish society at the time because it offered adults special training in singing, praying and devotional skills. The curriculum covered Biblical history, devotional singing, the Lord’s prayer, the doctrine of trinity, the sacraments and so on, according to learners’ level of development and progress they had made on the way to membership of the church, which was the ultimate objective of this kind of school.

2.3.2 Early development of adult education in England

The literature on adult education locates the roots of adult basic education far back in the history of mankind, but as Grattan (1971) states: “It got its present general shape during the last two centuries under the conditions of industrial society”. Quoting from a 1929 edition of an adult education journal Smith (1965:4) reports that “adult education in England is at least as old as Christianity and may be said to date from the landing in Kent in 597 AD of St Augustine who came to instruct the English in the new faith”. In modern England, however, as reported by Smith (1965) adult education was started in 1812 by William Smith, a door keeper of the Wesleyan Church who obtained permission to use two rooms on the church premises to teach men and women (ie adults) reading and writing. Adult education in England expanded from this humble beginning to the Workers’ Educational

Association (WEA) and the idea of a working men's college in 1854 (Smith 1965:8). Adult education started to gain popularity in England after 1854. The curriculum of the working men's college covered History, English, Grammar, Bible class, Geography and Arithmetic. Grattan (1971:65) reaffirms the foregoing views and says "British adult education had its origin in sporadic religiously inspired, philanthropic efforts during the eighteenth century to teach poor working people of all ages to read and understand the Bible and catechism. Usually the classes were held on Sunday for that was the only day on which the poor had leisure".

2.3.3 The development of adult education in South Africa

The history of adult education provision in South Africa presents a unique and pathetic situation. An educational supplement to City Press Newspaper (25-06-95) edition reports that "there are over 15 million illiterate adults in South Africa. Many of these people cope well with their daily lives without the skills offered by being literate, but many do not". This poor state of affairs can be traced to the country's history. Bhola (1997:44) for instance sums up the conditions of education under the old political dispensation in the following words: "the apartheid educational system had been designed for the continued social and economic reproduction of conditions in which the white was the boss and the black was in bondage. Of course, adult education, which is an inherently progressive sector of education, had no place under apartheid". Some night schools, according to Bhola (op.cit), "had been opened for blacks working at the margins of the economy to teach them some English or Afrikaans and in the process condition them to accept and internalise the imposed genetic, cultural, social and economic inferiority".

The development of adult education in South Africa started with night schools for black South Africans at the beginning of the 20th century. This development of adult education in the form of night schools illustrates a relationship between educational programmes and wider political and ideological interests or considerations. Bird (1984:192) reports that the first effective night school system

in South Africa at the beginning of this century was initiated by the South African Communist Party to train its members for political leadership in the party. Later on following the 1924 conference which launched trade union activities for Africans, party-initiated schools for adults were established under the general direction of the veteran Communist Party leader T W Thibedi who launched a drive against illiteracy. The night schools initiated by the Communist Party taught adults English, Arithmetic and History and were supremely concerned with the political education of their members. The night schools however had to contend with political controls, as well as administrative and financial problems.

Bird (1984:210) reports further that “the careful orchestrated attacks made by the state on the night school movement were part of a total strategy to implement apartheid”. In referring to extracts from parliamentary speeches by famous politicians on the debate concerning the Bantu Education Act of 1953, Christie and Collins (1984:160) offer readers the gist of why some political leaders of South Africa were not in favour of black education in general and adult education in particular. Christie and Collins (1984) report the following: “We should not give the natives an academic education, as some people are too prone to do. If we do this we shall later be burdened with numbers of academically trained Europeans and non-Europeans, and who is going to do the manual labour in the country? I am in thorough agreement with the view that we should so conduct our schools that the native who attends those schools will know that to a great extent he must be the labourer in the country.” Herein lies the *raison d’être* for the rigid control over adult education and training in particular and black education in general. In spite of deliberate state controls, regulations and cutting of subsidies, private adult education and training programmes in the form of night schools continued on a minimal scale under the scrutiny and watchful eyes of the state. Bird (1984:209) for instance mentions that in 1962 there were 33 night schools and 19 continuation classes with a total enrolment of 2,218 adult learners.

Writing on some efforts by a tertiary institution in the area of adult education for blacks in the Cape, Harrison (1973:346) reports that the first attempt at adult education in the form of literacy classes was undertaken by the then University Of

Good Hope (Now Unisa) in 1905 when the University set up evening classes for an initial 144 adult learners. The adult education activities for the University of Good Hope, however, did not cover most areas of the country. Nor did it offer programmes for illiterate adults. It nevertheless provided a much needed source of education for local people. Harrison (1973) reports further that a national system of adult education was formulated in South Africa after the Second World War as a result of the government's 1945 Eybers report which led to the creation of a division of Adult Education under the Department of Education. A National Advisory Council for Adult Education was then set up to assist in the promotion of art, and the advancement of science, physical education and adult education. The government's effort was, however, a drop in the ocean judging from the fact that no serious effort was made to educate many adult people of the country in literacy and practical skills. Malherbe (1969:7) estimates that in 1969 only about 13,000 persons out of a total African population of 11,000,000 had completed a secondary education. Malherbe (1969) further reports that "Little is done for the large number of African adults who require basic education; in the Republic, the Transkei and in all Territorial Authorities there are only 60 night schools providing primary education) and 21 continuation classes (post primary)". Despite the inadequate provision of adult education for all citizens of the country, segregation laws of 1957 and 1962 respectively closed down night schools for domestic and industrial workers in white areas (Malherbe 1969:7). As reported by Harrison (1973:382) the Spro-Cas education commission of 1971 "described this step as deplorable and backward" and consequently recommended that "night schools and continuation classes especially for adult Africans be considerably expanded and situated in areas where there is greatest demand for them". This historical survey on adult education in South Africa exhibits a situation of neglect and inadequacy; perhaps it was that poor state of affairs that prompted the government of National Unity to make Adult Basic Education and Training a priority in order to address this appalling situation.

2.3.4 International concern for adult education

Hely (1962:11) states: "For some decades adult education has been recognised, at least by educators as an inseparable aspect of citizenship in any democratic community. The difference today is one of degree and added urgency. Not only is adult education more than ever a national necessity but it has now become a matter of international concern". The United Nations Organisation since 1945 has organised series of conferences on the need for adult education as an instrument for development especially in the developing countries. The fifth international conference on adult education organised by UNESCO was held in Hamburg (Germany) between 14 and 18 July 1997. The conference, dubbed CONFNTEA V, (Fifth International Conference on Adult Education) was organised by UNESCO Institute of Education. CONFNTEA V, attended by 1, 507 delegates from 135 countries, reaffirmed the importance of adult education in the modern world. The conference emphasised the importance of adult education (especially skills training and literacy) in helping to alleviate poverty and ignorance; consolidating democratic processes, protecting human rights, and promoting creativity, competence, peace and gender equality among all citizens of the world. CONFNTEA V suggested to governments of various countries that they ensure that work-related adult education provide the specific competence and skills for entry into the labour market for occupational mobility, and to improve the ability of individuals to take part in diversified models of employment (CONFNTEA V 1997:34). The conference reaffirmed the fact that everywhere in the world literacy should be a gateway to fuller participation in social, cultural, political and economic life. Since literacy enables individuals to function effectively in their societies the conference suggested that it must be relevant to people's socio-economic and cultural contexts. Indeed, the various conferences held by the UN on Adult Education are yielding some fruits as they positively continue to direct and influence governments' policies and attitudes towards adult education in general as a tool for development, especially in the so-called third world countries.

2.4 THE VALUES OF ABET

While the previous sections outlined various developments in adult education in general, this section will provide a more detailed discussion of the value or import of ABET. Adult basic education and training has a variety of values relating to the individual, the community and the country at large.

2.4.1 Value of ABET for the individual

Skills and knowledge

Adult basic education and training has much value for the individual. It offers every adult who seeks or requires knowledge and skills access to them. In the words of Kaye and Harry (1982:9) “adult education should encompass ... education for, and by groups involved -- not merely the opening of new channels of access to a form of knowledge and culture designed by the privileged groups in the society for those of a less privileged status, but the encouragement of the less privileged to produce for themselves the knowledge and skills which they need in their struggle”. Thus through the provision of basic education and training for adults, individuals can acquire practical skills (eg sewing, knitting, painting, building, sculpting, typing, reading or writing) which may enable them to earn a living and become fully independent adult citizens of their respective communities and nations.

Adjustment to socio-economic conditions

Basic education and training for adults could assist individuals to adjust to marital, parental, vocational or socio-economic and political responsibilities. Hely (1962:11) says, “These adjustments involve aspects of education which cannot have any real meaning until the individual is an adult and a mature member of society”. It is a fact that most of the things people need to understand in the contemporary modern world are those which adults can fully grasp. Hence the need for adult basic education to enable adults to understand the world and its changes and challenges in order to adjust well to them. Hely (1962) states: “If man is to understand the changes which are taking place today and the problems

they create; if he is to have the knowledge which will enable him to control their effects, he must recognize that his education can never be complete". Surely all education must be a process of adjustment of each individual to the world around him or her. However, since his or her world does not remain constant but keeps on changing, and since the individual is one of the potential agents of change, adjustments should be a continuous process and not something which can be accomplished all at once during the stages of childhood or youth. This is the sentiment which underlies the South African government's intention to make lifelong learning a part of the adult education programme

Intellectual curiosity, freedom and leisure

Adult basic education and training has value in creating an atmosphere of intellectual curiosity, social freedom and tolerance, and stimulates in adults the demand and ability to take part in the development of the cultural life of their day. ABET can also make adults confident in whatever task they have to perform, and thus break down the barrier of psychological fear -- which makes some adults too powerless and impotent to discharge their duties to the full. With the leap in individual advancement many people have become lonely as family members are often apart from each other discharging professional or economic duties. ABET offers the lonely adult worthwhile activities like learning to play the organ or piano, paint, weave, knit, cook or garden, write short stories or poetry, or study some aspects of his/her own traditions and culture. ABET thus provides education for leisure.

Retraining and change of career

ABET has value in assisting individuals to change their circumstances, status or professions. Many adults find themselves in professions and careers that no longer pay well or are less lucrative on the job market. Others are losing jobs because automation does away with the demand for unskilled labour and replaces it with skilled technologists. Sharing this sentiment Hely (1962:75) says: "Today no one is more helpless than the mass production factory worker who sees automation dispense with his services on the conveyor belt. Technology is bound to move in

the direction of automation, for one of its principles is that manpower should never be dissipated by being used to do what machines can do because manpower is too costly and too precious". Such a principle, however cannot be understood nor appreciated by the hundreds and sometimes thousands of workers thrown out of work by technology. Another task of ABET therefore is to help men and women understand the factors behind the instability of vocational life and to assist them to acquire attitudes and values based on flexibility and willingness to change, and to make provision for the retraining of adults, which takes into account their needs, abilities and interests and also the new type of vocational opportunities which are opening up. Hely (1962) says: "The accelerating rate of change has focussed international attention on the inadequacy of formal education in childhood and on the need for further education throughout life". In this way adult basic education and training could be seen by many as a road to an improvement in financial status. As a vocational education it may assist adults to diversify their skills, know more and perhaps earn more.

Provision of education and training opportunities

Adult basic education and training could provide educational opportunities for individual adults who for various reasons have failed to obtain, or missed, formal schooling. Indeed, part of ABET's work deals with remedial education whereby adults "polish" or add to what they learnt some time before. It offers adults opportunities to learn new skills or broaden their interest and keep their intellectual faculties alert and flexible. ABET thus includes a wide range of activities by which men and women attempt to satisfy their thirst for knowledge and skills. As noted by Hely (1962: 73) "No matter how effective contemporary schooling may be it can never fully prepare youths to meet the world as it will be when they are adults. The fundamental function of adult education is to keep the balance between people and circumstances in the changing world". Thus ABET as part of the general lifelong education has a supplementary role to play in keeping professionals up to date in their various careers. Restating Mary Ely (1936), Grattan (1971: 11) sums up the value of ABET for the individual as follows:

- to educate the whole man
- to keep our minds open
- to base our judgement on facts
- to prepare for new occupations
- to ensure social stability
- to direct social change
- to improve teachers and teaching
- to enlarge our horizons

Grattan (1971) concludes that we need adult basic education and training because “only through it can the full development of man’s potentialities be achieved”.

2.4.2 Value of ABET for the community

Community building

The various skills and knowledge that ABET offers adults may assist them to initiate development projects to advance their communities instead of always waiting for government to come to develop their areas for them. Quoting from Sir John Maud’s speech at the 1949 UNESCO conference on what adult education could do for citizens of an emergent country, Hely (1962: 27) writes: “But now we find ourselves having apparently achieved power and not knowing how to use it.

The need which adult education, I would suggest, must today above all things is this need to find significance in our work, to find significant creative possibilities as citizens of our country, as citizens of the world, can be discharged”. If, indeed, adults were to have control over the changes taking place in the world around them then they would need to be well informed through adult basic education and training in order to exert their influence wisely within the frame work of democratic political institutions. Thus education for civic responsibility could only be achieved through adult basic education and training. “To educate is to liberate”, goes the saying. Hely (1962) says: “It is the task of adult education to provide individuals with the knowledge essential for the performance of their economic, social and political functions and especially to enable them, through participation

in the life of their communities, to aspire to a fuller and more harmonious life”.

For community members to understand change

An important value of adult basic education and training is to assist communities and their members to understand the nature of change and to recognise the extent to which they themselves can shape and fashion it and to control its effects. We live in an era of rapid change. Community members should become aware of this fact and accept modernisation, which is concomitant to changes in the rest of the contemporary world. Kanyile (1988: 14) rightly says: “Traditional communities and cultures have to change in order to modernise and adult education programmes have a role to play in changing a culture”. By implication, the adaptation of African cultures to the modern way of life can be better achieved through the provision of adult basic education and training.

2.4.3 Value of ABET for the country

Fast economic development.

Adult basic education and training has a great contribution to make towards the economic development of a country. This is because adults could use their newly acquired knowledge and skills at once for the benefit of a country, whereas years would pass by before children reached that stage where they could practically use the knowledge and skills acquired. ABET therefore has a speedier effect on a country’s economic development than educating children in school. Sharing these sentiments, Bown and Tomori (1979:25) say: “The whole point of adult education is to help people to contribute to, promote and participate in national development”.

Basic quality education for citizens.

The UN conference (CONFINTEA V) held in Hamburg, Germany in July 1997 recognised and reaffirmed the role of adult basic education in responding to profound changes taking place in various countries of the world. ABET in a developing country such as South Africa should act as a means by which adult citizens of all races who are educationally underprivileged may gain the knowledge

and skills to survive in the ever changing contemporary world. The government's new policy on adult basic education and training (1997: 7) states that " ABET must be understood within the overarching goal of building a just and equitable system which provides good quality education and training to adult learners throughout the country". Adults thus can utilise the knowledge and skills gained from ABET to press for the building of a more humane society.

Improvement of manpower needs

ABET has value in improving the manpower needs of a country. It offers in-service training or continuing education programmes for modern manpower needs of emergent countries. At independence most African countries have few highly-skilled personnel. As less skilled people are on the job in the various sectors of the economy, additional specialised education and training in management and technology must be given to them, as adults, in order to equip them to cope with the new tasks and national responsibilities entrusted to them. Thus as stated in the government's new policy on ABET (1997:16) one value of adult basic education and training is to create "a literate South Africa within which all its citizens have acquired basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation".

2.5 THE BASIC TENETS FOR TEACHING ABET

In the previous section we considered various views on the definition, nature, scope and values of adult education. It was stated that adult basic education and training attempts to address shortages in basic skills and knowledge among adults and that the "basic-ness" of these needs informs the approach used to mediate them. In this section, approaches to teaching basic skills and knowledge to adults will be addressed. According to Ampene (1979:101) "the purpose of learning is to bring about a desired change in the behaviour of the learner; therefore all who engage in a learning activity are concerned that the learning should be as effective as possible, so that the objectives of the learning efforts may be achieved. In this regard, what the teacher does or does not do is of crucial importance". It is

advisable that the guiding principle in the selection of a technique should be the extent to which it will help in making the learning experience as meaningful and as real as possible (Ampene 1979). Clark and Starr (1996:27) also say “The strategies and techniques we use in our teaching should be consistent with the best principles of learning”. In line with the foregoing statements, this writer is of the opinion that for any adult basic education programme to succeed it should be guided by basic didactic principles. The following didactic principles can be considered to be the basic tenets for ABET delivery.

2.5.1 Self-motivation

Adult learners come to the learning situation of their own accord and are therefore usually self-motivated. This could stem from factors such as the enjoyment of learning specific new skills or the hope of promotion or financial reward. Knowles (1990:68) says “goal-setting by the learner is important as motivation for learning and his successes and failures determine how he sets future goals”. To arouse and sustain the will to learn is a basic concern of every educator. However, in adult basic education educators are in most cases blessed with learners who are ready to learn. Discussing the nature of intrinsic motivation among adults Duminy and Sohngé (1986:29) say, “The pupil is appealed to so directly by the subject matter and everything that belongs to the teaching – learning situation, that he shows spontaneous interest without the need of any encouragement from outside the situation. The responsibility of the facilitator therefore is to nurture and sustain this motivation by creating learning opportunities, which will get learners actively involved in learning events. This could be done by making learning activities learner centred, giving correct exposition to content (ie effective communication), formulating clear and achievable learning out-comes, applying appropriate media and encouraging learners through self-activity throughout the didactic process.

2.5.2 Establishment of a conducive educative environment

Duminy and Sohngé (1986:29) point out that when the learning situation is experienced as something meaningful, there emanates from it an “almost endless stream of real and sound motivation”. As being a social set up a learning

environment should provide an atmosphere that helps adult learners to meet their learning needs and goals. As aptly noted by Knowles (1990:223) adult learners need to be psychologically and physically safe. This is why it is very crucial for the facilitator to make the teaching-learning environment learner-friendly: a situation where teaching is conducted in an atmosphere of support and mutual respect. This writer is of the view that it is essential to provide a conducive educative environment in adult basic education and training programmes. The educator/trainer should therefore create or set a climate that is very conducive to adult learning. For the Adult Basic Education and Training teaching-learning environment to be conducive to adult learning it should exhibit the following characteristics:

- a spirit of mutual respect
- a supportive and caring atmosphere
- collaborative rather than competitive attitude
- a climate of mutual trust and mutual responsibility
- a strong emphasis is on learning and not teaching per se
- recognition of learners' prior life experience
- individualisation
- effective planning
- a holistic teaching approach

2.5.2.1 Mutual respect

In a learning environment that exudes a spirit of mutual respect participants perceive one another as colleagues and sense that the facilitator or instructor also perceives them as learners who have each brought into the teaching/learning environment a reservoir of experience that can be a rich resource for one another's learning.

2.5.2.2 *Supportive and caring atmosphere*

Adult learners must feel safe and should be treated as adults. Tables and chairs used by adult learners must be comfortable; they should not be those meant for children. The room where teaching and learning take place should be airy, well lit and not crowded.

Adult learners must feel respected and liked. They should be free to express themselves openly in order to reveal their mature feelings on learning issues. Adult educators/trainers should not be rigid when teaching adults. Rigid or strict teaching, assessment and control procedures (characteristic of a formal school system) do not have a place in an adult learning environment. Nyerere (1976:17) aptly puts it thus: “teaching which induces a slave mentality or a sense of impotence is not education at all – it is an attack on the minds of men”.

2.5.2.3 *Collaborative rather than competitive attitude*

Adult learners should be encouraged to share what they know and can do rather than holding back for fear that others might look or do “better” than they. Facilitators of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes need to give adult learners praise and not judge them as this could be taken as ridicule and an affront to their dignity as mature people.

2.5.2.4 *A climate of mutual trust and mutual responsibility*

A climate of mutual trust and responsibility should be created so that participants on ABET Programmes see their instructors or resource persons as fellow learners – not as authority figures to control or manipulate them. The facilitator, trainer or resource person should create a learning environment in which adult learners will be free to explore their life world, express themselves and solve learning problems through creative thought.

2.5.2.5 *An emphasis on learning and teaching*

The ABET teaching learning environment should be a place where emphasis is on learning and not teaching per se. In fact if an ABET lesson were being televised,

the cameras should focus on how the learners are learning and not so much on how the trainers or facilitators are teaching.

2.5.2.6 Recognition of prior life experiences of adult learners

Recognition of prior experience of adult learners is very important. The National Department of Education (government) policy document on ABET (1997:19) clearly states that “recognition will be given to prior learning experiences which learners have obtained through formal, non-formal and informal learning and or experience”. Adult learners come to the teaching/learning situation with a wealth of experiences accumulated over the years from their economic and social life. Such experiences must be recognised by the facilitator. Knowles (1990:29) acknowledges the fact that too much learning consists of the vicarious substitution of someone else’s experience and knowledge. Knowles (1990) further argues that “the resource of highest value in adult education is the learner’s experience and that experience is the adult learner’s living textbook”.

Experience from economic life

Many participants in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes are working adults. They may be employees of state departments, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community Based Organisations or self-employed adults. During their economic (working) lives as adults learners may be exposed to many things which could influence their lives in general and their learning situation in particular. Participants on Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes may thus integrate experiences gained from their working lives into the new skills and knowledge being taught. Such prior knowledge or experience assists adults to understand new learning matter much faster. New skills acquired at a faster rate by adults could enhance the performance of their chosen careers.

Experience from social life

Being community members, leaders, parents or married people adult learners may come into contact with a variety of people, situations and unique experiences. For example, through participation in cultural activities such as marriage, religion,

settling of disputes and voluntary community services, adults could acquire a wealth of relevant knowledge and skills informally. In adult learning situations educators need to analyse the unique socio-economic experiences of learners and to draw from such experiences in order to make learning more relevant and participatory. They should also arrange learning activities in such ways that would give adult learners the fullest opportunity for participation and good chance to practice what they have learnt in order to improve their socio-economic lives. Since adult learners come from diverse backgrounds, making use of their prior experiences during the didactic encounter could benefit the whole learning group. Adult learners are usually motivated and eager to participate in learning activities that are related to their life experiences. Concurring with this viewpoint Fraser and Loubser et al (1990:57) aptly say, "adult learners in particular benefit when everyday life experiences are simulated during instruction". For instance, in a lesson meant to equip adult learners with practical skills, an explanation, example or process demonstration based on the previous social or economic experience of one of the learners could go a long way in helping the other learners understand the current lessons and acquire the needed skills faster. The use of didactic techniques like group discussions, field work or project work could also assist adult learners to apply what they have learnt in real life situations. Ampene (1979:108) concurs with the view stated above when he says: "Making the learning experiences as realistic and useful as possible requires that the tutor should apply methods, techniques and devices which will encourage the participation of the learner in the learning process".

2.5.2.7 *Individualisation*

Each adult in a group of learners is an individual. Adult learners differ in terms of age, level of intelligence, experience, skills, culture and background. For example, adult learners may be either slow or fast, introvert or extrovert, determined or lacking in determination. Some may depend on the educator's input and require formal teaching, while others may be able to work more independently. Terblanche (1995:54) is of the view that adult learners are usually confident, pragmatic and goal-orientated. Such learners are usually self-sufficient and have an interactive,

experiential learning style; and although they need a support system of peers, they are in competition only with themselves. These active learners profit from previous experience and value learning from all inputs. In view of the diversity among adult learners the educators should keep in mind that each individual adult learner has his/her own learning style. The adult educator/facilitator should take this fact into consideration when selecting appropriate methods or techniques for teaching, in order to ensure that the individual adult can learn according to his/her own style, pace and characteristics. A few of the unique characteristics of adult learners that may influence adult teaching learning are discussed briefly below.

Slow versus fast learners

Some adult learners are slow in learning. They may thus take a long time to complete a learning task or comprehend whatever learning they may be taught. Other adult learners may be fast learners and can easily comprehend or quickly complete whatever learning tasks may be assigned to them. These two groups of adult learners may influence one another in the didactic situation. The slow learners, for instance, could hold the whole group/class back while the fast learners could also put undue pressure on the slow learners. In most cases slow learners are left behind. To hold these two groups in check, the adult educator, facilitator or tutor should make sure that neither of the two groups of learners dominates the didactic activities (ie class or group discussions). The adult educator, facilitator or tutor should employ teaching techniques that would offer adult learners the freedom to choose the pace of learning that suits them best.

Introvert versus extrovert learners

In adult teaching/learning situations some of the participants may be introverts (shy, withdrawn or lacking confidence) while others could be extroverts (bold, open and reaching out to colleagues and facilitators more easily). The facilitator of an adult teaching/learning programme should therefore employ a variety of appropriate teaching media, teaching styles, methods or approaches to accommodate this fact. Textbooks, video, audio, charts, pictures, role play and demonstrations are some of the media and methods of teaching which when used

effectively could accommodate all participants (introverts and extroverts alike) in the teaching/learning transaction. The adult educator/facilitator should thus vary his/her teaching styles, methods and strategies. Individual teaching where attention is focused on one adult learner at a time should be used side by side with the group method of teaching in order to accommodate both the timid and the bold learner. Supporting this viewpoint Fraser and Loubser et al (1990:59) have this to say: "The individualizing method of teaching is therefore an attempt not only to coax the learner into active participation but also to give recognition to the unique individual character of each learner".

Determined versus less determined learners

Among participants in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes are learners who are very much determined either to improve their knowledge and skills or to make up what they lost out on during their youth. There are also participants who have little determination and are uncertain or unsure of themselves. Such adult learners could drop out when and wherever any hindrance comes their way. Adult learners who are determined to learn have confidence and high motivation (ie they have urgent learning needs to fulfil) and may therefore withstand the hindrances and frustrations associated with learning efforts. In sustaining adult learners' interest, motivation and determination, the facilitator/adult educator should seek to find out the motives of individual learners and try to address such concerns individually as much as possible. Such support measures could assist adult learners to increase their determination and enable them to complete their studies.

Dependent on teacher versus more independent learners

Some of the participants in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes may depend on the teacher's input while others require opportunities which will enable them to get actively involved in learning activities. Those who depend on the teacher's input always require formal teaching in order to achieve their learning goals.

Fraser and Loubser et al (1990:58) aptly put it thus: "Some learners are dependent upon the teacher's input and prefer a more formal teaching style, while others perform much better when they are given the opportunity to become actively involved in the teaching process and discover facts through inquiry". To this end the facilitator should vary his/her teaching methods and strategies in order to assist all types of learners in any particular didactic situation.

2.5.2.8 Effective planning

Planning is the foundation for all good teaching and thus also for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes. Clark and Starr (1996:100) say: "Planning is necessary to create a pleasant classroom atmosphere as well as a purposeful teaching/learning activity that is free from dead spots and wasted motion -- in short good planning promotes worthwhile learning". Thorough planning as a basic tenet in ABET programmes is crucial because no instructional task could be effectively executed without a laid-down plan which serves a guide for programme implementation. Citing Mager (1955) Curzon (1990:131) says: "If you don't know where you are going, it is difficult to select a suitable means for getting there". Planning for effective teaching in ABET programmes should include at least the following:

- formulation and selection of intended outcomes (instructional objective)
- selection of appropriate teaching methods, approaches or strategies
- selection of appropriate teaching media

Formulating and selection of intended instructional outcomes

Every didactic business transaction involving an educator and a learner should have a goal. Such a goal or intended instructional outcome should guide the educator/facilitator in his/her effort to impart skills or knowledge to adult learners. Indeed, if one knows where one is going one takes the necessary things that will help one to get there safely. Setting objectives (outcomes) is therefore the first step in planning a lesson. Clark and Starr (1996:14) rightly say: "The job of a theatrical producer is to provide a setting in which the action of the play can take place. So it

is with the teacher". The educator needs to provide a setting for learning, which includes effective planning for instructional outcomes. Effective planning of the teacher's input requires that the educator/facilitator of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes formulates and selects intended outcomes of the lesson.

Selection of appropriate teaching methods, approaches and strategies

After having formulated teaching/learning outcomes the facilitator/educator should then select appropriate teaching methods, approaches or strategies that will enhance the achievement of the intended instructional outcomes or goals. Teaching methods or strategies differ from lesson to lesson depending on what instructional outcomes (goals) are in mind. In a skill-training lesson the educator, trainer or facilitator could use demonstration as a method of teaching. He or she could put adult learners into smaller groups and assign each group some practical learning tasks to be completed. Such practical tasks would be done under the supervision and guidance of the educator or trainer. In selecting instructional outcomes and appropriate teaching/learning methods the educator/trainer should bear in mind the type of learners, their learning needs, the number of learners, classroom accommodation, individual differences, appropriate teaching media, length of instructional session, the role learners will play during the lesson in order to realise the intended outcomes of the instructional activity. Careful selection of appropriate methods for realising instructional outcome could also improve the chances of learner participation in the teaching/learning activities. The methods of teaching a particular lesson would determine the role of learners in that lesson.

Selection of appropriate teaching media

The selection of teaching media is dictated by the instructional outcomes, methods and strategies that were chosen to realise the intended learning objectives. In selecting suitable or appropriate teaching media for a particular lesson the instructor should consider the aims of the lesson and how the lesson will be taught to learners (the method of teaching). In a practical lesson like typing, the instructor may need (among other things) teaching media such as a typewriter, a computer, a

video on typing, pictures of typing sessions and a slide projector to demonstrate his or her lesson practically. Thorough planning is therefore a sine qua non to effective instruction in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes.

2.5.2.9 A holistic teaching approach

A human being is seen as a totality or a whole entity. A person normally observes things in wholes. Hence learning matter (content) should be presented to him or her not only in parts but also as a whole. When instructing adult learners, instructors should therefore be concerned about all the learning needs of the learners and not only part of them. The adult learner needs to confront the global or holistic view of the learning task before he or she attempts to master it. As Duminy and Sohng (1986:24) mention, "Man observes everything as a whole and ... learning is promoted when subject matter is presented in the form of wholes rather than harping on isolated parts, only later to be conjoined into a bigger whole". For instance in a literacy lesson a facilitator/ adult educator may not concentrate on alphabets or phonetics right from the beginning. He or she may first teach learners how to read a whole sentence, then phrases, words and letters in the sentences and finally the alphabet. Adults usually find it easier to learn things in totality before he parts are taught to them. To use the words of McKay and Northedge (1995:83) "... instead of just learning the sound of letters, learners worked on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills together. Adults cannot wait for years to move from one skill to another". The principle of totality or the holistic approach to teaching is therefore appropriate for adult teaching-learning activities.

2.6 MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH TO ABET DELIVERY

2.6.1 Introduction

The previous section of this chapter discussed the basic tenets of adult basic education and training in particular. This section elucidates how multi-media could be designed, planned, selected and integrated to support the basic tenets of ABET instructional programmes. In traditional or early societies (and even today) formal education (of both child and adult) was based on conventional methods in which the educator had to meet learners face-to-face at a given place. However

geographical locations, socio-economic and political changes or conditions of the contemporary modern society make it quite difficult for many adults (most of whom are workers, breadwinners or homemakers) to attend full-time face-to-face courses. The realisation that in the contemporary world human contact alone may not be enough, or the only way, to impart or acquire knowledge and skills has made the application of technological devices important in educating people both far and near. Skills and knowledge needed for survival in contemporary modern society may be obtained through technological communication devices like the telephone, computer, slide projector, video, audio cassette packages, internet and radio or television broadcasts.

The various courses offered at the University of South Africa and other tertiary institutions in the use of some of these technological devices are cases in point. The application of any of these media or a combination of two or more could enhance the realisation of adult education (teaching-learning) aims and outcomes. Thus through the application of multi-media techniques teaching and learning transactions in adult education could be successfully undertaken. Multimedia is therefore a vehicle for adult teaching and learning activities. Emphasising the importance of multi-media in adult education Kaye and Harry (1982: Preface) have this to say: "Broadcasting, be it through radio or television in conjunction with local provision with tutors and counsellors, can be a most effective way of reaching groups that might not otherwise be reached. Multi-media methods using distance learning and independent study as their main thrusts, have already proved successful in a wide range of countries and contexts for formal education – even at degree level".

Thus the utilisation and application of multi-media techniques to Adult Basic Education and Training has become increasingly important in adult teaching/learning programmes. The upsurge of technology in the contemporary modern world has had tremendous implications for adult education (teaching, training and learning). The explosion in communication which is concomitant with technological advancement has brought the classroom nearer to the learner than ever before. Technological devices resulting in multi-media instructional strategies

have now become the norm rather than the exception in modern adult education and training. Thanks to technology, even learners in rural areas without electricity can now tune in to broadcasts from windup radios. Indeed, the application of modern multi-media instructional modes to teaching in general and adult education in particular has become so spectacular and important that the educator's role can no longer be held back by the chalk-and-talk form of communication alone. Supporting this viewpoint Bhola (1988:120) says, "If the world has become one big classroom then the sky has become one big chalkboard". Today virtually every sector of society is dependent on technology and adult education is no exception. In view of this constant application of multi-media to adult education (teaching and learning activities) one can say with some certainty that technology is making spectacular strides in the field of Adult Basic Education and Training. Indeed the application of multi-media (technological) devices to adult education has become a didactic reality to which the contemporary adult educator has to adapt. In the opinion of Moody (1989:29) "Coming to terms with technology merely requires keeping up with it; enjoying it, learning what it can do -- letting your imagination as an educator or as a parent move one step beyond".

2.6.2 Media design and planning in ABET programmes

Briggs (1977: Glossary) defines media as "the physical means of conveying instructional content – books, films, video tapes, slide tape presentation etc. including the teacher's voice and non-verbal behaviour". To Freysen and Briel et al (1989:3) educational media refers to "any persons or object that are used deliberately to put across (communicate) learning content in the didactic situation". From the two descriptions above one can argue that media design and planning involve the selection, arrangement, orchestration and matching of relevant media with methods to enhance the achievement of instructional goals. Media design and planning incorporate the ways in which various media would feature at the different phases of a lesson (ie introduction, presentation of content, evaluation) and the activities to be undertaken by both the educator and the learner throughout the instructional process. In a nutshell, media design is itself the instructional pattern for utilising media for instructional purposes. It is a decision making

process for planning and selecting media for instruction. Kemp and Dayton (1985:7) aptly state that “instructional media of any type should be carefully planned and produced, whether they will be part of an application of an instructional design plan or individual entities of their own”. In fact, instruction given during the teaching/ learning encounter, (whether through a face-to-face human mode or not) is a deliberate act by an educator to draw the learners’ attention so that effective learning can take place. In other words the purpose of instruction is to give meaning and explanation to new concepts and to stimulate learners’ interest and involvement in a learning activity.

When designing and planning media for instructional purposes the major determining factors should include the objectives of teaching/ learning, the content to be taught, the size of the group of learners, the learning environment, learning characteristics and instructional methods. Kemp and Dayton (1985) explicitly say “Determination must be made of which media, in which form and at what time, will most effectively and efficiently provide the most relevant experiences for learners. Just as various instructional objectives require different kinds of learning, appropriate instructional resources should be matched to required tasks. Each separate concept to be taught should require a separate consideration of resources”. Certain types of media can best serve certain purposes (eg sound or print, motion or still pictures). As Potgieter (1987:173) puts it, “The symbol system or ‘languages’ that are chosen to code a particular message prescribe the different media that can be used to convey the message”. In a rural environment where there is no electricity, the educator could match his or her teaching methods with improvised media that would not require electric power. Media such as pictures, print, wall charts, audio cassette (using batteries) and wind-up radios would be suitable in such an environment. Different teaching media are also better suited to different types of lessons. As Fraser and Loubser et al (1990:161) observe, “During the actualization of existing knowledge the chalkboard or overhead projector will be of enormous value, while other media such as slide projectors, wall charts and flannel boards will probably be more suitable during the exposition of new content”. Slide projectors, overhead projectors and other complicated media will also be less effective for the teaching of the pre-primary children or secondary

school children or adults. Therefore careful planning of which media will be used during a lesson is recommended (Fraser & Loubser 1990).

In a practical lesson with an outcome of helping, say, a group of adult learners to acquire typing skills, the important media that were to be part of the lesson design or feature prominently throughout the instructional process (at all phases of the lesson) could be computers, typewriters, charts containing alphabets A to Z, ribbon, typing keys (manual), pictures of typing sessions, video cassette and deck for showing a real training session in typing, and of course the human medium (the trainer). The trainer could unlock the content through various teaching methods like demonstration, narration, question and answer; group work and individual work. Curzon (1990:310) says: "Any instructional situation must provide for four needs: stimulation (selectivity, novelty, etc), order (organisation of concepts), strategy (mental imagery and elaboration) and meaning (meaningfulness and feedback)". The trainer should therefore make use of media materials and methods relevant to the course and comprehension level of his adult learners. Using the human medium as in narration or in demonstration, the vocabulary used (either verbally or visually) and its sophistication, as well as the rate at which the content is presented to the learners, are crucial issues to be considered when designing media for instruction. At the introduction stage the trainer (educator) may let trainees go round the computers and typewriters, touch and feel them and even see a video on a practical typing session for about 10 to 15 minutes before the educator starts his or her training session. By using narration, demonstration and question and answer methods trainees could interactively acquire the basic knowledge of what is required in typing, as well as repeatedly practising the skills until they are mastered.

At the evaluation stage the educator (trainer) could give trainees some typing tasks (eg typing the English alphabet A-Z) to be completed within a given time. While this goes on the trainer could go from desk to desk to identify any difficulties and assist learners individually. The trainer could also collect students' work to assess. If the trainer observes some difficulties or shortcomings on the part of trainees, as a

way of ending the training for the day he/she might offer the adult learners another video session on typing skills. The educator could stop the machine from time to time to ask or allow questions and explain important points to trainees.

Dreckmeyr and Maarschalk (1994:124) suggest that a facilitator planning and designing his/her own media for instructional purposes should take a number of factors into consideration. These factors include:

- the use of instructional or demonstration materials familiar to learners whenever possible, for example, drinking glasses instead of test tubes (unless it is contrary to the aim of the experiment)
- planning for learners to handle the demonstration material themselves during specific activities
- always testing the equipment before the demonstration to establish that it is in good working order
- initiating the learners into the use of new equipment or media by slowly explaining and using it and then allowing learners to become familiar with some simple aspects themselves.

Indeed, as noted by Kemp and Dayton (1985:47) “A number of instructional media designed for instruction have shown the value of having the learner participate in some way during or immediately after studying the material. These experiments without reservation, have proven that active participation definitely helps learning”. The way to create participation is to make involvement an inherent part of the material itself. This in fact brings about interactive learning in which while working with materials a learner is frequently directed to answer a question, perform some task or engage in some kind of activity. These participation techniques, in the opinion of Kemp and Dayton (1985) “Often require a break in the presentation – having the student stop the projector or recorder to do something or promoting immediate activity after studying a section of the material”. The educator should also plan for self-evaluation of the participation results and provide feedback to the learner by indicating the correct answer. Indeed, the proper

application of media to teaching could make learning more interactive. The quality of learning could also be enhanced through interaction between a facilitator and adult learner. Farr and Schaeffer (1993:53) conclude that “an intermediary step between identifying and matching objectives, methods and media is determining which methods can be accomplished using which media”. For example, when using discussion, peer teaching, case studies or group project methods in teaching, the use of audio media could be valuable.

2.6.3 Media selection in ABET programmes

“We live in a world of media. We are a visual culture, living in an environment impacted by media messages of every kind and through experience, we’ve grown increasingly sophisticated in the way we both witness and contribute to the communication envelope which surrounds us” (Anderson 1976: Foreword). Surely, from early times to the present day, media have constituted an important aspect of the teaching/ learning process and they will probably continue to be an indispensable part of education for centuries to come. Supporting this view point Schramm (1977:12) has this to say: “So far as we know, there has always been instructional technology. The cave dweller has stone edges for demonstrating and practising the skills of cutting and shaping bone needles for demonstrating the skill of sewing, small bows and arrows for demonstrating and practising the skills of hunting. Even today, in some countries, we can see a patch of sand used, as sand must have been used millennia ago, for practising drawing and counting. And the ancient technology of the slate still exists in our schools in the form of chalkboards”.

Experience and observation make people aware of the fact that a major characteristic of the world’s development during the present century has been an unprecedented, tremendous explosion in the use of media in education at all levels and phases of teaching / learning. Thus media assume an important role in every aspect of instructional planning and design. McLuhan (1974:13) echoes the above sentiments when he writes, “This is the age of anxiety for the reason of the electric impulsion that compels commitment and participation quite regardless of any point of view”. A wide range of educational media is now available and there is also

greater access to a diversity of new media, which provide for further applications and control by both educators and learners. However, the use of the media available in the teaching/ learning environment does not necessarily make a learning experience successful. It is therefore imperative for the most suitable medium or media to be carefully selected by the educator in order to achieve desired educational outcomes. Sharing this viewpoint Freyzen, Briel and Potgieter et al (1989:24) say, "In order to utilize media successfully, ... it is essential that the best medium or media for a specific objective be selected and be integrated into the teaching/ learning situation in a didactically responsible manner". Media selection should therefore not only be based on what is readily available. It would be unwise to use a particular medium just because it is easily available. Lamenting on the difficulties regarding media selection Schramm (1977:15&263) writes: "The process of selection is a complex and difficult one asking for better theory than we actually have There is no cookbook of recipes for media selection that can be applied automatically in every educational system. It is necessary to carefully consider local needs, situation, and resources and then interpret such guidelines as exist".

At whatever level the decision of media selection is made there is the need to clearly specify the task to be done and consider or estimate the probable effectiveness of different media for achieving particular instructional outcomes. Media should be selected and used on the basis of such considerations as whether their use is financially feasible, administratively convenient, didactically sound, technically possible, easily accessible to students and suited or significant to adult learners. The more expensive medium is not necessarily the best medium for every learning situation. Sometimes a less expensive medium can do the job just as well or even better than high priced one. Dewal (1988:68) believes that in selecting media for teaching and learning purposes "the chief criterion should not be the availability or access to media but their instructional potential, their teaching effectiveness".

The purpose of using media is to facilitate the achievement of the outcomes of the teaching – learning process. Perry and Perry (1981:23) say, “Because media selection revolves around learners and objectives, it is an important part of planning instruction. The selection process should be a systematic and deliberate one in order that the best medium possible for maximum learning is employed”. Media selection is a crucial step in planning any instructional process because it is related to *how* people learn what they are expected to know. Potgieter (1987:174) adds that “media design should be an integral part of course design in order to select media which are appropriate and convey our messages in an accurate and meaningful way”. Some years back learning content was traditionally provided through the print medium only. With the development in technology, however, information and learning content these days bombard learners through a variety of educational media. The current use of film, video cassettes, audio cassettes, transparencies, radio, television, computer, telephone, and so on in adult teaching learning situations are cases in point. This proliferation of ways in which content can be conveyed to adult learners, however, in the view of Freysen et al (1989:25) “has complicated the task of selecting the right medium”. Anderson (1976:1) adds that “the selection of the best medium or media for instructional purposes is not an easy job, as everyone who has struggled with the problem can testify. The choice is complex and difficult because it is [based] upon a combination of inter-related factors”. Surely a number of factors prevent the selection of the best medium to convey specific learning content to adult learners. These factors as adapted from Freysen et al (1989) are as follows:

- Learning content is often presented only verbally. Schools and, for that matter, learners are thus geared mainly to abstract education, something completely removed from concrete experience.
- The usefulness of educational media is still questioned by some educators (teachers). Some educators feel threatened and intimidated by media. They are scared that media will replace them.

- Until recently there was still a lack of clear guidelines according to which media could be selected. The theory of media selection is still in its infancy and in view of this media are often selected haphazardly on the basis of what is readily available.
- There is ignorance concerning the attributes of the various media. It is impossible to select the best medium if an educator is not aware of the attributes and possibilities of different media.
- Media are often under utilised or not utilised at all as a result of poor media selection at the meso level and the macro level. Surely, if the policies regarding the purchase and implementation of media do not take the teaching/ learning situation into account, the hardware is likely to become a mere white elephant. Sharing in this sentiment Dewal (1988:68) says, “Although there is a surge of hardware in the technology market, actual use of technologies in practice is low and marginal”. This low and marginal use of media partly stems from the fact that programmes are in short supply and sometimes the quality of some of the programmes produced is poor. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned obstacles, there is an urgent need to select and use appropriate media in all education (teaching/ learning) programmes. This researcher is of the opinion that for effective utilisation of media, selection should be on the basis of particular lesson objectives, characteristics or attributes of the medium concerned and unique features of learners.
- The fact is that no two media convey learning content in the same way, because of the unique attributes of each of them. Each medium modifies the message it conveys in its own unique way. Hence McLuhan (1974:16) says, “The medium is the message because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action”. It is therefore a common practice for adult educators to combine two or more media in a single lesson when they feel that is the best way of achieving the desired

teaching/ learning outcomes: making learners understand better. To borrow the words of Sive (1979:57), “Teachers have long been told that a medium of instruction must be selected on the basis of its potential for implementing a stated objective”. Thus educators of adults are encouraged to base their selection of media on solid teaching-learning objectives and the unique characteristics of adult learners. In their view, Perry and Perry (1981:27) state, “Media ought not to be regarded as something that makes life easier for the teacher or more fun for the students; media are the means through which the stimuli which enable learners to achieve objectives are presented”.

2.6.4 Suggested strategies for media selection for adult teaching-learning programmes

Technology should be viewed as something an adult educator utilises to enhance learners’ ability to acquire knowledge or skills desired. Therefore, whatever devices are chosen should fit into whatever activities have been planned to enable students to reach their learning objectives (Seaman and Fellenz 1989:73). This researcher suggests the following strategies in selecting media for adult education programmes:

2.6.4.1 Review of print material

The adult educator should review print materials such as books, magazines, pictures and posters in order to select the most suitable ones for his or her lessons.

2.6.4.2 Consultation of additional sources

Most authors of textbooks offer additional sources of information at the end of their books for educators to consult. Adult educators could also contact school media centres or libraries for relevant files containing media sources in order to select suitable media materials for their instructional programmes. Media sources at libraries and media centres may contain new publications and professional journals from which materials could be selected. Sive (1979:60) suggests that “one

must make sure the list used covers the grade level, subject and format desired. It is important that it not be so all-inclusive as to overwhelm, nor so brief as to be gratuitous”.

2.6.4.3 Preview of media items

Adult educators need to preview thoroughly all media items at their disposal (eg audio and video materials) before selecting or purchasing them. Previewing helps the adult educators to get first-hand information of all that is contained in the medium in question. Sive (1979) concludes that “The job of previewing is made easier by checking items under consideration against a standard set of criteria”.

2.6.5 Media integration in ABET programmes

It can be said that no single medium can effectively carry an instructional message or appeal to the senses of all individual learners during the teaching/ learning encounter. Most educators therefore combine two or more educational media during the instructional process in order to satisfy the learning needs of a larger proportion of their adult learners. This combination of different media (be they auditory or visual) during the instructional design is what educators and media scientists refer to as media integration. Kemp and Dayton (1985:47) rightly say...”in a design approach, a number of media may be integrated, each serving one or more specific objectives and content”. An integration of various media in the instructional process is of great value. For instance, listening to a tape or radio, or watching television, jotting down notes and ideas and thinking of possibilities is an exciting challenge to the individual learner. The combination of listening to a voice on a tape plus making notes as the educator speaks in a conversational manner has more immediacy for the adult learners and larger numbers of learners could become involved, through actually wanting to understand a particular didactic activity.

Touching on proper integration of media, Domatob (1990:113) argues that “elements of each of the media groups (broadcast, print, interpersonal) should be

selected carefully and then integrated in a way that builds up their unique advantages so that a multiplier effect is achieved". Indeed, to achieve good results each medium (eg the written word, television or radio could be carefully integrated into the teaching/ learning activities to serve specific instructional goals and to meet learning needs of the individual adult learner. De Munnik (1993:3) aptly mentions that in a course consisting of print and audio materials the two should be "so effectively integrated that you cannot make a complete study of the subject if you do not use all the printed matter; recordings of radio programmes and audio cassettes". The various components forming the integral package should support each other and provide variety and different perspectives and opinions that would make adult education lively, easy and successful. Noting how the various components in media integration support each other, Schramm (1977: 13) restating McLuhan says, "Words can describe a bucket, but it is very hard to tell anyone exactly what a bucket looks like without a picture". When educators integrate media into the instructional process, (whether for individuals, small groups or larger audiences), they are meant to serve three purposes:

(i) Media integration for motivational purposes

An educator could use drama or other edutainment techniques as part of a teaching/ learning activity in order to motivate learners extrinsically to get involved in learning activities. As noted by Quan-Baffour(1992:22) "In view of the peculiar problems surrounding the adult learner as he / she studies at home (very often at the end of a hard day's work) adult and distance educators need to integrate various relevant instructional media during teaching-learning encounters in order to provide some interpersonal relationship between them and their students". Such an interpersonal relationship, which could be concomitant with proper integration of various instructional media such as film, computers, video, audio materials, print and picture, could ease frustration and increase motivation for independent study. Being able to hear the voice of one's lecturer or facilitator, for instance, could dispel psychological fears common among adult distance students studying at home. In support of this view point the reader is reminded of the apt words of Curzon (1990:310): "Any instructional situation must provide for

four needs: stimulation (selectivity, novelty, etc.), order (organization of concepts), strategy (mental imagery and elaboration) and meaning (meaningfulness and feedback)".

(ii) Media integration used for informational purpose

There are situations where the human medium alone (ie the educator's voice and body language) cannot give explicit information to adult learners. In such cases, when introducing new content or giving an overview of a lesson various media could be integrated in order to make sure the intended information gets to learners effectively. Thus the instructional strategy of integrating various media makes teaching and learning not only practical, but also real and comprehensible. For instance, in a real teaching situation sometimes verbal description alone may not go far enough in assisting the adult learner to comprehend what he/she reads or hears from the educator. The media (radio, pictures, television, newspapers, posters) can provide more explanation and information when they are integrated and used to back the educator's exposition. Domatob (1990:109) says "Radio, television, newspapers, and films can furthermore facilitate the collection, storage, processing and dissemination of news, data, pictures, facts, messages, opinion and comments which adults require to enable them to understand and react knowledgeably to personal, environmental conditions as well as to be in a position to take appropriate decisions".

In a media integration design where, for example, an audio cassette lecture refers to sections, topics, chapters and pictures of a main textbook an adult learner is able to play, pause, repeat (replay), make notes and read relevant sections of the book to strengthen what he or she hears from the audio cassette. He or she may pause to attempt some trial questions and refer back to evaluate himself or herself. Such an interaction between textbooks, lecture, notes and audio cassettes goes a long way in assisting the adult basic education and training student in mastering and memorising the relevant skills, or in passing examinations. The interaction between print and other media materials can also help students to acquire effective study habits like constant reading, drill and practice. This strategy of teaching (the

integrated media approach) could involve the adult learner at all levels of learning (cognitive, effective and psychomotor). Instead of being a passive listener, the adult learner is required to interact and use a number of activities: writing, reading, listening, viewing, summarising facts, answering questions and sketching out ideas.

The integrated media approach to teaching and learning fires the imagination of the adult learner and sets him / her in motion to work, listen, read, analyse, evaluate and arrive at sound judgements. Bates (1984:223) contends that “a course design should be such that the main teaching components-text materials, the media and tutorial provision- are employed in an integrated, holistic way”. Surely, for adult learners to make any serious use of media presentations, the various media components must be fully integrated into the course. When various media are integrated into the instructional process they supplement each other, focus students’ attention, stimulate, maintain interest, and above all, promote retention of facts. The writer concludes this section with the words of Curzon (1990: 311) who says: “As mediating in students, assisting students to achieve understanding; as component of a teaching situation requiring a combination of instructional techniques, their value is beyond doubt”.

(iii) Media integration is used for instructional purposes

In emphasising the importance of matching the learning needs of adult students and the teaching outcomes of integrating various media, Curzon (1990) writes: “The selection, orchestration and delivery of stimulation by means of various sources comprise a large portion of the decisions the teacher must make every day... and the ultimate guide to decisions about the sources of instructional stimulation is the learning objective”.

Truly, it is in order to bring about a-meeting of the learning needs of adults and the instructional outcomes of both face-to-face and distance teaching that various media are integrated into the instructional process. Commenting on the instructional value of media, Kemp and Dayton (1985:28) have this to say, “While

the presentation of information is important, attention must also be given to involving the participants in mental or overt activities relating to the instructional media being used so that learning can take place". Thus while the educator should use media materials systematically and in line with psychologically sound learning principles in order to give effective instruction, the various media forming the integration should at the same time be interesting and enjoyable in order to present to learners pleasant experiences. Kemp and Dayton (1985) say, "Making provisions for individuals to use the instructional media on their own can be desirable. In this way each person will interact with the materials by answering questions, by engaging in performance as directed by the materials, by checking, understanding and making use of information presented".

As mentioned earlier in this discussion, using one medium such as an audio cassette alone may have the weakness of not being able to teach as effectively as if it were used in conjunction with other media such as print, video, film or face-to-face instruction. As new resources for teaching become available the educator's pedagogical and andragogical competence and innovative skills (such as his or her integration of various media) could play a decisive role in fulfilling the educational needs of the adult learner. Various media are therefore integrated into the instructional process in order to provide guidance, instruction, stimulation, encouragement and motivation for the adult student. Kemp and Dayton (1985: 3) rightly put it thus: "When skillfully combined, pictures, words and sounds have the power to evoke emotions, change attitudes and motivate actions". The impressions that are created by such combinations of pictures, words and sounds have been shown to be retained significantly longer than when they are only heard or read. It is therefore a necessity to integrate various media of instruction such as face-to-face (human medium), print, audio and video materials when designing a course for adult basic education and training students.

In view of the peculiar circumstances of Adult Basic Education and Training students (mostly operating from a distance) this researcher is of the opinion that when designing an integrated course involving various instructional media, the

educator should plan and execute it with great thought and care. The educator needs to make use of materials and methods suitable to the cause and comprehension level of the adult and or distance learner. The vocabulary used and its level of sophistication, as well as the rate at which the content is presented and integrated into other instructional media are also crucial issues to be considered when integrating instructional material. Media integration is not new to the art of teaching. As noted by Schramm (1977:14) “the problem of how to combine media in the art of teaching has therefore been with us for a very long time. The difference today is that media are so much more readily available than they previously were for instructional use, and many of them are expensive and elaborate tools over which the classroom teacher has less control than over a slate or chalkboard or a picture clipped from a magazine”. It is because of the complex nature of modern multi-media that the educator has to be very careful and accurate in integrating them into the instructional process. When the roles of the various media like print, audio, radio, video and television are well considered and integrated into an instructional process they can lead to the realisation of many instructional advantages and outcomes. In the words of Daniel (1983:158) “The use of two channels – sound and vision – in a controlled and integrated way through the combined use of audio cassettes and print or ‘media’ is a very powerful teaching medium”.

The concept of instruction which is based on the educator relying solely on his voice and personality stems from the belief that communication is the best achieved through the medium of sound. However the integration of various media such as textbooks, study guides, face-to-face teaching, radio broadcasts, audio cassettes and films could practically provide appropriate stimuli for desired responses that engage the learners’ faculties of learning, seeing and touching. The National Department of Education ABET policy document (1997:36) clearly supports the notion of integrating various media in a more flexible curriculum that would allow a wide variety of approaches to materials and media. The policy document on ABET contends that “an integrated and open approach will also allow a wide variety of approaches for materials developed to tailor learning and

support materials to their institutional context and learners needs”.

2.6.6 Multi-media approach to ABET programmes

A multi-media approach to teaching and learning obtains where several types of media resource materials are used concurrently or sequentially in a didactic situation. It is a situation where the educator employs or combines a number of media sequentially during instruction. Writing on the indispensability of multi-media in instruction Schramm (1977: 13) has this to say, “We must not forget that almost all teaching is multi-media. The name is new and fashionable, but the practice is ancient. The caveman teaching his son to hunt, used not only words but also demonstration and practice. Even in the most isolated, impoverished school, the teacher will seek an additional medium of instruction beside what he or she can say to the students: a slate or (in our time) a picture from a magazine”. Since no single medium can prove entirely satisfactory for extending the experience of schooling, most institutions of learning do employ a multi-media approach to teaching.

A case in point is the provision made by the ABET Institute of Unisa to certificate and diploma students of audio cassettes, video cassettes and study guides, as well as opportunities for adult learners to consult tutors telephonically and to attend optional fortnightly face-to-face tutorials.

In a multi-media approach the different media are usually aimed at a topical approach within a content area. In the words of Adey (1987:5) “They can often provide the instruction for those topics which require the realism of photographs or the symbolism of diagrams along with verbal explanation”. The first instructional medium of modern times, according to Jivan (1985:8) was print, and this was invented in the 15th century. Since then the change in media communication has accelerated: improvement in photography in the 1920’s altered the entire concept of illustration; the moving picture was recognised as a new tool for discovery; sound recording had a profound effect on musical and aural experiences; radio broadcasts introduced in the 1920’s and television in the 1930’s had an

overwhelming impact and the electronic era and computer age opened up brand new avenues.

Chung (1991:preface) rightly mentions that the greatest educational challenge facing African countries today is how to design a system of learning in a cost effective way using the resources available. In looking for ways to achieve this goal, politicians, educational administrators and planners in most developing countries have resorted to a search for better alternative methods of education, namely, teaching that can reach their people more cheaply. This search for alternative methods of education has led to the use of multi-media instructional methods (radio, television broadcasts, audio cassettes, video, telephone, computers, etc) in adult teaching and learning. The trend now is to think of a combination of media, which will be able to do different things and contribute to learning in different ways. Commenting on the didactic reality of modern electronic multi-media Linden (1986: 336) has this to say: "At the moment we seem to be witnessing the beginning of a revolution in communications, the eventual implications of which cannot be fully envisaged. The media carrying information to us have suddenly proliferated so much so that we seem to be moving already into a society where print is becoming increasingly less important than other forms of communication such as computerized information systems, video cassette and video discs, satellite and cable television". Thus in the contemporary modern society the adult educator has a variety of media at his/her disposal for didactic purposes.

A multi-media approach to teaching consists of a combination of a variety of media such as print, pictures, film, video, audio cassettes, radio, slide and overhead projectors, chalkboard and the human medium (the teacher). Even though the adult educator (the teacher) is a medium, it is not always possible to unlock reality in the teaching-learning process without the utilisation of other media of instruction. As mentioned earlier on in this discussion, basically almost all teaching is multi-media oriented. For instance, in a situation where an educator employs print instruction, other media such as pictures, chalk, chalkboard, sketches, charts or realia normally

form part of the didactic process. Educators hardly ever use only one medium in their teaching. The use of multi-media in adult basic education and training has an important place in the teaching-learning process and the multi-media approach is a significant aspect of the didactic process. The multi-media approach to teaching is now a didactic fact. Briggs and Campeau et al (1976:11) say: "Multi-media are needed primarily to provide the range of displays needed, and to provide feedback and evaluation of response. In total, the media are the means for providing stimuli, whether the stimuli are used to motivate, to direct attention, to set a goal, to give a prompt, to evaluate, to guide thinking, to evoke a response or to test for transfer". With the availability of a variety of media for instructional purposes, as Domatob (1990:12) warns, "Adult educators and planners should not put their eggs in one media basket. Rather they should carefully study and strive for a blend of the widest array of communication channels available and plug their messages into as many as possible". Indeed a methodical approach involves first the determination of objectives of adult basic education programmes before finding out how to employ the means to obtain them. Different media should therefore be used by adult educators in their teaching to complement each other in order to achieve teaching / learning objectives.

2.6.7 Media and technology in rural communities

McKay et al (1998: 8) report that 48% of South Africans live in rural areas. This situation is not peculiar to South Africa. It is a general trend in most of the third world countries, particularly Africa. These rural people who live and work in scattered areas need to be empowered through education and as noted by McKay et al (1998:287) "The empowerment of people by means of knowledge can be enhanced by using the mass-media which are the most powerful tools of communication known to humankind". Unfortunately, however, due to lack of electric power and paucity of expensive electric media such as computers, internet, television, and video, rural learners are disadvantaged. As they do not have access to "big media", educators depend on print, radio and the human medium in teaching adult learners in the rural communities. Citing soul city evaluation report of 1995 as an example, McKay et al (1998) mention that approximately 92% of

the South African population have access to radios". This indicates that small portable battery-operated transmitter radios and wind-up radios, supplemented by minimal face-to-face tutorials, could be the best possible way of reaching out to the majority of learners, who live and work in the rural areas. Radio is an effective medium of instruction because it can reach a wider audience than other, expensive, electronic media, which may not be accessible to many rural communities. The impact of radio on rural learners stems from the fact that masses of people could be reached and taught both formally and non-formally about health issues, agricultural problems and pest control techniques.

Educators in rural areas could use posters, puppet shows, newspapers, charts and optional face-to-face tutorials as part of multi-media techniques to back up community radio education programmes. Touching on the effectiveness of radio as a powerful medium of instruction, Schramm (1977:228) says radio is "the only broad channel to rural regions, the one long range, relatively inexpensive, easily deliverable medium that overleaps the commonest barriers to sharing information with remote places". The less expensive multi-media, like portable transmitter and wind-up radios, used together with books, magazines and newspapers can effectively teach learners in the rural areas. These less expensive multi-media can spread information about development to rural people especially on the need for change and methods of social and economic change. Through formal and non-formal educational programmes adult learners in rural areas could be taught the needed skills for transformation of our rural communities via cheap but powerful and effective multi-media like radio, magazines, posters, books and face-to-face tutorials.

2.6.8 Distance education and adult basic education and training

The previous sections discussed multi-media design, planning, selection, integration, multi media approach to ABET programmes and the use of media and technology in rural communities. The focus of the present section is on distance education and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes. Distance education has been described by Keegan (1991: 43) as "... that field of educational

endeavour in which the learner is quasi-permanently separated from the teacher throughout the length of the learning process; the learner is quasi-permanently separated from the learning group throughout the length of the learning process; a technological medium replaces the interpersonal education; the teaching-learning process is institutionalized thus distinguishing it from teach-yourself programmes; two-way communication is possible for both student and teacher, thus distinguishing it from other forms of educational technology”.

Indeed, technological advancement in the contemporary modern world has made teaching and learning at a distance a reality. The availability of multi-media systems involving computers, internet, telephone, television, print, video and audio material have made it possible for adults to teach and learn at a distance. The modern adult education programme is thus no more confined to a specific place -- such as a classroom – owing to technological advancement which makes it possible for people to study on their own door steps at their own pace.

The multi-media approach to teaching which is concomitant with technological advancement has brought in its trail distance education. Distance education through the use of multi-media offers the promise of reaching out to remote areas where the training needs are greatest and the absence of training facilities is most acute. It has been realised by educators that the traditional approach to education characterised by “talk and chalk” cannot rapidly help solve the colonial legacy of illiteracy and lack of skills; hence the need to educate and train or retrain more adults at a distance via modern technological media. Really, the time has now come for all educators to be courageous, innovative, adaptable, to shed any conservative stance and suspicion regarding technology and resort to the adoption of the multi-media approach to teaching. As Maepa (1993: 1) states, “Educators to a large extent often mistrust technology, preferring face-to-face interaction. It is time to stop thinking that the only meaningful way for people to interact is face-to-face”. Distance education, which has become a reality through the provision of multi-media teaching, is very attractive and convenient to adult workers. For example it avoids the tiresome travelling to classes every day or the necessity for

frequent group meetings involving fellow students, sometimes after a day's hard work.

Ingesman (1993:86) is of the opinion that the basic pedagogical idea behind our distance teaching-learning concept (using a multi-media approach) can be summed up as follows: "Communication is central to learning: thus we should use technology to bring communication back into the (distance) learning situation. Bringing communication back into the distance learning environment also allows us to bring teaching back into distance learning environment, and with the use of computer conferencing systems we can give back to distance teachers their most important tool and allow them to do the same sort of things that they do in normal classroom environments -- summing up; drawing analogies, adding experiences and perspectives. In a personalised system of instruction (i.e. self-paced learning) which is normally based on a text with study units, other media of visual or audio nature are usually incorporated. Audio cassettes for example could provide information, guidance and instructions for adult learners both far and near. Adey (1987) says, "Activities directed by the tape may include reading information in books and articles, studying visual material, completing study guide worksheets and performing laboratory work as appropriate. The tutor is available in the learning laboratory to assist students and answer questions". Visual and audio resource materials are often used to augment, clarify or enhance printed information in adult distance education. In this regard the National Department of Education policy document on ABET (1997:36) suggests that the need for adult distance educators to provide learning materials that could be comprehensive and easily digestible to an average adult distance learner should consider the time frame and the level and ability of the learner. The policy document explicitly states that "with materials that are used in distance education or self instructional programmes there may be a similar shortage of time for adult learners to engage with the materials. This, together with a recognition that adults have different levels of knowledge as well as learning rates, necessitates that materials be carefully structured into appropriately sized modules or units of materials".

Indeed, one of the major benefits of multi-media instructional modes such as computer, television, video and audio materials is that they enable students to develop skills, through structured activities, practice and feedback. Media such as radio, television, textbook and computers provide source material which students can work on to expand their knowledge. Commenting on the value of multi-media Bates (1984: 223) says: "Different media provide alternative ways to reach understanding and comprehension, and in distance education, where tutor-student contacts are limited, a variety of presentation is essential".

The value of multi-media in the didactic process is enormous. Multi-media provide stimuli designed to serve various instructional functions including feedback and evaluation. Teaching machines make more frequent and explicit use of feedback than do many other media from which students learn. Multi-media instruction has been seen by many educators as superior to single-medium instruction. The use of audio visual media for example in adult distance teaching programmes can widen the scope of teaching and provide alternative approaches and variety that are essential to learner motivation and deep understanding. Again, audiovisual media can help increase the quality of learning and reduce dropout among adult distance learners. Multi-media provide greater opportunity for interaction between the adult learner and learning materials. For example, through viewing, listening, reading, writing and answering of questions adult learners interact between content and learning tasks thereby acquiring skills at a faster rate. Thus a multi-media approach to teaching enables students to learn more effectively than traditional modes of instruction. Touching on the important contribution of multi-media in distance education Parmaji (1984: 22) says: "The greatest contribution of media in distance education is that media have widened the frontiers of education available to the public. Supplemented by an effective, auxiliary face-to-face interpersonal network, media effect is tremendous and entire societies can be changed and modernized in a short span of time". Broadcast media, for instance, provide a sense of live teaching and a reason for the adult distance learner to stay on schedule. Regarding the merits of the modern electronic

media Schramm (1977:16) comments, "Instructional television could not only transport a gifted teacher to learners, but could also bring with the teacher more elaborate illustrative materials than any classroom teacher could possibly have at hand".

Computer-assisted instruction could programme a machine to perform like a teacher, -- a teacher who never showed the effects of a headache, never became impatient, and was always ready to provide tutorial experiences when a student needed them (Schramm 1977). Multi-media can be used to enhance almost every subject. A tape recorder for example can be used in conjunction with written materials. Where there are many learners an educator can easily and cheaply duplicate audio tape materials for them. The application of multi-media such as radio, television and print to instruction can serve to structure regular study among distance learners. For example an adult distance learner can organise his or her study habit or session to fit into regular transmission time. Radio and television educational broadcast is a very good way of publishing and popularising a course - and for that matter institutions offering such courses.

Multi-media (ie radio, telephone, internet and television) could be effective supplements and reinforcements to study guides, textbooks and face-to-face presentations. Summing up the possible benefits of audio materials (multi-media) such as television, radio, video cassettes and telephone as part of a multi-media system in distance education Rowntree (1992:108) says audio materials could be used

- to present new ideas to learners who do not care for reading
- to help learners make the best use of their time by giving them a means of learning while doing other things such as cooking

- to talk them through tasks like studying a map or table of figures where they might find it distracting to have to keep turning aside to look at a written guide
- to help learners practice skills
- to make teaching more human and personal
- to say things that are not easily expressed in print
- to encourage or motivate learners
- to touch learners' feelings and attitudes
- to bring to learners the voice of people who would be unable or unwilling to say anything in writing
- to provide "source materials" such as excerpts from an interview for learners to analyse or react to

In concluding this discussion on the merits of multi-media the writer would borrow the words of Domatob (1990:109) who argues that "the cardinal function of media in adult education is to teach. Through formal and informal lessons on radio and television, as well as articles and features in newspapers, the media can teach adults basic skills for survival. They can provide people with fundamental strategies on farming, and maintenance of equipment such as sewing machines and bicycles. The media can also train people in basic hygiene, nutrition and child care. More than anything else, they can teach people basic economics, sociology, politics, geography, history and philosophy which will enable them to grow and develop in their respective environments. The media can thus be of help in imparting basic cognitive professional skills".

Notwithstanding the numerous advantages and opportunities they offer, multi-media instructional devices are not without shortcomings. The following are some of the limitations of multi-media instructional devices. Economic problems of many developing countries limit the purchase, installation, maintenance and possible utilisation of expensive, sophisticated and powerful machines like computers, internet and television sets. Even where these items of equipment are made available through donor agencies, lack of technical infrastructure such as power supply; its reliability and the cost of maintaining multi-media equipment limit their application. Audio tapes could be operated on batteries in areas where there is no electric power. However, the escalating price of batteries makes it difficult for an unemployed adult learner in a village to acquire them for educational use. The sound quality of tapes recorded on cheap recorders may not always be clear for academic purposes. Again, cheap tapes may not last long enough due to constant tearing. Transmission times of radio and television do not always suit adult distance learners. Most distance learners are fully engaged employees who may be at work during broadcasting hours. Again, shifts in frequencies on transmitter radios could sometimes result in listeners failing to get tuned-in to an educational broadcast. Cost of television, radio and internet transmission could be too high for poor institutions to be able to employ them in their education programmes. Television, video and radio programmes tend to be viewed by many people as entertainment, so listeners may be inclined to be passive.

2.7 SUMMARY

In the foregoing chapter various sub-topics have been discussed under the main theme, Reviewing adult education: strategies for delivery. The literature is pregnant with the relevance and value of multi-media as an instructional strategy. Some of the main aspects highlighted by the literature study on the multi-media approach to adult education are:

Multi-media as an instructional strategy has become an essential part of education. To sum up:

- For effective utilisation of multi-media for instructional purposes, media must be designed, planned, selected and integrated effectively.
- The design, planning, selection and integration of multi-media for instruction should be determined by factors such as lesson outcomes (objectives), attributes of media and learner characteristics.
- Multi-media utilisation brings about the beneficial result that various component parts of the integration support each other, thereby leading to the better realisation of teaching-learning objectives.
- Multi-media instruction is superior to a single medium instruction.
- The application of multi-media electronic devices to teaching has made distance education a reality.
- Media are not supplementary to, or, in support of, instruction, but are instructional input themselves.

In the next chapter, consideration will be given to the importance of programme evaluation in general and with particular reference to distance education programmes.

CHAPTER THREE

EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter adult education in general and ABET in particular were reviewed and various media strategies for effective delivery were highlighted.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on evaluation in education in general and evaluation of distance education programme in particular. To this end various aspects of evaluation such as definitions, levels, types, rationale for evaluation, whatever is to be evaluated in distance education, and the criteria for evaluating distance education programmes have all been discussed.

3.2 DEFINING EVALUATION

Generally every educator wants his or her course to be valuable to students, and hopes that teaching and learning will lead to the achievement of course objectives as set out by planners. Indications of how well a course has been organised, taught or learnt can be obtained through systematic efforts to gather such evidence. This gathering, analysing and interpreting of data to assess the effectiveness of instruction and learning is what educators refer to as EVALUATION.

In the view of Clark and Starr (1996:378) teachers are “like the navigators of ships at sea. To know which way to go, they need to know where they are. Therefore, like the navigator who must keep a running record of the ship’s approximate position and make frequent checks to fix its exact location, educators must continually appraise and reappraise their positions. We call this appraisal and reappraisal of the teaching-learning situation evaluation”. The concept of evaluation implies measurement or assessment of some phenomenon. Evaluation may therefore be described as the process whereby value judgement (based on available sources, data or information) is made on some aspects of education (eg

teaching and learning). Cangelosi (1991:5) also sees the concept of evaluating as “a judgement about the quality, value, effectiveness or impact of something (e.g. a product, process, person, organisation or collection)”.

A thread of judgement runs through most of these definitions, emphasising the fact that evaluation has some element of judgement. In restating Paulson 1970, Grotelueschen et al (1976:17) describe evaluation as “a process of examining certain objects and events in the light of specific value standards for the purpose of making adaptive decisions”. Another important definition by Seaman and Fellenz (1989:148) describes the concept of evaluation as “the gathering of information that will assist in the making of decisions which will lead to the improvement of the teaching/learning transaction”. The two foregoing definitions emphasise the provision of useful information to decision makers with the hope that ensuing decisions about educational programmes will be sound and rational. As Grotelueschen et al (1979:19) observe, “Teachers must choose which materials to use and the instructional methods appropriate for adult learners. The adult participants must determine the worth or appropriateness of the programme for their needs. Employers must decide whether people who participate in adult education programme should receive preference in hiring”.

From the description above one may infer that educational evaluation in general could be on aspects such as

- instruction
- teachers' competency
- curriculum
- content
- learning output
- learning materials
- learning support system

Elaborating further on the concept of evaluation, Clark and Starr (1996) contend that “the element in evaluation or assessment that makes it different

from measurement is judgement. When you measure a situation, you merely describe the situation. When you evaluate or assess the situation, you judge its value". Evaluation is therefore the judgement or interpretation an individual makes or deduces from available information.

3.3 LEVELS OF EVALUATION

Fraser, Loubser and Van Rooy (1990:168–169) contend that educational evaluation could be conducted at three levels, namely macro, meso and micro levels.

3.3.1 Evaluation at the macro level

In the view of Fraser et al (1990) macro level of educational evaluation is usually conducted by educational authorities such as the provincial and national ministries of education, educational leaders, tertiary educational institutions, funders, politicians and educational planners. These institutions or individuals who constitute and conduct macro level evaluations are usually educationists, educational planners and advisors to government departments and therefore evaluation forms an essential part of their activities. At the macro level educational evaluation normally aims at

- informing donors, funders and taxpayers as to whether the money spent on education has yielded and good results or outcome
- the government (in this case, the ministry of education) providing to the various interest group and stakeholders in education (eg parents, political parties, communities, NGOs and donors) evidence that teaching aims of a particular curricula have been achieved.

Evaluation action at the macro level could lead to a shift in the aims of education for a whole province or country. The present emphasis, in education in South Africa and many other developing countries is on

education with production, that is, Outcomes Based Education (OBE). This new shift in educational aim could be the result of evaluation work conducted at the macro level. Thus evaluation at the macro level may help to redefine the aims of education to suit the current manpower needs of a country.

3.3.2 Evaluation at the meso level

Evaluation at the meso level falls under the domain of school and tertiary educational institutions (sometimes in collaboration with provincial education departments). Evaluation at this level relates to matters such as teacher training and introduction of new curricula or amendment of existing ones to suit the current needs of the province. For instance, management of educational institutions striving to improve their teaching methodologies, strategies, approaches, media and materials might adopt meso level evaluation. Thus structural and curricular changes in response to changes at the macro level can be seen as a way in which the meso responds to the macro level. At school level, meso evaluation would be done by school authorities (eg school superintendents, managers, principals and community representatives). Such an evaluation would aim at improving the existing curriculum of the school in order to provide learners with a variety of courses, better tuition and better learning outcomes.

3.3.3 Evaluation at the micro level

Micro level evaluation in education deals with instructional appraisals. It is therefore usually undertaken by the teacher or instructor at school level. The assessment of learners by the teacher at school level might be either an indicator of learner achievement or a tool used in general or over-all evaluation. According to Fraser et al (1990:169) micro-level evaluation (which is done by the instructor or facilitator) centres around the micro activities of the classroom. It involves gauging the impact of a series of learning events such as:

- compiling and making tests and examinations
- diagnosing and correcting pupils' and students' learning problems
- evaluating the instructor's subject curriculum by means of work schemes or forecasts

Micro-level evaluation is very dear to the hearts of teachers, school authorities, parents and students because this is the level at which they are directly affected: this is where they realise the results of their efforts. All these interested parties (ie parents, teachers and so on) receive direct feedback on their efforts in education at the micro level. Teachers reappraise their teaching, learners change their study strategies, and school authorities and parents take measures to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place in order to achieve their aims and objectives. Touching on the importance of evaluating one's own instruction as obtains at the micro level, Cangelosi (1991:6) aptly says "Teachers' evaluations, accurate or not, influence their goals, how classrooms are organised, methods for managing student behaviour, lesson designs, how lessons are conducted and how student achievement is assessed".

3.4 TYPES OF EVALUATION

3.4.1 Introduction

Evaluation is an integral part of programme functioning. Many people may regard it as useful mechanism for helping programme administrators, educators, funders, NGO's and participants to determine the status of an educational programme. Depending on its purpose or rationale, according to Clark and Starr (1996:381) three main types of evaluation can be identified, namely, diagnostic, formative and summative.

3.4.2 Diagnostic evaluation

In the view of this researcher, to diagnose is to find out exactly what is wrong with something or what has gone wrong with an individual. According to Fraser et al

(1990:182) “Diagnostic evaluation relates to the causes of learning problems and ways in which these can be corrected”. Diagnostic evaluation exists where an educator uses tests, interviews or questionnaires to find out more about the abilities of learners (eg to find out what learners already know or to identify some weakness in teaching/learning activities) so that remedial measures may be employed to rectify the situation. At the beginning of teaching a new course to new learners, educators could employ diagnostic evaluation measures to gather information on learners’ entrance levels, and their learning needs or academic ability with regard to the particular course. The results of such a base line evaluation could assist educators to plan their curricula to suit the needs of learners and to employ appropriate teaching methods and strategies that could make up any inadequacies and deficiencies in the instruction and learning processes. When learners perform poorly in learning tasks the cause might be found in either the educator’s teaching strategies or the students’ learning abilities. Thus in an existing teaching/learning programme diagnostic evaluation could be undertaken by the educator to unearth possible deficiencies, such as difficulty on the part of learners to understand the subject matter, or whether or not the course has been organised and taught well. In any of these cases, when a specific problem has been identified the educator or instructor could employ remedial teaching measures to arrest the situation.

3.4.3 Formative (process) evaluation

According to Gredler (1996:48) “the focus of process evaluation is the implementation of a program or a strategy. The main purpose is to provide feedback about needed modification if the implementation is inadequate”. As an instructional programme proceeds, the educator may seek some evidence of its value or worth in order to take decisions regarding improvement, revision, changes, expansion or continuity. This type of programme assessment is called process or formative evaluation: process or formative in the sense that the programme is still being formed and developed. While the course was still in its formative period, course providers, educators and institutions might decide to abandon it if they found out through the evaluation that it did not meet its objectives. Again, acting on the evaluation results, instructors could become aware

of the deficiencies regarding planning, teaching, learning and instructional outcomes and take the necessary steps either to ameliorate or rectify them. Thus the result of formative evaluation is used to form the instructional programme itself. Assessment of student needs and supervisory assistance to teacher trainees are good examples of formative evaluation measures.

Seeking evidence on the viability of an on going academic and professional programme could involve a few learners or a large number of students on the programme depending upon the availability of resources and time. Formative evaluation could be done informally and internally. For example, the results of a well-designed and well-organised internal assessment like monthly tests or assignments given to a number of groups or classes on the same course could be used as evidence to evaluate the effectiveness or viability of the instructional and learning programme. In order to make the results of process or formative evaluation more reliable and valid, the instruction itself needs to be assessed. In this case, the services of an expert in the field in which the evaluation is being conducted could be engaged. The evaluator could visit classes, read through the instructor's notes and lesson plans, and observe various instructional media employed by the instructor. Measures like these make the results of process or formative evaluation more valid and participative.

3.4.4 Summative or product evaluation

At the end of a course or a programme of instruction the educator, institutions and education authorities (eg principals, directors of institutes, school councils, parents, circuit managers and the department of education) would like to find out about the learning outcomes, the impact a course has had on the participants, and the instructor's performance. Such evidence could be obtained by means of an assessment of the course's impact. This holistic type of assessment conducted at the end of a course, semester or academic session is called product or summative because it aims at obtaining evidence about the sum of the effects of all units or parts of instruction and learning in a particular full course or programme. In other words, it is an attempt to assess how effective (or otherwise) the various elements

of the programme were. Citing Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985), Gredler (1996:48) rightly argues that the primary function of product evaluation is “to measure, interpret and judge the attainments of a program”. Product evaluation, in the view of Gredler (1996) should determine the extent to which identified needs were met.

Indeed, summative evaluation of programme of instruction is concerned with learning outcomes like intellectual skills or motor skills, as well as a variety of other intended and unintended outcomes. Results obtained from summative or product evaluation points out both positive accomplishments and defects of particular aspects of a programme. Based on evidence from summative (product) evaluation, measures or decisions on such matters as promotion to the next class, semester, or course, repetition of a course or class and recommendation for a certificate are taken. Summative evaluation also leads to decisions regarding learning programme adaptation, continuity or discontinuity. For example, through summative evaluation education authorities could decide either to replace a particular course with a new one or to continue with it, depending on the achievement of learners on that particular course. Unlike process (formative) evaluation, summative (product) evaluation is of necessity more formal, since it could involve many learners of the same standard nationwide.

3.5 SOME PERTINENT REASONS FOR EVALUATION

Grotelueschen et al (1976:20) contend that “like many other activities formal evaluation is widely endorsed and seldom pursued”. This may be true because some people in authority regard an evaluation exercise as an intrusion into their programme or a threat to individual autonomy. Evaluation is a necessary and integral part of every instructional and learning process. Seaman and Fellenz (1989:149) for instance, aptly argue that “Teaching is not a neutral process: It leads either to the liberation or to the control of men and women”. Indeed, it is through evaluation that the educator will be able to find out whether his/her teaching is helping or hindering people. A number of reasons could be given to justify

educational evaluation. Such reasons could range from educational to political or economic.

Improvement of instruction

There is a need to evaluate instruction in order to improve the quality of both instruction and learning. Educators thus need to support efforts to improve the teaching/learning process through evaluation of instruction and its outcomes. Volumes have been written on educational evaluation, and relevant literature on the topic by authors and writers like Grotelueschen et al (1976:17), Dressel (1976:116), Seaman and Fellenz (1989:149), Fraser et al (1990:5), Clark and Starr (1996:376) and Gredler (1996:48) identify the essence and reasons for evaluation in education. In most of the writings the need to improve instruction seems to be a major reason for evaluation in education. For instance, in a formative evaluation of ABET study programmes, data should be collected throughout the duration of the course for the purpose of improving the teaching/learning transaction. These data are used in finding out whether or not learners are progressing well, and whether the programme is on track, or changes are needed in the instructional or course strategies. In view of this need to improve instruction, measurement of learning outcome has become the most published aspect of educational evaluation. These learning outcomes are very often stated in the form of achievement results, which guide the educator in his/her planning and instruction. When learning outcomes are encouraging they serve as incentive and justification for educational evaluation. Fraser et al (1990) for example say the necessity for evaluation in any didactic situation is clear from the following examples.

- Learners' progress can be monitored constantly with the objective of adapting tuition so that learners will benefit.
- Shortcoming and gaps in the learners' mastering of skills or content can be identified by means of diagnostic tests and the necessary remedial steps can be taken. This is called a baseline assessment.

- Criterion-referenced tests can be used in determining whether or not learners are able to perform certain tasks or functions (ie how successful teaching has been).

Monitoring of educational activities

Stakeholders in education, namely, parents, educators, politicians, policy makers, funders, the state and the churches, may wish to monitor and appraise educational activities (teaching and learning). This monitoring of educational activities is done in order to evaluate and measure the teaching / learning process and find out whether or not it has achieved its goals and objectives as set out by the planners, the state, educators, donors and so on. Through evaluation, stakeholders in education (ie educators, donors, policy makers, the government and parents) could obtain feedback from their endeavours as to whether or not their efforts have been worthwhile. Commenting on the essence of educational evaluation Fraser et al (1990:165) have this to say: "Educational evaluation is a component of the monitoring of educational activities and for this reason it can be stated that instruction and learning can take place effectively only if the learner, instructor and different subject content are subjected to evaluation constantly". So educational evaluation may be done to monitor the process involved in educational programmes in order to understand more adequately the problems of diagnosis and programme formation.

Accountability to the public

Government departments (eg Education, Finance and Welfare), the community, funding agencies, donors and other interest groups could put pressure on institutions to evaluate their activities. In this case evaluation could be seen as a form of accountability which educators, educational institutions and administrators render to the public and all stakeholders in education. Public funds are used for education and training programmes, and it is through the evaluation of such programmes that the public will know whether the study programmes are successful in doing what they are supposed to do. Thus the evaluation of adult

basic education and training programmes, for example, could make educators and educational administrators legally, morally and educationally accountable to the constituencies and interest groups they serve. Kemmis (1983:58) emphasises the importance of accountability by stressing that "Evaluation provides us with mechanisms for being accountable and for showing people that we are accountable". Evaluation thus obliges all concerned with and involved in education to assess their role and the effectiveness of their work.

Improvement of existing programmes

Evaluation in education would enable educators, planners, donors, administrators and policy makers to redefine their roles, aims and objectives and thereby shift their focus, or change or amend their policies, instructional methods, administrative strategies or courses in order to improve their programmes. Thus when evaluation results are released they may enable educators and administrators to consider a variety of strategies that are likely to move programmes successfully toward the desired ends. In other words, evaluation could assist educational institutions and educators to re-adjust their study programmes to suit current needs of learners and the community at large.

In earlier sections consideration was given to the role and functions of project evaluation. Evaluation was discussed as being generic to all programmes. In the following section, emphasis will be given to the application of evaluation in distance education programmes.

3.6 EVALUATION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

3.6.1 Introduction

In order to expand to meet the demand for education for millions of South Africans, it will be necessary to employ the methods of distance education. For this reason, this section illuminates the evaluation of distance education programmes. The quality of distance teaching / learning programmes is of great

concern to distance-education planners, designers, instructors, learners, funders and the public at large. When referring to the need to evaluate the quality of distance education programmes, Van Niekerk (1995:102) indicates that, “the challenge is in establishing what we mean by quality in distance learning, what criteria should be used and how we go about using the information to maintain or improve the quality of our course materials”. While Van Niekerk (1995) focuses on the evaluation of teaching material, he nevertheless lists a range of variables that need to be considered in evaluating distance education courses.

Ensuring quality and or standard might be one of the reasons for auditing or evaluating distance education programmes. Citing Rowntree (1981) Van Niekerk (1995:103) aptly mentions that course evaluation serves as a quality control tool. It enables the writer of course material to obtain feedback on issues such as the planning process, aims and objectives, course content, teaching strategies, and materials and facilities that might be used by the students and tutors. Van Niekerk (1995) in this regard notes that an assumption that can be taken for granted is that many aspects of quality in distance education cannot be achieved and maintained without evaluation. Stressing the need for auditing distance education programmes, Brophy (1982:introduction) argues that evaluation is becoming increasingly important in curriculum development because of the trend towards accountability in education and the growing disillusionment with education as a means of promoting economic growth. This observation makes programme evaluation a sine qua non to maintenance of quality in distance education.

Evaluation of distance education programmes could utilise two types of assessment: formative (process) and summative (product) depending on the circumstances and the goals of the evaluation process. Citing Harlem (1975) Brophy (1982:65) rightly notes that “formative evaluation often produces information useful in a summative context, whilst the summative evaluation of the products of one curriculum project could be the first step in the formative evaluation of the next wave of curriculum development in that field”.

3.6.2 What ought to be evaluated in distance education programme

3.6.2.1 Introduction

Due to the special nature of distance education at the tertiary stage some specific elements of its programme ought to be evaluated. Restating Stufflebean (1980) Edward (1991:16) says: "... an evaluation should not be done at all if there is no prospect of it being useful to some audience. Second, it should not be done if it is not feasible to conduct in political terms, or practicality terms, or cost effectiveness terms. Finally if we can demonstrate that an evaluation will have utility, will be feasible and will be proper in its conduct, then ... we could turn to the difficult matters of the evaluation". Evaluation, according to Edward (1991) should have four characteristics, namely, utility, feasibility, propriety and accuracy. Patton (1981:23) recognises the fact that there is no single best way to conduct an evaluation. Patton (1981) aptly argues that "Every evaluation (one that is practical, ethical, useful and accurate) emerges from the special characteristics and conditions of a particular situation – a mixture of people, politics, history, context, resources, constraints, values, needs, interests and chance".

The intention (goal) of studies to evaluate adult distance education programmes is to draw conclusions about the effects of instruction on learning experiences or outcomes taking into account learner capabilities, achievement of instructional goals, the relevance of curriculum, content of teaching, and learning programmes. In practical terms this writer is of the opinion that a holistic evaluation of distance education programmes should include the following areas: Aims and objectives (goals) of the programme, curriculum of the programme, study materials, instruction, student learning, learner support systems, administrative or delivery services system, physical settings and facilities, and assessment procedure.

3.6.2.2 *Aims, objectives, goals or outcomes of distance study programmes*

Citing Dippenaar (1993) Vaccarino (1995:15) describes aims as “the educative purpose to be reached at the end of a certain time span and ... focused on specific results”. Widdowson (1983:7) also defines objectives as “the pedagogic intentions of a particular course of study to be achieved within the period of that course and in principle measurable by some assessment device at the end of the course”. Indeed, course objectives should be stated in terms of what learners will be able to do as a result of instruction. Thus objectives must refer to the learning outcomes that should be promoted through teaching and training activities. This implies that course objectives should offer clear guidance to the learners, should be relevant because they are meaningful to the learners, and should be feasible. Planners and designers of distance education programmes do not operate in a vacuum; they have some aims, objectives or outcomes (goals) to achieve. For instance, an institution offering distance education programmes may aim at equipping adult learners with skills in teaching or training for the upliftment of people or communities. Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes for facilitators of distance education at tertiary level could be funded by foreign or local donors. Adult learners also have motives for enrolling for the courses (such as to obtain skills for employment and survival). Evaluation of programme objectives (outcomes) could therefore assist donors, institutions, educators, learners and all stakeholders to take crucial decisions regarding programme improvement, adjustment, continuity or even discontinuity.

3.6.2.3 *Curriculum of distance education programmes*

One of the initial components to be examined in the evaluation of a distance education programme is the curriculum.

Curriculum is a planned teaching / learning activity or programme for which an educational institution is responsible. Farrant (1988:24) says: “a curriculum represents the distilled thinking of society on what it wants to achieve through education. It tends to mirror society itself, reflecting its aims, values and priorities.

It spells out clearly the knowledge society considers important and useful". The curriculum of a tertiary Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme for instance may consist of varied instructional and learning activities. These instructional and learning activities may include literacy, numeracy, skills training in various areas such as building, brick moulding, painting, gardening, primary health care, management of projects and small businesses, computer training, accounting, business economics, or playing of a piano or organ. These aspects of the curriculum might be planned and designed by distance educators and might be sponsored by governments. Such a curriculum should be evaluated so that stakeholders may know where it can be improved or what should be discontinued.

3.6.2.4 *Content of distance education programmes*

Content refers to the learning matter contained in a course or a study programme. It deals with what is actually being taught to learners. The three variables in instruction are the instructor, the learner and the content (or learning matter). The interplay among these three variables leads to the achievement of instructional objectives (outcomes). The content of a course is therefore crucial to the acquisition of the needed knowledge and relevant skills being offered by an academic institution and its educators. The content of distance education programmes (in most cases) is made up of print (eg textbooks and study guides). This writer is of the opinion that distance- education course content should go beyond print materials, the reason being that many non-print materials such as television and radio broadcasts, video and audio cassettes can also be used in distance teaching, especially in areas with electricity. However, as Hawkrige (1995:85) points out, "by comparison very little effort has been put into evaluation of the content of common non-print media such as television; video, radio and audio materials". Course content of distance-education programmes should be comprehensible, digestible and up-to the level of learners. A situation where content is perceived by learners as either too difficult or too easy could lead to learner attrition. It can be contended that to motivate learners and reduce learner attrition, the course content of distance education should be at the level of learners. For example, the content of distance education courses for tertiary ABET students

should reflect learners' life experiences and contain well-explained facts based on relevant case studies. Course content should contain structured student tasks (ie self-evaluation exercises) at the end of each study unit.

3.6.2.5 Study materials utilised in distance education programmes

Course materials contain the information that is to be studied. In distance education programmes, materials for study consist of books, study guides, notices, letters, information sheets, and video and audio cassettes that learners receive from the institution on registration and in the course of the academic session. Commenting on the appearance of study materials, O'Neill (1990:151) says, "they need not to be glossy, glittering products in full colour, packaged and sold like deodorants, neither should they ... look like one of those catalogues you sometimes see in funeral parlours advertising coffins or cremation urns". Illustrations in study materials for distance education students should include everyday adult activities explained in accessible language, which may be easily comprehended by adult learners.

Again, since the distance learner is isolated most of the time, writers of study materials should make them more interactive so that the study materials necessarily promote active learning. Citing Marland and Store (1991) Kamau (1995:263) contends that distance education study materials require motivational devices such as advance organisers, brief content overview, pre-tests, emphasis of certain important points in the tests, summaries, in-text reflective questions, objectives and self-assessment tests. Advance organisers could provide learners with prerequisite information and form a basis for learning new content. To judge and improve the worth of study materials they need to be evaluated from time to time.

3.6.2.6 Instruction in distance education programmes

Instruction deals with teaching, or how course content is presented and explained to learners in the best way that can induce and facilitate learning. The instructional component of distance education programmes is very important because it is

through instruction that learners acquire knowledge and skills in specific courses. One goal of any distance education institution or educator should be to offer learners education and training (through instruction) which is comparable to full-time residential studies. However, if the quality of instruction or the educational experience provided is inferior and unsatisfactory, then as Kemmis (1983:59) correctly puts it; “the apparent extension of educational opportunity is more illusory than real”. Indeed, one way of increasing the quality of instruction is to increase the quality of the instructor. In order to increase the quality of instruction, various aspects of it should be evaluated.

3.6.2.7 Students' learning in distance education programmes

Students' learning refers to how much information, knowledge or skills learners have been able to acquire as a result of instruction. In distance teaching both the institution offering the programme and the tutor aim at imparting specific skills and knowledge to their learners. Thus through instruction and to a larger extent learning, distance learners are supposed to acquire specific skills and be able to demonstrate such skills practically as proofs that they have learnt and can apply those skills in real life situations. If, for example, an educator sets out to teach poetry appreciation, the learners concerned should be able to read and appreciate or interpret a particular poem themselves after a given period of instruction and intensive study. Many people judge instruction by the amount of skills learners who have undergone a specific course are able to demonstrate practically. Cangelosi (1991:11) for example is of the view that “the success of a school depends on what its students learn and student achievement is the goal of instruction”. Surely, the quality of a product reflects the quality of the process that produced the product. The overall achievement of a learner depends on two variables – the quality of instruction and how well the learner has learnt. The evaluation of learning outcomes could therefore assist learners to become aware of how much they have learnt and how much they can improve.

3.6.2.8 *Learner support system in distance education programme*

Learners generally need the support of their institutions (lecturers and tutors alike) in order to achieve their learning goals. The learner support system in distance education may consist of minimal face-to-face tutorials, telephone discussion, or comments on learners' assignments. Studying alone at an isolated place in the countryside could be a traumatic or discouraging experience for the distance education learner. For this reason in recent times many distance education institutions are trying to reduce the "distance" between them and their students and to offer individual and group support. Commenting on the necessity of a learner support system, Kemmis (1983:59) argues that if distance education is to be effective, it needs to be recognised as a valid educational mode that requires "... an efficient course delivery system in its widest sense, including the development of an effective support system to meet the needs of students at a distance both before enrolment and as enrolled students". Indeed learner support in the form of face-to-face tutorials could be built up to clarify certain difficult areas of content and also to stem learner isolation. As aptly noted by Kamau (1995:264) the existence of tutors in distance education programme "is to cater for the majority of learners in issues relating to study and examination skills, advice on completion of assignments or projects and feedback on learner performance and progress on the study programme". In order to be certain that the tutorial or learner support system is serving its purpose it needs to be evaluated.

3.6.2.9 *Administrative or delivery services system*

In distance education, delivery services such as the processing of lecturers' or tutors' claim forms, student registration, supply of study materials, arrangement of venues for tutorials and examinations, and the mailing of notices, tutorial letters and news letters are done by the administrative staff of the institution offering the courses. This delivery system is the life-line of distance education programmes. Consumers of these services (ie lecturers, tutors, course co-ordinators, students and the general public) need to be consulted on the quality of such services. However, as Tamar and Ganor (1995:223) observe, "evaluations performed in the field of

education are focused mainly on the educational process or product. The delivery process which is the instrumental process is hardly assessed at all". Citing Parasuraman et al (1985), Tamar and Ganor (1995) argue that service quality is based on the assumption that "a prerequisite for a superior service is the understanding of customers' needs." Indeed, understanding and addressing the needs of customers by the administrative or delivery services system must be subjected to periodic evaluation.

3.6.2.10 Physical, settings and facilities

At present most distance education institutions organise minimal face-to-face contact tuition for their learners in specific subject areas. In most cases those distance education institutions organising tutorials for distance learners do not have their own physical facilities in the form of buildings, venues, classrooms, chalkboards, projectors, computers or video machines. Such institutions usually rent facilities from residential institutions like colleges, technikons, universities or even high schools (in the rural areas) which exist in various vantage parts of the country. These rented premises serve as venues for tutorial sessions. Both tutors and learners using rented facilities may encounter some problems such as lack of good classrooms or electricity. The facilities utilised for tutorial purposes should also form part of any evaluation of a distance education programme.

3.6.2.11 Assessment procedures

Institutions offering distance education programmes have various ways and means of assessing instruction and learning. Assessment of instruction and learning in distance education could be done through one or a combination of the following:

Assignments

Students at a distance teaching institution such as UNISA may be required to write and submit a number of assignments throughout the academic year. Assignments may be optional or compulsory. Compulsory assignments must be done to prove a

student's capability to write the end of year examination in a chosen course of study. In most distance education institutions a specific number of compulsory assignments must be passed by a student before he/she is admitted to semester or end of year examinations. Optional assignments are done as practice to enable learners to acquaint themselves with how to tackle typical examination questions. Assignments submitted by students (whether optional or compulsory) enable tutors and lecturers to guide students and also to improve their own teaching.

Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio is a collection of samples of a learner's work over a given length of time, which he or she has compiled into a file. The content of a portfolio includes samples of tasks, projects, or practical work done by the learner in the course of his or her studies. Clark and Starr (1996:388) rightly describe a portfolio as "a file or folder that contains samples of the student's work such as themes, homework, papers, teacher ratings of the work performed, descriptions of the students' accomplishments, scores on tests and other significant materials gathered by the student during the term". As part of the general evaluation of a learner, educators collect portfolios from learners for assessment.

Questionnaires

The institution offering distance education courses could design structured questionnaires to enable course participants to give their objective views on the various aspects of the programme, such as tuition, learning, assignment, venues for tutorials, study materials and course objectives, as part of the general evaluation of the programmes offered.

3.7 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

3.7.1 Introduction

The previous section of this chapter discussed the various aspects that need to be evaluated in distance education programmes. This section highlights the criteria for evaluating distance education programmes. By “criteria” is meant the principles or standards by which various aspects of distance education programmes could be judged. Thus, this section answers the question: On what criteria or principles should the evaluation of distance education programmes be based? Citing Stufflebean and Webster (1981) Bitzer (1993:28) describes educational evaluation as activities “designed and conducted to assist some audience to judge and improve the worth of some educational object”. Thus in assisting some audience (e.g. tutors, learners, educators, funders, policy makers and the general public) to judge the quality or worth of distance education programmes the evaluator must design some criteria or principles upon which all programme activities of the institution concerned could be assessed or scrutinised. Without criteria the evaluator would not be able to judge any aspect of an academic programme. The following are some of the criteria employed in this study for the evaluation of distance-education programmes.

3.7.2 A written set of clear, attainable and measurable aims, objectives and goals

It is important for the general public, funders and prospective students to know what the study programme offers them. Mission statements or course aims and objectives should specify the expected outcome for participants in terms of the general and specific skills, knowledge or performance that are expected to be attained. The criteria for judging the worth of distance education course aims and objectives should include the following:

Clear, precise and unambiguous

Aims and objectives of distance education programmes should be *clearly* and *precisely* spelt out by course providers. Clarity of purpose will avoid ambiguity in the minds of funders and prospective students. As Kamau (1995:263) indicates, “the writing of clear, precise and unambiguous objectives is vital in distance education ... because objectives provide teachers with clear guidelines for selecting content and instructional methods and evaluation criteria”.

Measurable and attainable

Course aims and objectives should be set out in such a way that they can be both achieved and assessed.

To this end, in judging the aims and objectives of a distance education programme, information and opinions regarding the clarity, achievability and precise nature of the course need to be defined by all the stakeholders.

3.7.3 Curriculum of distance education programmes

Considering the high unemployment situation in most developing countries, a curriculum or instructional programme for distance students needs to ensure that learners are taught practical skills, which will help them to become either employable or self-employed. In view of this, distance courses (which have minimal contact teaching) might have the following in the curriculum: small scale business management, gardening, computer training, literacy, numeracy, poultry keeping, brick-moulding and primary health care.

Relevance of curriculum:

The curriculum of a distance education programme should have relevance to what learners want to learn. That is, it should relate to the learning needs of course participants and community needs in general.

Suitability of curriculum:

The curriculum for a distance education programme should be appropriate and suitable to the requirements of learners. The curriculum should fit the learning needs of participants and thus serve the purpose it is meant to serve.

The evaluation of the relevance and suitability of all aspects of a distance education programme could assist course producers and educators alike to improve their curriculum in order to offer better courses to learners, prospective learners and the general public. The two criteria – relevance and suitability -- should therefore be the guiding poles for the curriculum assessor of a distance education programme.

3.7.4 Content of distance education study programmes

Hornby et al (1974:185) define content as “that which is contained in something”. Content of a course therefore refers to what is really contained in the particular course. Course content deals with what is being taught to learners. For instance, in an adult literacy course, the content might be the teaching of the alphabet, pronunciation, sounds, or word formation. Content (ie what is being taught to learners) could be presented in both printed and non-printed forms. Thus content could be either written, or contained in video or audio cassettes. In judging the content of a course for improvement the following should be considered:

Opportunity to practice what is being taught

We learn by doing, and practice makes perfect. In view of this adult learners on literacy courses need to be given opportunities for practice in both writing and speaking. To gain confidence in speaking a second language (eg French, Sotho or English) learners should be offered the opportunity to practise.

Clarity of content

The presentation of course content should be clear. For example, in literacy studies, words, sounds and pronunciation should be clear and unambiguous.

Meaningfulness and relevance:

The content of any distance-education course meant for adults should be meaningful and relevant to learners. Adults should be taught things that are relevant and meaningful to their lives.

3.7.5 Materials for study in distance education

In distance education programmes, materials for study may consist of print and non-print items such as study guides, textbooks, tutorial letters, information sheets, and video and audio cassettes. In judging these study materials criteria like the following may be applied:

Quality, authenticity and suitability

Study materials (whether print or non-print) should be of good quality, authentic, suitable, and up to the level of learners. Study materials should be user-friendly, interesting, moderately challenging and not boring or scruffy. Materials meant for adult learners should not be as decorative in appearance as those for children.

Accessibility and availability of study materials

Study materials should be accessible and available to learners at all times. Inaccessibility or non-availability of study materials might have serious negative effect on learning. Touching on the subject of inaccessibility of non-print materials, Hawkrige (1995:85) reports that in the 1970s early surveys on non-print materials – such as television and radio broadcasts – showed that half of the students interviewed were not at home when the broadcast occurred; none of them

had video cassette recorders in those days; and even those who watched the television broadcasts did not consider the programme particularly valuable.

3.7.6 Instruction in distance education programme

Instruction is the pivot around which every academic programme revolves. In distance education programmes instruction is given through a variety of means, such as face-to-face tutorials, copious comments on students' assignments or telephone discussions. In some cases lecturers teach via modern technological media such as audio and video cassettes, or radio or television broadcasts. To judge the quality of instruction one can employ the following criteria:

Suitability, relevance and meaningfulness

Since instruction is the pivot around which academic and training programmes revolve, it is important to examine its suitability, relevance, efficiency and meaningfulness to the study programmes in general and to learners in particular.

Competency and effectiveness

The ability of the instructor to impart knowledge and skills effectively in distance education should be evaluated. In a case where it is found that an instructor does not possess the relevant skills he or she could be advised to improve his or her performance in order to improve the quality of instruction.

Appropriateness of instruction methods

There are many methods through which an instructor or educator may convey knowledge to students, however, not all the available instructional methods are suitable in every teaching situation. Some instructional methods are outdated and therefore unproductive, while others are unsuitable for a particular lesson. The application of suitable, appropriate and effective instructional methods is therefore crucial to any teaching process.

3.7.7 Students' learning (learning outcomes) in distance education programmes

As in all education programmes, students in distance education undertake courses of study with the aim of acquiring some specific knowledge or skills they need in order to function well in their communities. The courses and training that can help course participants to achieve their learning goals are usually offered by specialist educators. There is usually a time frame for the course. During the given time frame learners are guided in their learning and acquisition of the required skills and knowledge. In judging how much knowledge and skills a learner has acquired one needs to consider the following criteria:

Learning experiences

The learning programme should be organised in such a way that learners are given opportunities to practice what they learn. Surely, in most cases people learn by doing; and it is a fact that practice makes one perfect in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In this regard, activities that involve learners actively in the learning process could help them gain experience and thereby achieve success in what they are studying.

Learner performance/learning outcome

In acquiring any new skill an individual has to make a conscious effort to learn that specific skill. In order for the trainer and the general public to be convinced that the learner has learnt or acquired the specific skill in question, the learner has to demonstrate practically how specific tasks related to the particular skill are performed. Thus an outcome of any learning activity may only be shown in behavioural terms, that is, through seeing how well the learner performs the learnt skill.

3.7.8 Learner support system in distance education programmes

In an attempt to bridge the “distance” between an institution offering academic and training programmes and its students scattered all over the country, learners are given some support. This support system is usually in the form of minimal face-to-face tutorials, guidance, copious and encouraging comments on students’ assignments, telephone discussions, fax messages and letters from tutors or lecturers to individual students concerned. In judging the quality of a learner support system the following criteria can be applied:

Effectiveness and reliability

The student or learner support system in distance education, for example, face-to-face tutorials, should be effective and reliable if it is to serve distance students better.

Accessibility and commitment

Student support in any form, (eg telephone discussions, face-to-face tutorials or guidance) should be accessible to all registered distance learners in order to reduce frustration and its concomitant student attrition. Tutors and lecturers in the learner support system should therefore show commitment to their learners. This can bridge or reduce the “distance” between learners and the institution offering the programme.

3.7.9 Administrative or delivery services system

The delivery system or administrative services, handle important communications between tutors, course co-ordinators and learners; process registration of courses and tutors’ claims; give information on examination dates and venues to registered students; and may organise workshops for tutors and arrange tutorials for distance students. Delivering these administrative services to customers is essential to the day-to-day running and success of distance education programmes. To understand

its customers' needs and to improve the quality of services rendered, the delivery system should be evaluated. According to Tamar and Ganor (1995:224) "in order to assess satisfaction from service we have to give precise criteria for customers to work from. It is however regrettable that the literature which deals with the examination of customers' attitudes and opinion towards the services rendered seldom deals in a systematic manner with the definition of the criteria for measuring attitudes towards service". As adopted from Tamar and Gannor (1995) the quality of the delivery system of a distance education institution could be judged by the following criteria:

Reliability and competency

Service delivery systems should be dependable and consistent. The staff handling administrative matters at the institution must be competent in providing essential services to learners, academic staff and the general public. Distance learners' and part-time tutors' queries should be handled efficiently, reliably and professionally.

Courtesy and responsiveness

What comes to the fore here is the attitude of administrative staff. In a distance education programme tutors, learners and the general public do not usually travel to the institution to get information, submit forms and so on. In this regard, any institution that offers distance education courses needs courteous, polite, friendly and committed administrative staff members who are willing to provide services timeously either telephonically or through the mail. Lack of courtesy on the part of administrative staff could portray a negative image of the institution in the eyes of students, tutors, funders and the general public.

Understanding, accessibility and proper communication

In order to provide good services, administrative staff members should make efforts to know and understand the customers' needs. The doors of the administrative staff should always be open to customers (ie the staff should be

approachable). Stakeholders, such as students, tutors and co-ordinators, must be informed about new policies in a language they can easily understand.

3.7.10 Physical settings and facilities

Studying alone could be traumatic for many distance education students. In an attempt to support learners, many institutions offering programmes at a distance have started to organise tutorial sessions for their learners. In evaluating the physical facilities at which face-to-face tutorial sessions take place an assessor could employ the following criteria:

Adequacy and suitability

Venues or classroom accommodation, chairs, tables, chalkboard, video and audio-visual materials are normally rented from residential institutions. The general environment of tutorial venues may be noisy or hostile to learning. The process of evaluation should therefore establish how adequate and suitable such rented facilities are for effective tutorials. In situations where physical facilities are either inadequate or unsuitable, distance education institutions should make alternative arrangements in order to offer students the best contact tuition possible.

Accessibility of facilities

Distance education students are usually adults and or workers who are scattered all over a country and beyond. Some of the students live and work in isolated places and might have to travel several kilometres to reach venues for tutorials. In cases where facilities are too far away from learners, they might not attend tutorials regularly and could even abandon their studies altogether.

3.7.11 Assessment procedures

Distance education institutions have several procedures for assessing their learners. These assessment procedures need to be evaluated in order to be improved. In judging assessment procedures the following criteria can be applied:

Quality, efficiency and reliability

The procedures for assessing learners, such as marking assignments or examination of portfolios should be well thought-out, reliable and efficient. The assessment should be continuous and learner centred. Learners should therefore be informed timeously of the basis for assessment (i.e. the standard required) so that they are able to work toward that.

Guidance and encouragement

Both tutors and lecturers should regard the marking of assignments as part of teaching. In this regard they should offer copious, efficient and valuable suggestions and encouraging comments that can motivate learners.

3.8 PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE CONDUCTING OF SUCCESSFUL EVALUATION IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

3.8.1 Introduction

According to Clark and Starr (1996:379) “When you evaluate or assess the situation you judge its value”. Every educational evaluation has a purpose. However, as noted by Gredler (1996:217) “Misunderstandings about purpose are the most likely single reason for evaluations to misfire or to result in findings that are of no use”. In the light of this caution this researcher is of the view that for any educational evaluation to be successful certain fundamental principles, guidelines or steps need to be critically considered and followed. These important principles

or steps for conducting a successful evaluation in education might include the following:

A statement of appropriate instructional objectives, provision of effective teaching and learning, validity and reliability of evaluation instruments, increased responsiveness in evaluation, the need to select observational categories, and the need to identify interest groups in the evaluation programme.

3.8.2 Statement of appropriate instructional objectives

Instructional objectives of Adult Basic Education and Training must be clearly stated and followed during instruction. Where these are specified evaluation should be based on them (the objectives) thereby finding how exactly instruction has influenced the learners. It becomes quite easy to evaluate instruction and its outcomes when the instructional objectives are specified at the outset. As appropriately noted by Kamau (1995:263) “The writing of clear, precise and unambiguous objectives is vital in distance education ... because objectives provide teachers with clear guidelines for selecting content and instructional methods and evaluation criteria”.

The identification of explicitly stated programme objectives avoids vague speculations, or the inclusion of irrelevant or trivial materials and exclusion of some pertinent data that need to be considered. Furthermore, when objectives of instruction are clearly specified, the evaluator will be able to identify any important aspects of the syllabus that are either de-emphasised or completely ignored. Adhering to this principle means that the results of evaluation are valid and comprehensive enough to become the basis for taking important decisions in Adult Basic Education and Training programmes. Truly, good teaching is based on clearly stated objectives; and instruction and learning are evaluated by determining the extent to which such objectives have been realised in teaching. The statement of objectives of programmes could be useful indicators in evaluating how well the programme in question is achieving the goals initially set out by institutions and educators.

3.8.3 Provision of effective teaching and learning

One very important condition to be met in evaluation is that prior effective teaching and learning must have taken place. One wonders if the whole exercise of evaluation would be worthwhile without prior teaching and learning. Quality and qualitative instruction and learning are therefore prerequisites for a successful evaluation in Adult Basic Education and Training. Fraser et al (1990:167) aptly say “the improvement of teaching which follows from evaluation action not only ensures qualitative teaching for the future, but also enhances the instructor’s self confidence. This also applies to the learner, whose self confidence should increase as a result of evaluation of his progress in the learning activities ...”. Thus when instruction and learning are duly performed and consequently evaluated both the instructor and the learner could experience some benefit. For example they may realise the shortcomings in their work and strive to correct them. Evaluation of tuition and learning is therefore the basis of good education. This is why prior effective teaching and learning are imperative to educational evaluation.

3.8.4 Validity and reliability of evaluation instruments

In order to consider an evaluation exercise in a distance course in Adult Basic Education and Training as successful, its instruments (ie various test designs) should be accurate and reliable. The veracity of any educational evaluation is dependent on the validity and reliability of measurement instruments employed by the evaluator. In the words of Cangelosi (1991:25) “To varying degrees measurement error contaminates all measurement results used in the evaluation of instruction”. To reduce possible errors in evaluation therefore, its instruments (particularly tests and examinations) should be made to cover all aspects of the study or training programme. Where tests are used they should be varied. For instance, some sections of the tests should contain multiple-choice items. Each of the multiple-choice items should contain only one correct unambiguous answer. Another section should test the creativity of learners and should therefore contain essay type test items.

All test items should be taken from what has been taught in class, and be backed by a well-prepared marking key or memorandum. Such measures would reduce subjectivity, thereby making evaluation results more valid and reliable. As Cangelosi (1991) rightly puts it, "The less measurement error influences measurement results, the more valid the measurement that produced those results". To be valid, evaluation in distance Adult Basic Education and Training programmes should not only be relevant but should also be reliable. It is only when evaluation results are relevant, valid and reliable that such results could be considered "useable" and useful in making educational decisions. The relevance of evaluation of instruction therefore depends upon how well its results pertain to the question addressed by that evaluation.

3.8.5 The need to select observational categories

The evaluator needs to select what would count as data (eg observable activities like writing, counting, planning or drawing) in the evaluation exercise. In order to achieve this the evaluator should first determine the needs of programme participants, the nature of the programme and the context within which such a programme operates. For the evaluator to evaluate a programme he or she must participate in such a programme (e.g. be an instructor, a course designer, a learner or an administrator). Through participant observation, information on activities on distance Adult Basic Education and Training programmes that cannot be obtained through questionnaires, tests or examinations. For instance information that touches on emotions (such as a crisis in one's marriage) and how this affects the individual's performance in studies can only be known to a close member of the study group who has concern for all participants on the programme. Participative observation is therefore a necessary tool or condition for evaluating Adult Basic Education and Training programmes.

3.8.6 The need to identify interest groups in the evaluation

Important stakeholders in distance Adult Basic Education and Training programmes who may need to know the results of the evaluation should be

identified and described. Tutors, Adult Basic Education and Training administrators, educational planners, educators, department of education, government, NGO'S and funders are some of the stakeholders that may be interested in the evaluation results. The identification and description of such groups is crucial to evaluation since it helps the evaluator to provide findings that will be relevant to each of them. Again, in planning the evaluation programme such constituencies or interest groups need to be consulted for their input, since the evaluators should be able to satisfy their needs and interests in distance Adult Basic Education and Training programmes. The evaluator should be able to analyse the expectations of the various stakeholders, the criteria they would employ in judging the programme and their value perspectives with regard to the evaluation. When information on the interests of the various stakeholders is known the evaluator will be in a suitable position to select appropriate data that could lead to the results such stakeholders expect.

Once audience or interest groups for evaluation have been specified, the evaluator then has to determine the questions about the programme which each interest group most wants the evaluation to address. Such questions will direct the evaluator to the type of data he or she needs to collect. Addressing issues of importance is therefore essential in any evaluation exercise. Grotelueschen et al (1976:43) however warn evaluators that "since not all issues identified as important can be addressed, care must be taken to avoid unwanted expectations about which issues will be dealt with and whether or how they will be resolved". Thus it can be contended that an evaluator of distance Adult Basic Education and Training programmes should assign priorities to various audience concerns or issues. These priorities may be established at the outset of the evaluation exercise, but may be revised as the evaluation proceeds. The evaluation may also assign evaluation priorities to various programme components as well as various goal statements of the Adult Basic Education and Training activities.

3.9 SUMMARY

In the foregoing chapter the evaluation of instruction in general and, in particular, distance education programmes has been examined. The main issues which emerge clearly from the literature study include the following:

- Evaluation of instruction entails the judgement of quality, value, effectiveness and impact.
- Evaluation could be done at three main levels, namely: macro, micro and meso levels.
- The three main types of evaluation are diagnostic, formative and summative.
- The most publicised aspect of evaluation is instruction.
- Through evaluation, stakeholders in distance Adult Basic Education and Training (and for that matter education in general) are able to take relevant decisions on study programmes.
- Evaluation exercises provide instructors, learners and other participants in distance Adult Basic Education and Training programmes with feedback on their educational endeavours.
- Evaluation exercises should take into consideration instruction, content, objectives, curriculum, learning experiences and the conditions under which instruction and learning occur.
- Evaluation of distance education programmes should cover the following aspects: aims, objectives, curriculum, content, study materials, instruction, student learning, administrative/delivery services, student-support services, the physical setting and assessment procedures.

- The principles guiding successful evaluation of distance education programmes include the statement or existence of appropriate instructional objectives, prior teaching and learning, validity and reliability of evaluation instruments and the need to identify interest groups in evaluation exercise.

In the next chapter a model for the evaluation of distance education programmes will be offered.

CHAPTER FOUR

A MODEL FOR THE EVALUATION OF ABET PROGRAMMES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed evaluation in general and in ABET and distance education in particular. In this chapter, a model for the evaluation of ABET programmes will be proposed.

The Government of National Unity, which came to power in 1994, realised not only the extent of illiteracy among adults but also its implications for individuals and the country at large. To empower adults to play meaningful roles in a democratic society, the government made basic education a provision available to all adults. In view of this provision educators (trained and untrained) began to teach adults at various learning centres throughout South Africa. In spite of this provision of basic education for adults, there are presently no guidelines to direct or assist practitioners in the effective instruction of ABET programmes. With this scenario it is likely that practitioners might implement outmoded instructional strategies, which might not assist stakeholders to realise the goals of ABET.

Until very recently, the focus of education at all levels (including ABET) was on content. Educators “spoon-fed” learners with information whilst the latter played little active part in the learning situation. To a very large extent learning was memory based, and learners had very little chance of demonstrating that they understood what they had learnt. Under the present system of outcomes based education, however, there has been a paradigm shift from educator-centred to learner-centred instruction. In this regard the outcome of learning (ie what a learner does to demonstrate that learning has taken place) is of the utmost importance to all stakeholders in education. Thus much premium is now placed (in all sectors of education) on the demonstration of desired learning results by the learner. Clark and Starr (1996:44) appropriately say, “As a teacher, your job is to get students to engage in activities that will result in a desired learning”.

Against this background, a model for instruction and evaluation of ABET programmes is proposed. The model shown on page 4 seeks to provide a sound basis for instruction, assessment and evaluation in order to ensure effective ABET delivery. The rationale for the model is to ensure value in instruction, assessment, evaluation and easy application and delivery of ABET programmes. In designing the model the researcher used the existing facts and information made available in the National Department of Education policy document on adult basic education and training (1997:9) as a foundation. The policy document was deemed an appropriate basis for the model because it spelt out government decisions, aspirations and expectations regarding the provision of basic education and training for adults. In addition to the policy document on ABET a number of other sources which have relevance to didactics in general were consulted. On the basis of critical examination and reflection the researcher re-organised and structured information obtained from the various sources into the model shown in figure 1.

In subsequent paragraphs the various stages of the development of the model will be explained.

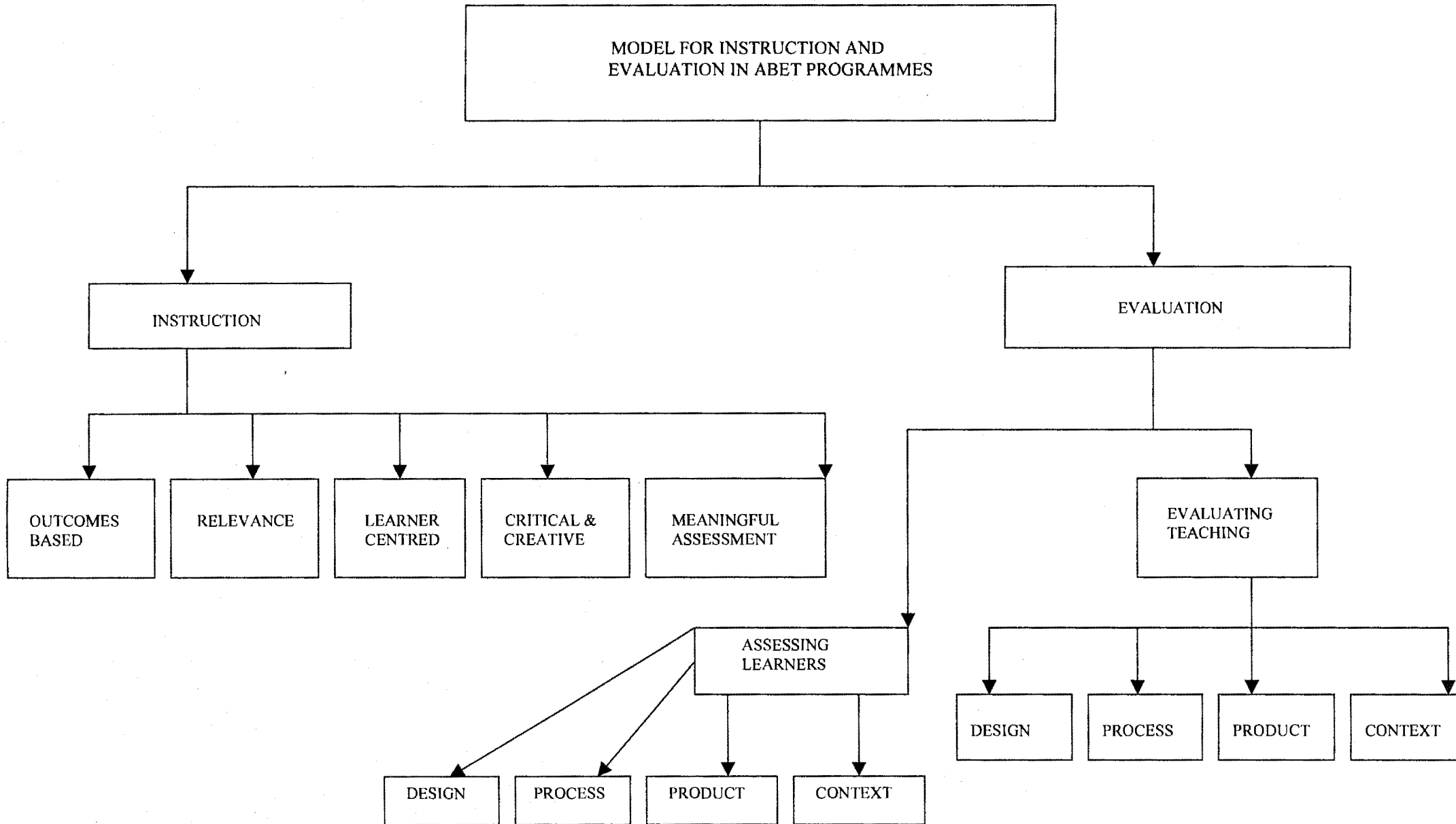


FIGURE 1: A MODEL FOR INSTRUCTION AND EVALUATION IN ABET PROGRAMMES

4.2 PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE EVALUATION OF ABET PROGRAMMES

A study of the literature on didactics reveals two important elements, namely, instruction and evaluation. Educators undertake instructional activities with the aim of bringing about the learning of specific skills among their learners. In order to find out how successful instruction has been evaluation must be done. The two activities, instruction and evaluation, usually take place simultaneously. Thus, wherever instructional activities occur stakeholders in the programme expect evaluation to follow in order to realise educational goals. This explains why, at the outset, the proposed model developed into two branches, namely, instruction and evaluation, as shown in figure 2 below.

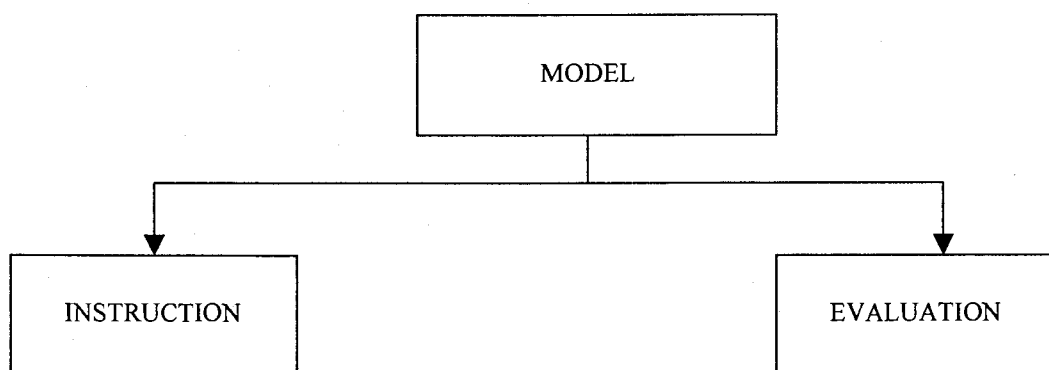


FIGURE 2: THE TWO LEGS OF THE MODEL

4.2.1 The instruction branch of the model

In developing the instruction component of the model the researcher perused the available literature on didactics and identified a host of general didactical principles put forward by different authors in that field. From a close look study of the literature the researcher identified 36 instructional guidelines, which he adapted to ABET instructional programmes.

In order to simplify and organise these guidelines into meaningful categories the researcher particularly studied, in detail, the National Department of Education (government) policy document on ABET (1997) as well as the following sources;

Potgieter (1992), Gous (1999), Piek and Mahlangu (1990), Vacarino (1995), Fraser et al (1990), Curzon (1990), Clark and Starr (1996), McKay, Kotze and Vacarino (1998), Hiemstra (1992), and Hayslip and Panek (1985). Each of the sources provides a list of principles for instruction.

After critical examination and reflection, the 36 broad didactical principles were reorganised and structured into the following five main didactic categories – Outcomes Based Education, Relevant, Learner centred, Inducing critical and creative thinking, and Meaningful assessment, as indicated in figure 3 below.

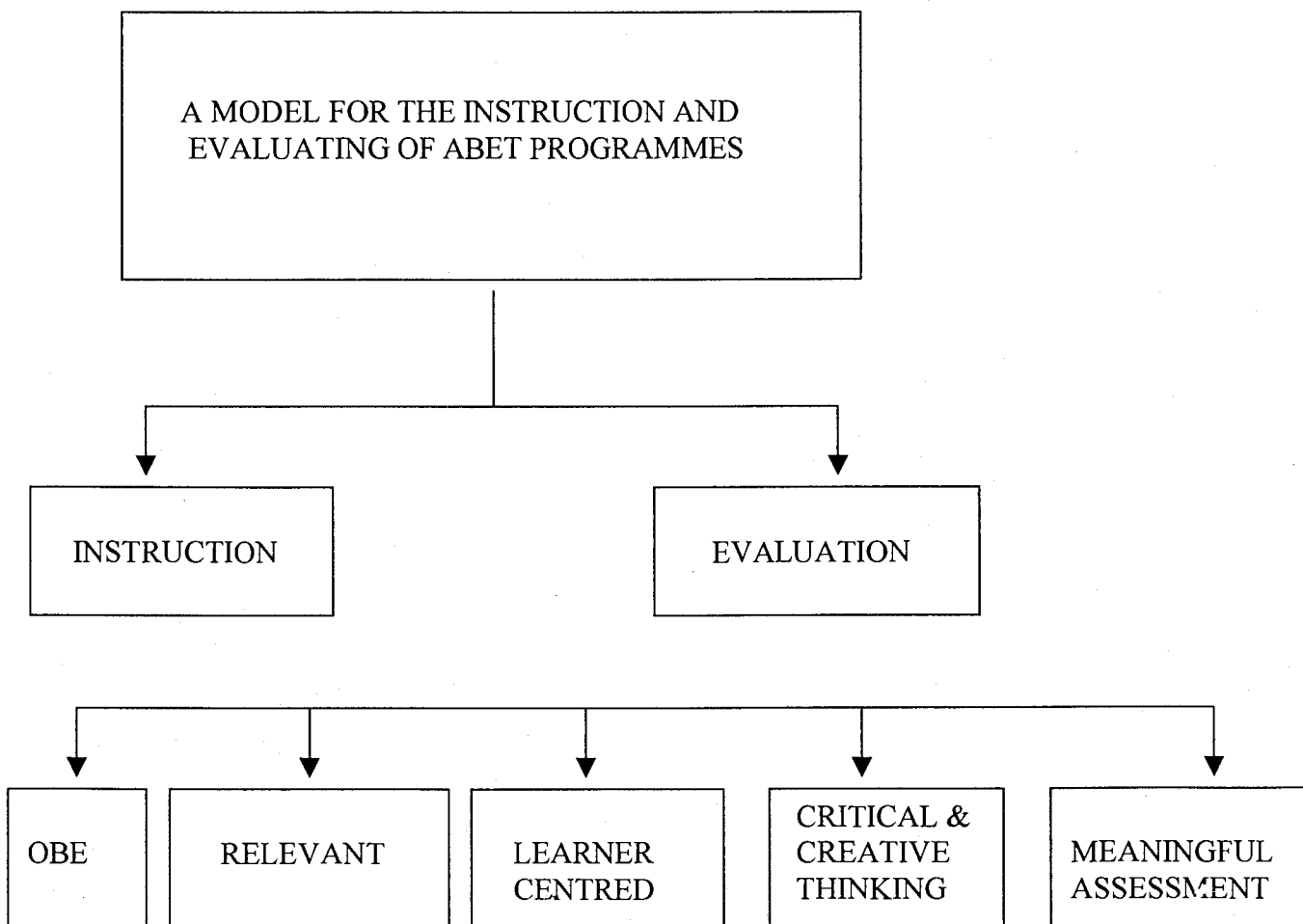


FIGURE 3: THE INSTRUCTION BRANCH OF THE MODEL

The details of the instruction branch of the model are given in figure 4 and explained in the guidelines that follow.

4.2.2 The evaluation branch of the model

A study of the literature on didactics reveals that the subject matter of evaluation is broad and one of the important areas it covers is that of assessment.

Cangelosi (1991:5) for instance recognises the broader concept – evaluation – as “a judgement about the quality, value, effectiveness or impact of something (eg a product, process, person, organisation or collection)”.

In describing assessment McKay (1995:209) says it is “the process of getting information about a learner’s progress or performance”.

By implication, while evaluation seeks a holistic view of all aspects of an instructional programme in order to make a decision, assessment may be done on an aspect of an instructional programme such as learner’s performance in a test. Thus the evaluation aspect of the model has developed into two categories or branches of a broader concept (evaluation of instruction) and a narrower one (assessment of learners). This is shown in figure 5 below.

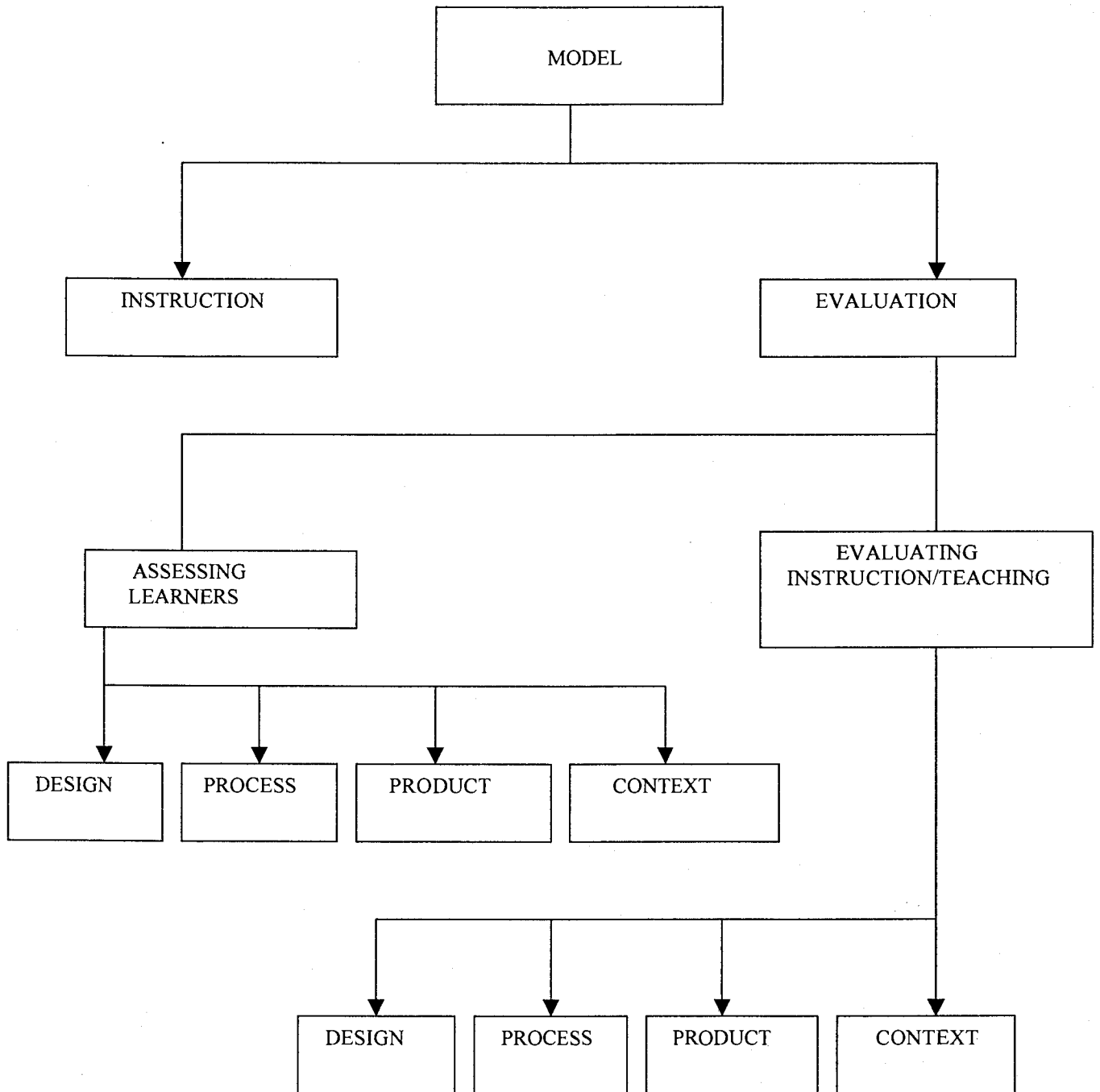


FIGURE 5: EVALUATION BRANCH OF THE MODEL

From the literature on didactics it was found that both evaluation and assessment must be planned, follow a logical pattern, have outcomes and must be done within a particular situation. In line with this fact the researcher structured evaluation of instruction and

assessment of learners into the following four categories – design, process, product and context.

A further study of the literature led to the identification of 18 principles for evaluating instructional programmes and 16 for assessing learners. These principles were re-organised into guidelines for evaluating instruction and assessing learners.

The details of the evaluation and assessment categories and their guidelines are given in figure 6 on page 172.

4.3 GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION (TEACHING) IN ABET PROGRAMMES

Introduction

Instruction is a major aspect of formal education. It is the foundation stone upon which education is built. Without instruction (of some sort) acquisition of skills and knowledge could hardly take place among learners. Instruction is a conscious effort by the educator to inculcate in the learner skills and knowledge which the latter might need to function well in his or her environment. If instruction or teaching in general, and particularly in ABET programmes, is to lead to the realisation of educational goals as set out by educators, planners, policy makers and the community at large, then it must be done in a manner that promotes learning. Clark and Starr (1996:44) appropriately note that “as a teacher your job is to get students to engage in activities that will result in a desired learning”. To guide or assist ABET educators in their efforts to educate adults, some instructional principles are called for.

In the following paragraphs some instructional guidelines (based on the model shown on page 4) have been formulated to assist ABET educators to realise their instructional goals (outcomes).

**INSTRUCTIONAL
GUIDELINES**

1 OUTCOMES BASED	2 RELEVANT	3 LEARNER CENTRED	4 CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING	5 MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT
It should	It should	It should	It should	It should
1.1 Have a goal. 1.2 Be structured. 1.3 Utilise advance organisers. 1.4 Proceed from p.k of learner. 1.5 Aim at changing and modifying behaviour of learners.	2.1 Provide insight to learners. 2.2 Be based on effective and appropriate communication. 2.3 Be holistic. 2.4 Be based on experience. 2.5 Consist of appropriate teaching-learning content. 2.6 Be based on case study methods. 2.7 Have a motivational effect. 2.8 Help learners to undertake meaningful projects.	3.1 Be based on needs on learners. 3.2 Allow for individualisation 3.3 Encourage co-operative learning. 3.4 Involve variety of methods. 3.5 Allow for reinforcement. 3.6 Involve repetition. 3.7 Aid retention and recall. 3.8 Allow for active participation.	4.1 Provide a supportive learning environment. 4.2 Encourage critical thinking. 4.3 Offer meaningful learning opportunities. 4.4 Involve discussion. 4.5 Be based on group work. 4.6 Make room for clear perception. 4.7 Make use of substitutional experience. 4.8 Make use of modern technology. 4.9 Make use of multi-media.	5.1 Have a meaningful assessment procedure. 5.2 Take place in conducive learning environment. 5.3 Allow for facilitation. 5.4 Offer true guidance. 5.5 Provide for self-evaluation. 5.6 Allow for introspection (self-reflection).

Figure 4: Guidelines for effective instruction in ABET programmes

a) ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE OUTCOMES-BASED

This first category (OBE), which comprises five didactical guidelines, was adopted from the ABET policy document (1997), Potgieter (1992) and Curzon (1990).

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should have a goal, direction and objectives

In any instructional transaction involving an adult learner, the dialogue between the educator and educand should be purposeful, and have a goal, objective or direction. In the words of Mager (1995) as quoted by Curzon (1990:131), "If you don't know where you are going, it is difficult to select a suitable means for getting there. After all, machinists and surgeons don't select tools until they know what operation they are going to perform.... Instructors simply function in a fog of their own making unless they know what they want their students to accomplish as a result of their instruction". The instructional process must therefore be planned in such a way that it is directed towards achieving particular desirable instructional and learning outcomes (goals). Instructional objectives are stated in terms of the learning outcome the instructor would wish to see as a result of the instruction. They must be specific and known to learners because adult learners usually like to know what needs to be done and how to do it. To achieve its objectives instructional dialogue must be well structured and ordered in a scientific and clear approach. In order to focus learner attention right from the start of the discourse, the instructor should make learners aware of their point of departure and intended destination. In doing so the instructor should state the measurable learning outcomes that are intended to take place as a result of the instruction.

Thus the instructional and learning objectives (outcomes) must be clearly formulated and made known to learners and instructors alike so that the objectives can be used as guides for evaluating results. After identifying instructional goals, the instructor should determine what learners should be able to do following the lesson (ie various tasks to be undertaken towards the achievement of instructional goals. The instructor must then make an instructional analysis in which he or she will list the steps and skills which will be followed in order to arrive at the desired outcomes. This would be followed by a task analysis, which includes main and subordinate and skills to be taught. Indeed adults learn best if they realise that what they learn will be useful in their particular situations in life.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should be structured

Instructional activities in Adult Basic Education and Training should proceed in sequence or in phases in order to facilitate learning. The development of each phase of instruction in sequence could reinforce processes like gaining insight, recalling, guidance, informing adult learners of instructional outcomes, enhancing retention and transfer and providing feedback. Fraser et al (1990:123) share the view that structured learning content or content which can be taught and learned in some type of scheme is mastered more easily than unstructured and un-ordered learning content. For effective instruction and learning, subject matter must be ordered in sequence. Sequencing or ordering of content, however, is influenced and determined by the nature and structure of the subject matter in question. For example while subjects like History, Biblical Studies and English Literature need to be ordered chronologically, others, like Mathematics, Science and Social Science should be ordered logically in order to follow laid down scientific principles.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should utilise advance organisers

Instructional dialogue in Adult Basic Education and Training programmes should make use of advance organisers in which salient points of the learning material are introduced to the learners just at the beginning of a lesson. The instructor may use this method to prompt the learner's prior knowledge (pk) of the subject. Advance organisers in the text are cognitive bridges, which prepare learners for new learning tasks. New content can be linked to existing relevant concepts. The material may take the form of short statements in continuous prose interlaced with diagrams, audio or video cassette on previous learning experience that has some bearing on the present lesson. For example, a short film or video presentation on a relevant topic such as a visit to a hospital ward by student nurses, or the collection and planting of seeds to investigate the influence of light on stem tropism, sets the scene for the exposition of the new content which will follow later (Fraser et al 1990:46).

Advance organisers bridge the gap between what adult learners know and what they need to know before they can successfully learn new materials, skills or information. Thus, when an instructor employs an advance organiser, he or she is providing a linking structure between the known and what is to be learnt.

Advance organisers help learners to relate new concepts to their existing resources of ideas and concepts, thereby leading to clarity and comprehension of current instructional matter.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should proceed from previous and prior knowledge of learners

Instructional dialogue in ABET should consider the prior knowledge (pk) of the adult learner and use such knowledge as its point of departure. To make adult learners more active and motivated the instructor should explore the previous experiences of learners and link them to the new tasks to be learnt. The instructor should then proceed from a known task to an unknown one, from a simple task to a complex one, from a concrete task to a more abstract one, and from general to specific instructional learning tasks. In this way the learning of new tasks is made easier for adults to master. In using this didactic principle, the instructor should ensure that adult learners duly master lower-order skills before moving on to related higher-order skills.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should aim at changing or modifying behaviour of learners

Behavioural theorists like Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike and Guthrie as cited by Curzon (1990:40-47) see learning as a relative change in the behaviour of the learner (the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes which the learner previously did not know or have) as a result of some particular stimulus such as instruction or training. Adult learners have some immediate learning needs to fulfil and are therefore eager to acquire new skills, which may help them change or modify their circumstances in life. The onus is therefore on the instructor of adult learning programmes to organise and order learning content in such a way that it will reinforce learning in order to bring about the intended and needed changes in the learners. In most cases successful learning is very closely linked to the quality of instruction. Learning new skills, for instance, can be positively influenced by effective instruction because good instruction acts as a stimulus, which acts on the learner, thereby enhancing learning. In this regard instruction is seen as the organisation of reinforcers by the instructor of whatever will reinforce or promote learning. In order to bring about the needed changes in the learner the instructor should reinforce correct responses from the learner as soon as such responses occur during instruction. In order to secure recall and retention of a desired response there should not be a long period between a given response and a further

reinforcement.

b) ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE RELEVANT

This category comprises eight didactic guidelines. The category was adapted from the instructional principles outlined by the ABET policy document (1997), Curzon (1990), Potgieter (1994), Duminy and Söhnge (1986), Vaccarino (1995), McKay (1995) and Piek and Mahlangu (1990).

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should provide insight to adult learners

Insight is a sudden discovery of a new idea or a solution to a problem. Insight could be an instantaneous comprehension of a whole group of relationships, or simply new light on how a problem could be tackled. Curzon (1990: 31) appropriately says, "It is the teachers' task to assist in the promotion of insightful learning and to act so that students might develop and extend the quality of their insights".

Instructional dialogue should offer insight into what is being learnt in order to make learners understand learning tasks easily. In learning situations the learner organises and reorganises his/her thoughts. As this organisation and/or reorganisation takes place, new relations or insights to the problems at hand emerge, thus leading to a solution or understanding of what is being learnt. Again, since the learner's past experiences contribute to the process of understanding of new learning tasks instructional dialogue should tap the past experiences of the learner and relate new learning tasks to similar ones the learner has experienced before. In this way the learner may obtain insights into current learning tasks. By offering explicit insight into learning tasks, instructional dialogue can assist learners to structure their perceptions sufficiently well in order to see into a learning task. In teaching to offer insight into learning tasks, the instructor should guide learners through specific parts before going on to the whole problem. Productive thinking or insight makes learners grasp essential relationships within instructional tasks, grouping them into "wholes" and restructuring the problem. The instructor's task should be the planning of instructional dialogue in a way that arranges a problem situation and leads learners to the discovery of patterns, relationships and solutions. When learners see the specific parts and relate them to the "whole", insights may occur, thereby leading to an understanding of the learning task. Curzon (1990: 77) reiterates that "considerable progress may be made in lessons in which learners are brought to a

particular point and then asked to examine and explain how they arrived at that point, and how they see their work as linked to the next steps in the solution of the problem". Learning is thus facilitated where an overview is presented and any inter-relationships of lesson topics have been clearly explained to learners by the instructor.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should be based on effective and appropriate communication

Communication in the teaching situation is described by Curzon (1990:109) as the "exchange of meanings between teacher and students, without which there can be no effective teaching or learning".

Effective and appropriate communication should be the basis of any instructional dialogue. Communication is crucial to effective instruction and learning in ABET programmes. Communication during instruction in ABET programmes should be a two-way approach in which information flows from the instructor to the learner and from the learner to the instructor. During instruction the two principal participants (the instructor and the learner) should communicate with each other clearly and audibly. Where technological media such as video, television or audio cassettes are employed in communication it should be ensured that the medium is appropriate to communicate the message to learners.

Communication in the form of writing must be clear and readable in all cases. As Curzon (1990) puts it, "The essence of communication is the transmitting and receiving of information through a common system of signals and symbols, whether in the form of writing or other signs, expressive movements, or the spoken word".

During the instructional dialogue both the instructor and the learner must be attentive in order to hear and understand what each has to say. Poor instructional communication can jeopardise transmission of information from instructor to learner and vice versa. To this end the instructor should communicate in a language relevant to the level of adult learners and understood by them. Using high sounding or grandiloquent words not comprehensible to the learners could block understanding and for that matter learning. Such a practice (perhaps done to impress adult learners) could lead to a breakdown in communication and instruction. Since without effective communication instruction and learning cannot take place, instructors

should communicate appropriately and effectively during instruction.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should be holistic

Duminy and Söhnge (1986:20) say that “man is now seen as a unity, a totality or a whole”. This means that in order to teach the total person instructional dialogue in ABET should involve the whole life space of the adult learner in the educational process. The learner’s emotional, moral, spiritual, physical, intellectual and psychological aspects must be integrated into the instructional discourse. The instructional process should always relate to the life and world of the adult learner. Adult learners could for instance be encouraged to apply their prior and new knowledge in real life. The process of instruction will not succeed if it ignores or isolates these inseparable elements in the make up of the learner. It follows naturally that both the learner and the learning matter must be seen in their totalities and not in parts. During the process of instruction the instructor should explain how the subject matter under discussion links up with other subjects and the whole life of the learner. For example in teaching learners in ABET programmes how to make a vegetable garden, the aspects of nutrition, economics, calculation and agriculture that are components of the project must be stressed by the educator. In literacy classes, for example, instead of just being taught the sounds of letters, adult learners should be encouraged to work on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills all together. This is because, as Duminy and Söhnge (1986:22) appropriately put it, “Man observes everything as a whole and ... learning is promoted when subject matter is presented in the form of wholes rather than harping on isolated parts only later to be conjoined into a bigger whole”.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should be based on experience

Touching on the need to base instructional dialogue on learners’ experience Duminy and Söhnge (1986:204) say “Direct everyday experience should be introduced into the classroom as far as possible”. This is perhaps an acknowledgement of the fact that adults come to the instructional situation with a wealth of experiences accumulated from their environment and the occurrences of everyday life.

This fact should therefore be respected and exploited by the instructor to the fullest by centring learning activities on what learners experience in their daily lives. Making use of

learners' experiences could lead to mutual sharing whereby various learners would offer their own unique experiences as they touch on particular learning tasks as examples and support for new learning activities. Instructional dialogue in adult education should emphasise the relationship between theory and practice. If the lesson is about how to change a car battery, an adult learner who has gained practical experience in that field could be requested to demonstrate to the group how it is done. Adult learning thus becomes more "problem centred" and less subject-centred.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should consist of appropriate teaching / learning content

According to Vaccarino (1995:17) "Content deals with what is being taught". Instructional dialogue in ABET should therefore set up an appropriate learning content to which teaching and learning should relate. Adult learners can acquire the needed knowledge and skills only when the learning experiences are based on or relate to the content of the teaching/learning transaction. To this end the instructor should arrange the instructional dialogue with the view to exposing the various aspects of the content to the learner. The instructor should therefore explain all aspects of the work with the use of practical examples. Diagrams, pictures, sketches and other instructional media employed by the instructor during the teaching of content should be fully explained.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should be based on case study methods

Curzon (1990: 295) writes, "The case study mode of instruction is based upon a participatory examination, analysis and diagnosis of a real or simulated problem so that general principles might emerge in a realistic fashion". Instructional dialogue in ABET should therefore be based on case study methods in order to offer adult learners the opportunity to explore, examine and analyse learning tasks in depth so that they can draw their own conclusions. In using case study methods of instruction the instructor should select suitable topics to be studied by adult learners. The material provided should help learners to explore the problems thoroughly. Topics selected for case studies should be relevant to the learning needs of participants. The instructor should follow up the study with a discussion in which adult learners can share their findings and conclusions. Case study methods are ideal for adult teaching because they give learners insights into knotty problems and offer opportunities for in-depth study of learning tasks that lead to the realisation of outcomes.

As the ABET policy document (1997:27) states: "learners will be able to attain outcomes at different rates of learning in a wide and rich variety of programmes".

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should have a motivational effect

In the words of Potgieter (1994:155) "Instructional dialogue should induce motivation by being directed toward meaningful activities". To achieve this the instructor should employ appropriate teaching strategies, which will induce motivation and thereby enhance willingness to learn. Adult learners naturally exhibit the desire to learn where and when the atmosphere is friendly and conducive to learning. The onus is therefore on the instructor to create a learning environment devoid of both psychological and physical threats, in order to maximise learning and so obtain desirable instructional outcomes. Learners must be motivated or encouraged in a friendly manner to take the required action. Motivation is a key to successful instruction and learning and it should influence how one organises one's class. The instructor should look out for opportunities to employ both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational techniques in order to achieve instructional goals. Piek and Mahlangu (1990:33) appropriately write: "The teacher's role of increasing the pupil's motivation and interest consists of the creation of teaching-learning situations which will stimulate the pupil's desire to learn". If for instance the learning activity is made more practical and seen by adult learners as something that can help them to achieve their objectives they will be motivated to learn, in order to apply the new skills acquired to their everyday life situations. In order to motivate learners, the stimuli provided by the teaching performance should be associated by the learners with appropriate and desired results. To sustain motivation therefore, the instructor needs to find out what learners' aims and interests are and try to build on them. In the planning and delivery of all aspects of lessons, the instructor should think of how best to present the correct and appropriate stimuli in order to obtain the desired responses. To make learning more purposeful to adult learners the instructor should introduce learning tasks in ways that stimulate motivation (ie take note of the purpose and intended outcomes, and stimulate curiosity).

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should assist learners in undertaking meaningful projects

As part of the acquisition of knowledge and the various skills emanating from instruction ABET learners are encouraged to start worthwhile projects in their communities. McKay (1995:45) suggests that “one way of getting support for a project is by talking to key people in the community”. Instructional dialogue in ABET should therefore guide learners to select, design and undertake projects which will assist them to acquire practical skills that might lead to self-employment and / or upliftment of their community. Such learning projects should consist of real learning experiences of the learner’s own choice such as sewing, knitting, banking, vegetable gardening, poultry keeping, moulding of blocks, or any entrepreneurial skill. The project undertaken by adult learners should be pertinent to the course the adults are taking.

c) ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE LEARNER-CENTRED

This category, which consists of seven instructional guidelines, was developed from the ABET Policy document (1997), Clark and Starr (1996), Potgieter (1994), Kotze and McKay (1998), Curzon (1990), Piek and Mahlangu (1990), and Gunter and Estes (1995).

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should be based on the needs of learners

As an instructor in ABET programmes as Clark and Starr (1996: 14) put it, “You must find out the needs of the students so that you can plan experiences that will help them satisfy their needs”. Thus in ABET learning programmes the instructor should gear instructional activities towards content which will enable adult learners to achieve their learning needs. An important feature of outcomes based education, as stated by the National Department of Education document on ABET (1997:27) is “a focus on learning by doing, and on what learners can do as well as learning of content”. For instance adult learners who have no practical skills such as typing or sewing may be interested in learning activities which can culminate in the acquisition of such skills. The learning needs of adult learners should therefore be paramount in instructional discourses. Instructional-learning activities which do not take these needs into consideration could be characterised by a high drop-out rate.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should allow for individualisation

In teaching-learning situations instructors must take cognisance of individual differences among learners. Instructors of adult learning programmes must not subject the individual to what may be described as the whims and techniques of pedagogical collectivism if they expect to realise positive learning outcomes among individual adult learners. Potgieter (1994:155) for instance; suggests that instructional dialogues should make room for the individual nature of the personalities of students by the incorporation of differentiated learning opportunities, where provision is made for differences in learning tempo, learning styles and developmental nature of the learning process by gradually and with accompaniment assuring continuity between learning experiences. The instructor of adult teaching /learning programmes must thus plan for an instructional process that meets the range of abilities and variety of interests among adult learners. Adult learners are different in many respects: for example, physically, culturally, linguistically, morally, in intelligence, in age and in interests. The instructional process should take into account individual differences **in** nature and abilities among adult learners. To cater for individual differences the instructor should devise a variety of learning activities that could assist each learner to progress at his or her own pace. Provision should therefore be made for individual work, and a variety of auditory, kinetic and visual learning opportunities.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should encourage co-operative learning

Co-operative learning occurs where learners work together for the benefit of all group members so that the group benefits from each individual's contribution. Adult learners have experience in sharing. Kotze and Mckay (1998:97) say "In doing co-operative learning activities, learners are able to work together and draw on their own as well as other learners' background knowledge and skills".

In a co-operative learning group, each learner has a responsibility to the other members of the group to ensure that all group members are successful in learning and acquiring new skills. Thus the philosophy of "Ubuntu" (collaborating with others to achieve a desired goal) is the hallmark of co-operative learning. Instructors of adult learning programmes should therefore make use of the co-operative method of instruction where adult learners are put in small learning groups to share learning tasks and ideas. Each of the groups formed could be

assigned some particular learning tasks where group members (learners) are given the opportunity and freedom to argue or discuss constructively in order to arrive at a consensus or a solution to the given task. The unique characteristic of the co-operative method of instruction, which makes it different from other group methods, is that when using the co-operative method each group member is assigned a specific task to perform for the benefit of the whole group. In this method of teaching there are no “free riders” (ie group members who do not contribute but only benefit from the contributions of others). Thus under the co-operative instructional method learners are engaged in specific learning tasks which require mutual collaboration and support from group members. The use of co-operative instructional / learning methods makes face-to-face interaction among learners possible thereby providing adult learners with the opportunity to share ideas, support each other and assess themselves as they grapple with learning tasks.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should involve a variety of methods

Instructional methods are the various procedures instructors employ in achieving specific instructional goals. There are varieties of instructional procedures or methods available to instructors but these are dictated by the type of lesson outcomes and the specific needs of a particular group of learners. In most cases no single method can realise the outcomes of instruction. It therefore becomes imperative for the instructor to use one or more effective methods in order to achieve a specific instructional outcome. For example, in a skill lesson for adult learners the instructor could combine teaching methods like demonstration, narration, experiment, discussion, and question and answer. The application of various methods of instruction in a single lesson would make use of the advantages of each method of instruction, thereby increasing the ability of learners to understand and successfully complete instructional and learning activities.

To this end the National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997:40) advocates instructional activity in which the educator promotes a variety of methods such as exploratory learning, collaboration and co-operation, active learning and interactive approaches, and reflective learning strategies.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should allow for reinforcement

Behavioural theorists like Pavlov, Watson, Thorndike and Guthrie as cited by Curzon (1990) mention reinforcement as an important condition for learning. Instructional dialogue in ABET should therefore involve reinforcement. The instructor should reinforce the desirable responses of the learner. When behaviour results in a positive outcome and it is immediately reinforced that behaviour is more likely to be repeated. Reinforcement could be in the form of verbal comment such as, good, very good, that is right, correct, you have got it right or well done! Such verbal reinforcements during instruction could spur learners on to master learning tasks. The instructor should give praise and attention to learner behaviour that facilitates learning and should avoid giving rewards to behaviour that hinders learning.

Reinforcement as a technique should be used appropriately by the instructor in order not to abuse it. Curzon (1990:61) for instance is of the view that in the first stage of learning instructors should reward every correct response made by learners, while in succeeding stages they should reward at random, or in a fixed manner relative to an interval based on a certain ratio. In teaching a new task for example, the instructor must reinforce learners' responses immediately as delay in doing so may make it lose value. However, in order not to misuse reinforcement as an instructional technique it must be regulated by reducing its frequency until it finally fades away.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should involve repetition

An essential aspect of learning is that if a task, a technique or a skill is to be performed well, it must be repeated several times till it is thoroughly mastered. Indeed, behavioural psychologists encourage repetition of responses made by learners. A great number of adult learning programmes involve the acquisition of new skills such as reading, writing, driving, moulding, dancing or sewing. The instructor should therefore repeat and demonstrate what is being taught and allow learners to practise by repeating the performance of a particular task several times in order for them to master it well. It goes without saying that in order to master skills efficiently the learner should be guided through practice for a period of time to enable him/her acquire dexterity. People do not create mental map of a town in just a day. Sometimes a very important idea takes a long time to fit into the ways adult learners think. Learning is a process that takes time to achieve. Hence instruction and learning should make

use of repetition until learning tasks are well mastered. To be sure that adult learners do not forget, learning should be revised very often in order to make the desired behaviour automatic. Practice, they say, makes perfect. It increases understanding and helps to consolidate learning acts.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should aid retention and recall

Instructional dialogue should aid adult learners to **retain** and **recall** what they learn. Curzon (1990:178) rightly states that “it is the responsibility of the teacher-manager to arrange instruction so that knowledge is retained by the learner for as long as possible”. In helping learners to memorise, consolidate and recall particular content, instruction should be presented not as an isolated unit but as a continuation of what has been learnt previously. New content presented during the instructional process should be associated clearly with the existing stock of knowledge of the learner. Furthermore, in order to aid recall and firm retention, the instructional dialogue must be meaningful to the learner. Adult learners can remember materials that are meaningful more clearly and easily and for longer periods of time than materials that have little or no reflection on their level of learning at the time of instruction. For instructional dialogue to aid retention and recall, its presentation should be logical, clearly connected and organised.

The process of instruction must encourage adequate rehearsal in order to assist permanent retention of information. Learners should be encouraged to think over or practice a new experience as often as possible and to integrate it with other experiences in order to remember it. The instructional dialogue should stimulate the learners so that their attention remains focused on the process of instruction, thereby assisting assimilation and retention. Curzon (1990:187–188) suggests that the instructional dialogue should train learners in the use of pegwords, keywords and mnemonics. The instructor’s advice on how to use pegwords, keywords and mnemonics in appropriate contexts could valuably assist recall of the associated information. Instructors’ recapitulation and learners’ rehearsal of learning material through appropriate activities at regular intervals (ie periodic revision and review of a summary of instructional material) could assist in retention and recall.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should allow for active participation

During instruction the instructor should present the learner (either a trainee practitioner or ABET learner) with learning tasks which could allow the latter to practice what is being taught to him or her.

Piek and Mahlangu (1990:34) say, "There must be a deliberate breakaway from the pupil's passive listening role in the teaching/learning situation. If self-activity is seen as a goal in the educative teaching, it requires an attitude of active participation by the pupil in the teaching/learning situation". Active participation (ie dynamic interaction) of the learner with the learning activity is an essential aspect of instruction since in most cases people learn by doing.

As Gunter and Estes (1995:36) put it, "We cannot be said to understand something unless we can employ our knowledge wisely, fluently, flexibly and aptly in particular and in diverse contexts". Thus if instructors expect to realise a meaningful outcome based education they need to actively involve their learners in whatever they teach them. The instructor should not always dominate instructional (classroom) activities. He or she should always try to involve learners actively in the instructional dialogue. In reciting Hiemstra (1992), Gous (1999:9) points out that in practice educators should involve learners actively in the instructional discourse in order to bring about learning. In allowing for dynamic interaction therefore, the instructor should adopt a learner-centred teaching strategy where the learners' input, views and active involvement in instructional discourse are regarded as essential. Interaction also implies that the learner can make a response, monitor its accuracy and revise the learning contents where necessary. Where learners are expected to analyse or evaluate, the learning activities of the lesson should indicate exactly how such activities or processes should be performed. Emphasising the need for learner participation Curzon (1990:10) says, "The passing on of information can no longer constitute the teacher's entire responsibility. His role is seen ... as involving responsibility for all the vital interpersonal processes of communication which are at the very centre of the teaching-learning situation". This applies even to distance teaching situations where an instructor teaches via telephone or during mini face-to-face tutorials.

d) ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD INDUCE CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING

This category consists of nine instructional guidelines. The category was based on instructional principles expressed by the National Department of Education policy document on ABET (1997), Potgieter (1994), Curzon (1990) Clark and Starr (1996), McKay (1995), Fraser et al (1990), and Duminy and Söhnge (1986).

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should provide a supportive learning environment

The instructional process in ABET programmes should provide a supportive learning environment where the instructor makes maximum use of the instructional techniques of **explanation** and **demonstration**. Curzon (1990:229) rightly states “the essence of a relevant strategy for teaching the older student is the provision of a positive supportive-learning climate in which self-direction will predominate”. The dialogue should involve explanation of concepts (ie interpretation, analysis, direction giving and clarification of learning materials) in a relaxed, informal, conversational manner. The technique of explanation reinforces what has been taught and learnt previously. It summarises and synthesises information, and clarifies points that might not have been clear. In using demonstration as an instructional technique, the instructor shows adult learners how something works and the procedures to be followed in using it. Demonstration as an instructional tool helps to translate description into actual practice, thereby intensifying the learning experience. Demonstration also acts to focus attention on correct procedures and applications and assists adult learners who may have problems in reading and comprehension.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should encourage critical thinking

The National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997:40) supports and encourages the “development of learning programmes that promote the learner’s ability to think logically and analytically as well as holistically and which acknowledge the provisional, contested and changing nature of knowledge”.

Instructional dialogue in Adult Basic Education and Training should therefore encourage critical thinking among learners. The instructor should not “spoon feed” learners. Clark and Starr (1996:237) for instance say “You cannot teach thinking skills if you limit yourself to

textbook teaching alone. Teaching for thinking requires additional hard work, creative instruction and hours of practice". Thus instructors of ABET learning programmes need to create opportunities for learners to think creatively about learning tasks presented to them.

This could assist learners to think creatively about day-to-day issues that confront them. To encourage creative thinking the instructor could employ instructional techniques such as brainstorming, encouraging learners to come up with new ideas and to try to elaborate on such ideas. In encouraging learners to think analytically the instructor should teach them to break down the material or task being investigated into elements so that they can assess the material piece by piece in order to establish the relationships among them. The instructor must raise problem issues and questions that will pique learners' interest and call for further investigation into such issues.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should offer participants meaningful learning opportunities

Instructors in Adult Basic Education and Training programmes need to find out which didactic activities would offer adult learners new learning opportunities to enable them to achieve the desired learning outcomes. What could be involved here are the teaching media employed by the instructor in unlocking learning content, and the spelling out of the learners' role in the acquisition of desired knowledge and skills. Fraser et al (1990:145) appropriately mention that "where learners have to solve problems themselves a degree of self-activity will be necessary. An activity like a play provides plenty of opportunity for self-activity and self-learning."

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should involve discussion

Instructional dialogue in Adult Basic Education and Training should involve learners in meaningful, informal, discussion on learning tasks. In the words of Curzon (1990:287) "The purpose of a discussion group is usually the collective exploration and public evaluation of ideas". Indeed, discussion as an instructional technique has advantages, which include training learners in communication skills, and building positive social attitudes and a sense of belonging.

For discussions to be successful however, learners should be given sufficient background information on what they will be discussing. In this regard the instructor must introduce the topic for discussion with sufficient explanation and motivation in order to generate interest in the instructional discourse. In doing this the instructor must select a learning topic which will not only interest learners but also offer them opportunities to learn. Discussion is a form of conversation and when it is based on interesting learning tasks adult learners will become involved enthusiastically. In any adult teaching/learning situation where the discussion method is used every learner should be given the opportunity to express his or her opinion on the topic concerned. Discussions meant to teach should end with a definite conclusion. The instructor should also sum up the discussion by mentioning the main points raised by participants.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes must be based on group work

Instructional dialogue in ABET should be based on group work because learning becomes more meaningful through group activities and the sharing of ideas. As rightly noted by McKay (1995:96) "Working in groups enables the members of a class to develop relationships in the classroom which are helpful to adult learning". This is equally important even in distance teaching with minimal face-to-face tutorials. In the group method of teaching there is no specific task assigned to each member of the group as happens under the co-operative learning method. Thus while some group members may contribute (or even dominate the discussion) of their own free will, others may do nothing, as they are not obligated to take an active part.

Under group-based learner-centred instruction the instructor plans the various learning tasks in advance. After dividing learners into groups (3 to 6 learners in a group) the instructor may request each group to choose a recorder and a chairperson. The instructor then introduces the lesson and leaves the various groups to carry on with their work.

In teaching a new task for example, the instructor must reinforce learners' responses immediately as delay in doing so may make it lose value.

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Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should make use of substitutional experience

In a normal didactic situation instructors make reference to real things in life in order to assist learners to comprehend instructional and learning tasks. However as noted by Fraser et al (1990:151) "Sometimes the actual subject of the content that has to be transferred in the didactic situation is not readily available and substitutional media have to be used". For example, an instructor of Biology in a forest region, teaching a face-to-face lesson on the adaptation of desert plants, will find it difficult to get the learners to experience what a desert area looks like. In a situation like this the instructor would have to use other substitutional experiences such as pictures, slides, transparencies or video to bring realism to the teaching and learning environment. Thus since direct experience of a phenomena is not always possible or available in a didactic environment, instructors need to improvise by using substitutional experience in order to make lessons real and comprehensible to learners.

Instructional dialogue should make use of available but suitable substitutional experience in order to appeal to all the senses of learners. The instructor should however select teaching media most suited to transferring specific content to learner.

Instructional dialogue in ABET should make room for clear perceptibility

Duminy and Söhnge (1986:34) say that "Perception concerns the observation of concrete objects as well as their representation in the consciousness or the imagination". Piek and Mahlangu also note that: "Sensory observation of things becomes meaningful only when it is followed by understanding and internal assimilation; when external observation is followed by internal experience". In this regard instructional discourses should make room for clear perceptibility to enable the adult learner to have meaningful learning experiences.

Teaching-learning activities should thus assist the learner to obtain a clear and conscious perception of the world around him or her in order to give meaning to the subject matter under study. Potgieter (1994:155) suggests that a "learning task should be mediated in a planned and systematic way and should be adapted to the immediate reference field of the student and all applications should relate to actual events or occurrences". During instruction the instructor could mediate the learning task by systematically applying relevant or suitable

media that could assist him or her to communicate the instructional message effectively to adult learners. When instructional dialogue is well mediated and adapted to the immediate perceptual field of learners greater comprehension may occur.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should make use of modern technology

Modern technology has made considerable inroads into all spheres of life including Adult Basic Education and Training. An instructor of distance ABET programmes has to employ modern technology (eg radio, TV and telephone) in instruction in order to reach and serve many adult learners scattered all over the globe. Restating Stonier (1981) Curzon (1990:325) states: "An educated workforce learns how to exploit new technology, an ignorant one becomes its victim".

As technology breaks down the barriers of distance and national borders the onus is increasingly upon the instructor of adult learning programmes to employ modern technological devices in reaching out to adult learners both far and near. A recent CSIR report published in the Sunday Times, (July 27, 1997:23) for example mentions that South Africa's requirements in education included literacy and numeracy training for 12 million adults, training for a formal workforce of 10 million, special tuition for about 2 million unemployed adults to bring them back into the mainstream economy and upgrading of 300,000 teachers in a new educational environment.

Traditional means of instruction cannot reach and serve the needs of such great numbers of learners so widely dispersed. This means the ABET educator or instructor has to employ modern technological devices like satellite television, computers, lectures on audio and video cassette, the internet and the telephone interactively in order to meet the learning needs of millions of adult learners who for socio-economic reasons cannot attend full-time schools.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should make use of multi-media

To make instruction more meaningful to learners and also assist them to understand learning tasks well, multi-media utilisation should be part and parcel of the instructional dialogue. Learning content should not be explained verbally alone; various media such as pictures, chalkboard, charts, and (in the case of minimal face-to-face tutorials) video and audio-visual materials should be integrated into the instructional dialogue. Such an integration of multi-

media could enrich and intensify student learning, improve perception, assimilation and retention of learning material and above all give adult learners the needed support in learning.

In utilising multi-media in instruction the instructor should select demonstration materials familiar to adult learners whenever possible. For instance, if the lesson is about market gardening, in order to make the lesson more real and practical, the instructor may suggest that learners visit a real market garden in their vicinity to see and interact with gardeners in order to obtain first-hand experience and information on gardening. In restating Gagne (1983) Curzon (1990:310) writes: "Selection, orchestration and delivery of stimulation by means of various sources comprise a large portion of the decisions the teacher must make every day The ultimate guide to decisions about the sources of instructional stimulation is the learning objective".

During the instructional discourse especially during a minimal face-to-face tutorials, the instructor should introduce learners to the new media materials by explaining to them how to use such materials or equipment and enabling learners to become familiar with them. In making learners familiar with multi-media materials and equipment the instructor should allow them to handle items used for instruction and learning. Thus the educator's task of providing stimuli for desired responses could be facilitated by being able to engage adult learner's senses of hearing, touching and seeing.

Selected and skilfully applied, multi-media can multiply and widen the channels of communication between the instructor and the learner. However as Curzon (1990) says "used at random or unskilfully so that they dominate or distort, rather than assist, the instructional process or without careful consideration of their effect on the attainment of objective, they can generate sufficient "noise" to render communication channels ineffective". Thus the instructor should use media appropriately and skilfully in ABET instructional activities in order not to blur communication channels.

(e) ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD INCLUDE MEANINGFUL ASSESSMENT

This last category, which comprises six didactical guidelines, was adapted from the instructional principles expressed by Curzon (1990), McKay (1995), Oberholzer and

Greyling (1989), Clark and Starr (1996), and Potgieter (1992).

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should have a meaningful assessment procedure

In describing assessment Curzon (1990:341) says, "It involves collecting, measuring and interpreting information relating to students' responses to the process of instruction". As the instruction proceeds the instructor should be able to assess its progress either through questions put to adult learners from time to time or practical work given to learners to perform. The National Department of Education policy document on ABET (1997:57) states that "assessment must focus on skills, knowledge and values that are relevant to the learning outcomes, and be appropriate and close to the ways in which people learn and how they will use or apply the skills and knowledge which are being assessed". The appraisal of a teaching / learning process will enable the instructor to find out the weaknesses in both the instructional strategies and the learning efforts of learners. The appraisal of instruction could also lead to valid recognition of achievement.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should take place in an environment conducive to learning

Instructional dialogue in Adult Education and Training should occur in an environment that facilitates learning. The instructor should control the instructional environment in a way that gives learners access to facilities and opportunities to learn. Learning has to be viewed as part of an interaction between a learner and his or her environment. An environment that assures the learner of personal security enhances his or her learning process. Clark and Starr (1996:48) say "People learn better in a happy frame of mind. Laughter, fun, humour, co-operation, pleasantness and politeness all make the classroom a happy place." Adults may learn more readily in an instructional environment that is characterised by physical comfort, mutual trust, acceptance and respect, freedom of expression, and the ability and desire to assist one another. The instructional process should therefore encourage co-operative learning activities among adult learners instead of creating competition. Adults can learn well in a conducive physical environment where chairs and desks are arranged in small groups making face-to-face instruction possible. Ventilation should be adequate with good lighting so that learners will not strain their eyes when reading from the chalkboard.

For psychological reasons, instructional dialogue should take place in an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and acceptance of learners as adults who have learning needs to fulfil. In this regard the instructor of an adult learning programme should remove all possible perceptions of threat or block from the instructional environment. Adult learners may harbour some fears pertaining to making mistakes and possibly being ridiculed by their colleagues. McKay (1995:31) rightly says “the fear of being too old may be more pronounced if an older learner is in a class with many younger learners, or if there is only one man among many women, or if one particular learner is very much poorer than the others and so on”.

Such psychological fears could make adults defensive and passive during instruction and learning. Adults may also lack confidence in learning and could develop anxieties about it. There is therefore the need for a learning environment that will minimise anxieties and improve upon learners’ confidence. To offer learners support and confidence the instructor should employ instructional methods such as small group activities and co-operative learning where learners may express themselves among colleagues who can support each other and share ideas. Calm debates should be encouraged during the instructional dialogue in a non-threatening atmosphere. Diverging views should be allowed where and when they arise because, as adults, learners may hold different views on learning issues.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should allow for facilitation

The traditional approach to teaching, in which the instructor dominates a group of adult learners who listen dutifully and passively to elucidation of an expert has become outdated in modern didactic circles due to its ineffectiveness as an instructional strategy. In modern andragogic practices it has become more appropriate and effective for the educator to facilitate learning during the instructional discourse instead of dominating the process. In using facilitation as an instructional strategy the educator guides, coaxes, supports and encourages adult learners to play an active role in the instructional process. He or she sets the pace with explanations, and guides learners through learning tasks. In this way adult learners are not allowed to sit quietly and listen passively to some explanation or elucidation from an expert. Adult learners come to the teaching / learning situation with a great wealth of life experiences and ideas. They therefore need guidance, direction and encouragement regarding learning, but not a rigid teaching strategy where the educator is seen as the sole provider and controller of information. In an instructional process where the emphasis is on facilitation

rather than teaching as such, learners are gently coaxed, guided and encouraged to learn, instead of being controlled or criticised so they learn under fear and intimidation. Nyerere (1976:9-10) for instance, is more than apt when he writes: “teaching which induces a slave mentality or a sense of impotence is not education at all; it is an attack on the minds of men”. Facilitation therefore implies that educators must create instructional conditions under which learners will be free to explore their life-world and to solve learning tasks independently instead of being “spoon-fed”. Facilitation means that learners must make a greater input into the teaching / learning process than is possible under the traditional approach to teaching. Under facilitation both the educator and the educand have a shared responsibility in making sure that effective learning takes place.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should offer learners true guidance and accompaniment

Oberholzer and Greyling (1989:25) say, “The agogic is the function of escorting, accompanying, going with, of being a companion, a fellow traveller who points the way”. Instructional dialogue in Adult Basic Education and Training should therefore be concerned with social agogics where the instructor sees himself or herself as skilful, knowledgeable and experienced adult guiding and accompanying another adult, who is less skilled, on his or her way to acquire the skills and knowledge needed for survival. The adult educator / instructor thus accompanies the adult learner as a neophyte who is guided through learning tasks. The instructor therefore needs to adapt to instructional methods that suit the teaching of adults. Adult learners feel the need to learn. Hence they should be encouraged, guided and accompanied sympathetically through instruction in order to reach their destination (the achievement of their goals) successfully. The sympathetic accompaniment of adults on the path of learning should be devoid of all the rigidity, threats and punishment associated with the traditional methods of teaching children. Adult learners are volunteers and should be handled with respect and understanding in order to promote effective learning.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should provide for self-evaluation

To stimulate interest, retain motivation and give learners the opportunity to monitor their own progress, self-evaluation questions and activities should be built into the instructional process. Clark and Starr (1996:389) rightly say, “If evaluation is to be fully effective and the students are to set their goals correctly, they should participate in evaluating their own

progress". Activities or questions for self-evaluation however, should be closely related to the stated learning outcomes.

In view of the fact that in some cases the instructor may not necessarily be available immediately (as happens in distance education) to monitor the learner's response, the correct response to questions should be included in the text itself. A discussion of why certain answers are correct and others incorrect should also be provided. The learner should be able to refer back to relevant parts of the text. Incorrect responses should be followed by additional explanations and practice. At the end of each theme, or when a series of learning units has been completed, self-evaluation tests should involve more than mere recall of information. Application of concepts and principles, problem-solving and other higher order activities are also required. In this way learners can determine how well they understand and can apply the learning content. The most important point is that each study unit should contain such a self-test and that the test should be related to the learning outcome of a particular instructional unit.

Instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should allow for introspection

Instructional dialogue should make room for self-reflection during which the instructor can think creatively about how to address the learning needs of adult learners. The instructor should think carefully and analytically about how he or she teaches and decide whether the strategies employed can lead to maximised learning among adult learners. Indeed, one of the important features of Outcomes Based Education is that educators should reflect on their teaching. McKay (1998:56) for instance writes: "Reflective teaching means that teachers think about their teaching both during and after their lessons, and in this way, are able to improve the way that they teach". Through reflection on teaching the instructor may realise possible shortcomings and seek ways to improve future instruction. The instructor should observe what is happening in the instructional –learning environment and reflect on it during the lesson and afterward ask himself or herself whether he or she taught well or should consider alternative strategies. Reflection on instructional methods and strategies could assist the instructor to make suitable decisions and adjustments to improve instruction.

4.4 GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING LEARNERS IN ABET PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

One important purpose of instruction in ABET programmes is to inculcate in adult learners new skills and knowledge or to improve on existing ones. Adult educators therefore need to find out how their instruction is promoting learning of desired skills and knowledge among learners. Thus as part of instruction adult educators assess their learners to determine how far learning has taken place among them. McKay (1995:209) describes assessment as “the process of getting information about learners’ progress or performance”. Information on how learners perform after instruction can only be obtained through assessment. Assessment however cannot take place in a vacuum. It must be done in a manner that can yield the desired results. This makes it imperative for some guiding principles to be suggested or formulated for ABET educators, to assist them in assessment of learners.

In the ensuing paragraphs some guidelines (based on the model shown on page 4) have been formulated and discussed.

a) ASSESSMENT OF ABET LEARNERS SHOULD HAVE A DESIGN (i.e. it must be well planned)

This category consists of four assessment guidelines that were adapted from the following sources: The National Department of Education Policy Document on ABET (1997), Gredler (1996), Briggs (1985), Gunter and Estes (1995) and Dressel (1976).

Assessment of learners in ABET programmes should be criterion referenced

Criterion referenced assessment compares a learner against a certain standard of achievement rather than against other students. According to Gredler (1996:112) under criterion-referenced assessment, “the basis for evaluating the student’s performance is not how well other students performed on the test. Instead, it is a particular set of behaviour or tasks on which the student demonstrates proficiency”.

Assessment of learners in ABET study programmes should therefore be directed at finding out the outcome (degree of mastery, competency and proficiency) of skills and knowledge individual learners have acquired as a result of instruction, rather than comparing them to that

of other learners at the same level. A learner may move to the next ABET level when he or she (at his or her own pace) has attained the level of competency required at a particular level. This is because adult learners may be more comfortable with assessment procedures that induce collaboration rather than competition. Many adult learners left formal learning programmes when they were young. This means any stiff comparison or competition of their performance with that of other learners is likely to lead to drop-out among them. It is therefore more suitable to use an assessment procedure that exhibits an individual's ability to perform certain tasks well. Gredler (1996:106) rightly says tests should answer the question "what skills has the student mastered"?

Assessment of ABET learners in ABET programmes should be specific and purposeful

The assessor of ABET programmes should define or state exactly (to learners) which aspects of their work will be appraised or assessed. In other words the assessor should define the assessment criterion more explicitly to the learners. Briggs (1985:149) says, "whether a unit or course of instruction is designed by a teacher some means must be developed to determine whether the desired learning has taken place as a result of the instruction. The most common way to assess whether desired learning has taken place is to administer assessment tests to the students at the conclusion of appropriate unit of instruction". The purpose of the assessment exercise should be clearly spelt out in order for ABET learners to know the importance of the exercise. The awareness of its purpose and aspects of the work to be assessed could make learners more committed to the cause of the assessment exercise.

Assessment of ABET learners should be holistic

Assessment of ABET learners should cover all domains or aspects of learning activities (eg cognitive, affective and psycho-motor skills.) Since ABET learning programmes aim at equipping adult learners with skills for living, assessment should cover affective cognitive and psycho-motor skills like singing, dancing, poetry, recitals, driving, handling of musical instruments, painting or typing. Gunter and Estes (1995:36) say "We cannot be said to understand something unless we can employ our knowledge wisely, fluently, flexibly and aptly in a particular and diverse context".

Assessment in cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills can enhance learners' preparation for practical vocations. In assessing the affective, cognitive and psychomotor skills of adult learners, consideration should be given to prior learning. The assessment of prior learning in all three domains mentioned above should be done for accreditation. However in order to uphold norms and standards given by SAQA assessment of learners either for recognition of prior learning or for moving to another level should be done unit by unit. As noted by Van Niekerk (1996:30) a unit of learning is "the smallest entity registered on the NQF which is assessable and which consists of knowledge, skills and abilities. Every learning unit will carry a credit rating or 'currency' to facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), credit transfer amongst providers and certification within the NQF.

Assessment of ABET learners should be conducted in a conducive atmosphere

Assessment could bring about fear and stress among learners. The assessor should therefore make the prevailing conditions under which learners are assessed free from stress. Dressel (1976:166) says, "a climate, frequently defined and used interchangeably with environment is similarly defined as prevailing conditions affecting life or activity". The assessor can make the prevailing conditions of assessment less stressful by making ABET learners aware of the importance of the exercise.

b) ASSESSMENT OF ABET LEARNERS SHOULD HAVE A PROCESS (i.e. it should follow different steps)

This second category comprises four assessment guidelines. The guidelines for the category were adapted from the National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997) Gredler (1996), McKay (1995), Curzon (1990), Bown (1999) and Newby and Stepwich (1996).

Assessment of ABET learners should be both formal and informal

In view of the numerous criticisms levelled against formal assessment there is the need to combine formal and informal assessment in ABET study programmes. A certain percentage of marks could be allocated to each of the two forms of assessment thereby reducing their shortcomings and making assessment fairer. ABET courses for adults are not too academic. In fact much emphasis should be on training, and in training programmes various methods of

assessment (eg discussion, demonstration, peer assessment or observation) could be used in order to judge learner's achievements fairly. There is no doubt about the fact that not all skills can be assessed in traditional ways such as tests and examinations. In view of this, learners should be assessed informally in addition to formal assessment. For example, ABET learners could keep files or portfolios in which copies and samples of all tasks performed (and marked by the educator) are kept. According to Gredler (1996:147) a portfolio is a "collection of student work that reflects growth and also indicates some of the diversity of student accomplishment". Examples of learners' best work, observation notes from the educator, reports on educator / learner interviews could also be kept in such files or portfolios. The files or portfolios should be collected and checked for learners' progress from time to time. With the move towards outcomes based education, the ability to demonstrate results of learning is becoming more important to stakeholders of ABET study programmes. This makes it imperative for adult educators to employ various ways of assessing their learners in terms of how they use or apply skills and knowledge acquired through instruction or training. McKay and Northedge (1995:228) appropriately say, "What is required is a system of assessment that tells us what specific skills and knowledge learners should have at the end of a course". However to maintain norms and standards; as reported by Van Niekerk (1996:29), assessment of ABET learners is controlled by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB), and the National Qualifications Framework under the auspices of the South African Qualifications Authority. Thus despite the possibility of informal assessment there is a mechanism in place to ensure adherence to norms and standards pertaining to assessment of ABET learners.

Assessment of ABET learners should be continuous

Assessment of learners in ABET study programmes should be regular and continuous. It should take place at regular intervals throughout the year. For example, when assessment is done on a continuous or monthly basis learners may be able to cope well as they will have a limited range of learning tasks to cover at a given time. It thus reduces the strain and anxiety induced by a single examination or test at the end of the year. Curzon (1990:352) says "this cumulative judgement rather than the result of a single examination forms the basis of the final assessment and evaluation of the students' capabilities". In a continuous assessment both written and practical work of the learners as well as his or her contribution to work of the class as a whole may be taken into account and assessed. This could give a general view

of a learner's attainment.

Assessment of ABET learners should be both internal and external

In assessing ABET learners both the educator and the Institution offering the programme should be involved. The exercise should be collaborative and participatory in order to achieve objectivity and success. As the educator handles the learners at the personal level he or she knows their strengths and weaknesses, which could not be known by an external assessor. It is therefore fair for the educator to be involved in assessing his/her learners. As noted by Bown (1999:6) "experience suggests that the best principle or strategy is co-operation".

Assessment of ABET learners should involve alternative assessment procedures

The traditional technique involving pencil-and-paper tests do not cater for the aptitudes or creativity of learners. It is therefore crucial to diversify assessment techniques in ABET programmes. Newby and Stepwich (1996:287) for example recognise that "term papers, science projects, unit activities, interviews, oral evaluations and writing samples are some of the alternative tools of assessing or evaluating learners".

c) ASSESSMENT OF ABET LEARNERS SHOULD HAVE A PRODUCT (i.e. the process should have an outcome)

The above category is made up of three guidelines. These guidelines were adopted from the National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997), Curzon (1990), Piek and Mahlangu (1990), Van der Stoep and Louw (1984), Gredler (1996), and McKay and Northedge (1995).

Assessment of ABET learners should be reliable and valid

Educators of ABET study programmes may use assessment tools like tests or examinations to construct a profile of achievement of each learner. In order to do the assessment well, the assessor should be objective, sincere and knowledgeable. These are the qualities that lead to validity and reliability of the assessment exercise. Validity of assessment is concerned with how well a test assesses what it is intended to assess. For assessment to be valid, in the words of Curzon (1990:346), it "should be in a suitable form, i.e. it must be structured correctly in relation to subject matter and purpose". Touching on the validity of a test as a

form of assessment tool Piek and Mahlangu (1990:205) say, "The accuracy with which a test measures what it is intended to measure is known as its empirical validity".

Reliability of assessment is concerned with the extent to which a test or examination is fair to those being tested. Test reliability has to do with the consistency with which assessment procedures produce the same result under different but comparable conditions. To make assessment results more valid and reliable the assessor should plan and design the process carefully. As Van der Stoep and Louw (1984:241) correctly put it, "Good tests do not drop from the sky, they are carefully planned and composed with great consideration." To this end items for assessing learners should cover all aspects of the syllabus that have been taught to learners. In a situation where assessment is in a form of test or examination, the type and scope of the items should balance. That is, equal numbers of marks should be given to both essay-type tests, short paragraph-writing and multiple-choice items. Tests should be properly ordered or arranged, from easy to difficult, simple to complex, and so on, so that even the weakest adult learner can achieve something. Indeed the validity of a test may be assured when the assessment procedure results in measurement of the performance described in the instruction objective. In the words of Van der Stoep and Louw (1984) "any other approach is unprofessional, unethical and unquestionably dishonest".

Assessment of ABET learners should allow for creativity

Project work borne of learners' own initiatives or imaginations should be made an essential part of assessment of ABET learning. Project or creative work could be done individually or in groups (of two to three learners) on any important aspect of the ABET course. Project work could culminate in the presentation by adult learners of some report, which could be assessed by the educator. Gredler (1996:142) aptly says: "performance assessments require students to demonstrate their capabilities in creating a product or engaging in some activity". Some performance tasks are academic in that they are key intellectual processes in the subject area. Other performance tasks are seen as authentic because the tasks involved represent real-world situations. Apart from motivating learners, project work can lead to creativity, decision making and independent work that can enhance personal development among adult learners. Curzon (1990:353) however warns adult educators that "the precise purpose of the project be explained to students, so that it will be seen as an essential feature of the course, not an optional extra, not merely as a shifting of work from teacher to student, and that it be

accorded due recognition in the overall assessment and evaluation of students' course work".

Assessment of ABET learners should involve diagnostic, formative and summative techniques

Assessment of learners in ABET study programmes should cover the three main types of assessment procedures, namely diagnostic, formative and summative. The integration of these major types of assessment could make stakeholders in ABET programmes (eg learners and educators) benefit from the advantages of each. Many learners in ABET programmes left formal learning programmes many years ago. There are also those who have never been in any formal learning situation at all. In order to find out the learning needs of adult learners and which area of their training needs most attention it makes sense to employ diagnostic assessment measures.

Also, in view of the limitations of summative assessment, many stakeholders in ABET study programmes might welcome a combination of formative and summative assessment as a means of judging learners' achievement. In view of the shortcomings of using only one type of assessment McKay, Northedge, Vieyra-king and French (1995:230) for instance, say, "Many people feel that the final record of a learner's achievements reflected in a certificate should include both formative and summative assessments". Thus learners on ABET study programmes should be assessed, both formatively, through the work they submit to their tutors for vetting, and summatively, through formal examinations at the end of a course. These measures would promote fairness in assessment and also allow learners' achievements to be measured cumulatively. Moreover, as Gredler (1996:118) appropriately puts it, "Summarising student's performance as a single score is misleading".

a) ASSESSMENT OF ABET LEARNERS SHOULD HAVE A CONTEXT (i.e. it should be done in a particular situation)

The fourth category, which comprises three guidelines, was adapted from the assessment principles expressed by the National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997), Van der Stoep and Louw (1984) and Newby and Stepwich (1996)

Assessment of ABET learners should reflect the aims and objectives of curriculum and instruction

Assessment of ABET learners should be in terms of aims and objectives identified in the curriculum. Assessment of learners is usually done in terms of teaching and learning objectives as set out in the curriculum. Van der Stoep and Louw (1984:234) write: "If a teacher teaches without first of all determining exactly what the aim is, he does not know what he is doing. If he then tests without knowing what he is testing, the same applies". Indeed, assessing the relationship between aims and content of a curriculum is the educator's fundamental concern and responsibility. It is therefore crucial for educators of ABET programmes to assess learners within the parameters of specific teaching-learning objectives and overall aims of the curriculum.

Assessment of ABET learners should motivate learners

Assessment of ABET learners should serve as both motivation for learners to learn more and as feedback on their efforts. As adults, ABET learners are intent on success and motivation from the educator (as a result of assessment) to give them a boost and encourage them in their efforts. The feeling of achievement that comes when a learner is told that she or he has done well, undoubtedly leads to more success. Thus success breeds success. The assessor of ABET study programmes should therefore not regard assessment as a punitive measure to fail learners. He or she should use assessment as a means of encouraging learners to learn and achieve more. To this end test items should be unambiguous because as Van der Stoep and Louw (1984:234) put it, "badly devised tests frustrate this aim" (of motivating learners). It is therefore imperative for assessors of ABET learners to employ suitable assessment tools in order not to frustrate learners. As a way of encouraging learners to learn more, assessment results should be shown to them promptly. Adult learners should not have to wait for too long before results of assessment are made known to them.

Assessment of learners in ABET programmes should be planned

Thorough planning is the first essential step towards a successful assessment of ABET learners. A plan can lay down correct procedures, methods and techniques in assessing learners successfully. Indeed, without proper planning unanticipated problems can jeopardise any assessment exercise. Newby and Stepwich (1996:286) say, "forethought and planning are required for learning to be properly measured." Planning thus gives direction to the

assessment activities.

4.5 GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING THE TEACHING OF ABET PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is the process of determining the extent to which aims, objectives and assumptions of an instructional and learning programme, course or curriculum have actually been achieved. In the view of Fraser et al (1990:90–91), “Evaluation reflects upon and provides value judgements concerning the quality and effectiveness of didactic activities”. Various ways and methods are adopted for evaluation of instruction in ABET programmes. In some instances evaluation involves assessment or measuring some variables in instruction by means of questionnaires, interviews, observation or examinations.

Considering the various devices (eg interviews, examinations and projects) employed in evaluating instruction in ABET programmes, one can say that there is no one best way of conducting an evaluation because of the uniqueness of every situation. Evaluation therefore needs to be responsive to each situation instead of following some particular rigid methodology. It is a necessary and important aspect of instruction in ABET programmes. It (evaluation) is a continuing process that allows both the instructor and the learner to make corrections in order to achieve success. Feedback from evaluation exercises can enable an instructor to re-teach, to supplement, to revise, to individualise, and basically to be in full control of instruction and learning. Reasons for conducting evaluation exercises in ABET instructional programmes are multifarious and may include the following (adapted from McKay 1995:212-216):

- to make sure that learners enter the learning programmes at the appropriate ABET level
- to identify possible weaknesses and difficulties among adult learners
- to keep track of the progress of learners and give them a feeling of support and achievement at each study level
- to make it possible for education planners to monitor the quality of particular ABET programmes being offered

- to make it possible for adult learners to demonstrate that knowledge they have acquired in their daily lives and experience can be measured against national or international standards, in order to formally recognise such skills

Evaluation of educational programmes is thus a component of the monitoring of educational activities. Instruction and learning can only take place effectively when and where both instruction and learning as well as subject matter are constantly subjected to scrutiny (evaluation). Gunter and Estes (1995:41) rightly say the crucial feature of all evaluation is validity. The evaluation tool must accurately portray the intended outcome.

The evaluation and assessment of the model are described in detail in figure 6 on page 149.

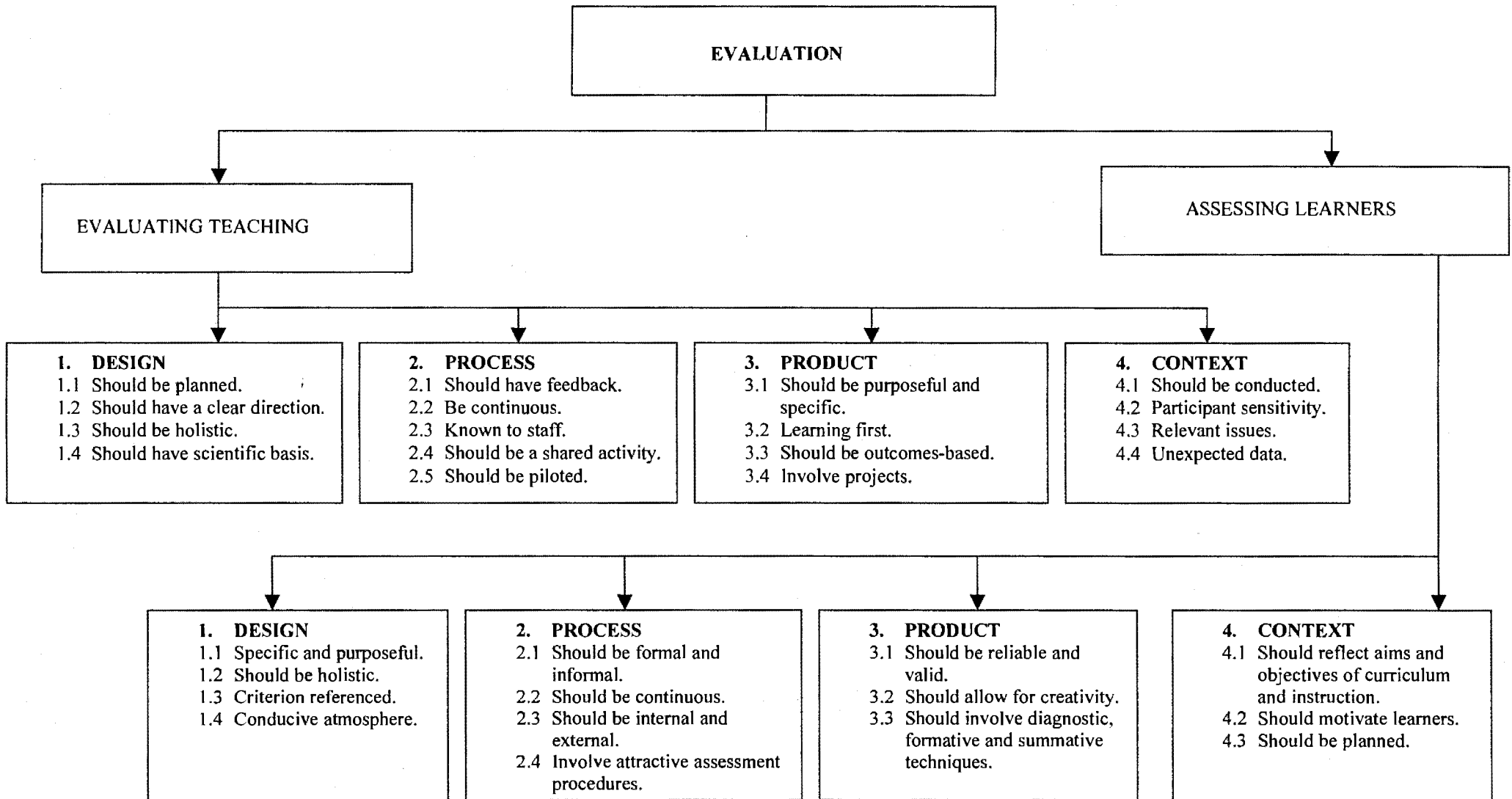


Figure 6: Evaluating branch of the model

In the preceding paragraphs the researcher has suggested some guidelines for conducting evaluation in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) instructional programmes (as shown in figure 6, p 30). Although these suggested guidelines may not be a recipe or a guarantee for a successful conduct of evaluation, they may nevertheless increase the probability that the evaluation will yield the kind of information desired.

a) EVALUATION OF ABET PROGRAMMES SHOULD HAVE A DESIGN, (i.e. the whole exercise of evaluation should be planned)

This category consists of five evaluation guidelines. The guidelines from the category were adopted from the National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997), Graven (1995), Dressel (1976), Bown (1999), and Flood and Romm (1998)

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should be planned

Evaluation is a complex activity which requires careful thought and planning. An important step in the evaluation of a course or programme therefore, is to set up a plan for the execution of the evaluation. Emphasising the importance of planning in evaluation, Cangelosi (1991:148) has this to say: "The evaluation team meets to determine the variable to be targeted ..., establish procedures, determine data sources and schedule activities".

To be sure that the evaluation includes all the essential aspects and functions, proper measurement techniques for evaluating the programmes should be set up before the exercise starts. As noted by Newby (1996:286) "Forethought and planning are required for learning to be properly measured". A plan for evaluation could be viewed as a blueprint which provides information about intended activities during the evaluation. It is the plan that explains the purpose of the exercise to all the people involved in evaluation (tutors, learners, administrators, co-ordinators, etc) so that they may offer input or suggestions. The plan lays down important issues like the purpose, the audience to be served, resources available, how data will be collected, how data will be analysed, and to whom it will be reported. Evaluation may be more effective when it is planned and monitored. Evaluation exercises may be subject to error; but careful planning, design and execution should reduce the chance of mistakes.

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should have a clear direction

Simple, careful, straightforward instructions and directions should be given on data-gathering instruments (eg tests, examinations, interviews schedule and questionnaires) in order to assist participants to answer questions well. Dressel (1976:3) appropriately says "When the objectives are not specific (as they often should be in education), evaluation is difficult". People normally answer questions according to the way they understand them. The onus is therefore on the evaluator to make sure that the people from whom information is requested understand what they have been asked in the questionnaires, tests or interviews.

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should be holistic

Evaluation in ABET programmes should be broad enough to cover all aspects of instructional and learning activities that fall under ABET. To make evaluation a broad-based endeavour, tutors, learners (i.e. learners cognitive, psychomotor and affective aspects), instructional materials, course content, venue, instruction, learning and organisation must be included in the evaluation exercise. Gunter and Estes (1995:36) contend that "We cannot be said to understand something unless we can employ our knowledge wisely, fluently, flexibly and aptly in particular and diverse contexts".

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should have a scientific basis

Evaluation of ABET instructional programmes must have scientific basis consisting of different evaluation techniques. Gunter and Estes (1995:41) say "the crucial feature of all evaluation is validity; the evaluation tool must accurately portray the intended outcome". Instruments used in evaluation must be scientifically, logically and carefully designed in order to make the evaluation exercise a success. The instruments for evaluation must also be carefully administered and scored to provide acceptable results. Valid evaluations always depend on accurate measurement and assessments. The evaluator must select or develop practical measurements that will provide accurate results relevant to a particular evaluation

variable.

b) EVALUATION OF ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD HAVE A PROCESS

This category consists of five evaluation guidelines. The guidelines for the category were adapted from the National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997), Graven (1995), Dressel (1976), Bown (1999), and Flood and Romm (1998).

Evaluation of ABET instructional programmes should provide feedback to concerned groups

One of the most important criteria for a successful evaluation in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) instructional programmes is that it provides feedback to groups and individuals concerned with and involved in Adult Basic Education and Training. Graven (1995:153) says, "People and organisations who will be interested in the feedback include the funders or the people who give money to the project. They will want to know that it is not wasted". Tutors, course organisers, co-ordinators, adult learners, NGOs, churches, government departments, university institutes of adult education, and departments of extra-mural studies may expect evaluation to give them feedback on all ABET activities, especially instruction and learning. Newby and Stepwich (1996:269) aptly say, "When individuals realise the value of feedback, evaluation becomes a desirable tool for facilitating improvements".

Evaluation of ABET programmes must be a continuous process

Evaluation needs to be carried out on a regular basis because no matter how scrupulously it is conducted, a fully accurate picture can never be drawn during one evaluation exercise. We live in a world which is subjected to constant changes; whatever information or data one obtains now could be obsolete within a short space of time. Dressel (1976:6) says, "I am concerned not only that the complexities just mentioned be recognised and unravelled, but also that the process of evaluation itself be ongoing and continuous".

Evaluation of ABET instructional programmes should be made known to staff

Evaluation of ABET programmes must not remain a secret from ABET personnel such as tutors, co-ordinators, adult learners, administrators, organisers, lecturers and clerks. Many people fear evaluation and because of that they may not only be defensive but also uncooperative toward the whole exercise of evaluation. The evaluator should therefore explain the evaluation plans, objectives and activities to all the relevant programme personnel in order to court their assistance and co-operation. Bown (1999:6) says “ experience suggests that the best principle of strategy is co-operation”.

Evaluation of ABET instructional programmes should be a shared activity

Evaluation of a whole institution offering ABET instruction should be a shared activity among all staff members. Dressel (1976:7) says “ administrative and staff support for and influence on change are more likely under these conditions of continuing feedback and discussion than after remote, mysterious, and cataclysmic report”. For this reason an evaluation steering committee should be set up with the evaluator as its co-ordinator. Unless everyone working for the institution involved in the evaluation has the opportunity to air his or her opinion and concerns or contribute to decisions, the evaluation exercise is not likely to be worthwhile. Truly, evaluation is most likely to be worthwhile when the practitioners of the service are fully involved in carrying out the exercise. Thus evaluation should be carried out in a collaborative and participatory way.

Evaluation of ABET instructional programmes should be piloted

Before getting down to the serious business of evaluation the evaluator of ABET programmes should try his or her plan on a small number of selected people who are willing to assist in the exercise. In the pilot evaluation the evaluator should include only people whose success could encourage others to participate in the major evaluation exercise. Flood and Romm (1998:6) say “lessons from the pilot enable improvements to be made to the questionnaire in advance of the postal lurch”.

Indeed, piloting will assist the evaluating team to anticipate any shortcomings in the evaluation procedure.

c) EVALUATION OF ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD HAVE A PRODUCT (i.e. the evaluation exercise should have some outcome)

This third category is made up of four guidelines, which were adapted from the following sources: The National Department of Education Policy Document on ABET (1997), McKay (1998), Dressel (1976), Clark and Starr (1996), and Bown (1999).

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should be purposeful and specific

As with any learning programme, adult learners are usually evaluated to ascertain whether or not they are capable of performing certain psychomotor or cognitive tasks and skills. Touching on the importance of appraisal in ABET programmes, McKay (1998:133) rightly says, "Its purpose is rather to tell us how a learner compares with other learners on the same level". Evaluation of Adult Basic Education and Training instructional/learning programmes should therefore be specific, purposeful and unambiguous in order to attract the support of adult learners. Evaluation procedures that tend to include unnecessary details may confuse participants and reduce interest in the whole exercise. All the people involved in ABET programmes: adult learners, instructors, administrators and so on, must know exactly what will be evaluated (ie the scope of evaluation must be clearly demarcated).

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should be preceded by instruction and learning

Before evaluating any ABET learning programmes, there must be tuition and learning because, as recognised by Dressel (1976:8) "Evaluation involves formulating or classifying the objectives, goals and purposes of the programme". The improvement of teaching and learning in most cases take place as a result of an evaluation. Evaluation results may make both instructor and learner realise some shortcomings in their work. With that knowledge they can work hard to improve their respective performances. It logically follows that

without instruction and learning there can be no good reason for evaluating learners and instructors of ABET programmes.

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should be outcomes-based

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Programmes must be evaluated on the basis of sound instructional outcomes. This is so because evaluation consists of making reasoned judgements in the light of instructional outcomes, which implies that evaluative data are pertinent to instruction and learning outcomes. Both instructor and learner have some objectives to fulfil. The instructor specifically spells out what learners are expected to do after the instruction. Clark and Starr (1996:378) say that “evaluation must conform to the instructional goals if it is to be valid”.

Evaluation must therefore aim at finding out how some specific instruction in learners, or outcomes of instruction, were realised. Using clear and specific instructional outcomes as the basis for instruction and evaluation avoids inclusion of trivial and irrelevant data in the problem being investigated.

Evaluation of ABET instructional and learning programmes should include projects undertaken by learners

Evaluation in ABET instructional / learning programmes should focus on projects undertaken by adult learners. Projects are components of the instructional activities in Adult Basic Education and Training Programmes. The ABET Institute may require adult learners to work on selected projects individually and submit their work to institutes, tutors, organisers and administrators for evaluation. It is therefore plausible and pertinent to evaluate such projects as part of an overall programme evaluation of ABET activities. Projects are learners' own creative and independent endeavours, which could lead to personal development and increase interest in adult learning programmes. Bown (1999:4) says “citizens should not be parasites but should bear a harvest”.

d) EVALUATION OF ABET INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE CONTEXTUALISED (i.e. the evaluation exercise should be based on particular situations)

This last category of evaluation comprises four guidelines. The four guidelines were adapted from the National Department of Education Policy document on ABET (1997), Dressel (1976), and Flood and Romm (1998).

Evaluation of ABET programmes should be conducted under a conducive atmosphere.

The evaluator of ABET programmes should create an atmosphere of trust. Evaluation can cause anxiety to most people within an organisation because of the fear that some unpleasant information may come out which could put jobs at risk. Restating Astin (1968), Dressel (1976:169) views an “environmental influence as any characteristics constituting a potential stimulus capable of changing the student’s sensory input”. Although it is often difficult, the evaluator should reduce the element of threat by explaining to all involved, tutors, adult learners, administrators, management and so on, the positive side of the exercise. For instance, evaluation can boost staff confidence in their day-to-day duties. It can also offer support for staff, learners and administrators. Where questionnaires or interviews are involved in the evaluation procedures there should be some short written or verbal appeal and explanation of the purpose and usefulness of the exercise in order to allay the fears and suspicions of participants. To be able to do an evaluation well an evaluator should possess personal qualities such as the ability to listen, to empathise, to ask questions and relay information in a non-threatening manner, combined with good organisation and the ability to record information clearly and well.

Evaluation of ABET programmes should take the sensitivities of participants into consideration

People have their own duties and responsibilities. Pressure from work, for instance, may not allow participants to answer questionnaires, opinionnaires or interviews when the evaluator first meets them. Since rushing them could lead to opposition, refusal, rejection and adverse

effects on the evaluation exercise, the evaluator should be understanding and sensitive to the needs and request of participants by giving them time to answer interviews or questionnaires. Flood and Romm (1998:15) rightly say “action research may be seen as one way in which such a sensitivity might be cultivated”.

Evaluation of ABET programmes should focus on issues that are relevant to the audience of the institution

ABET instructional programmes, like any educational endeavour, serve the interests of many stakeholders. Donors, funders, directors, institutes, centre administrators, communities, government departments, tutors, organisers, co-ordinators and learners are all interested in knowing what goes on in ABET programmes. Evaluation should therefore focus on issues and programme components that are important and useful to the audience who will receive the findings. This calls for selectivity in data collection thereby focusing on the most important information with the greatest value to the programmes.

Evaluation of ABET programmes should allow for unexpected or unintended data

In an evaluation exercise, some information the evaluator never expected could emerge from the data collected. The evaluator must accept that sometimes he or she may not get the expected answers to questions asked, and should tolerate ambiguity. The evaluator should expect such a possibility. The evaluator should therefore be flexible and not insist on sticking rigidly to the evaluation plan. Flexibility, adaptation and accommodation should thus be a hallmark of a good evaluation exercise.

4.4 CHECKLISTS

4.4.1 Introduction

Literally a checklist consists of items or facts to be referred to for guidance, comparison, verification or identification. Realising their importance to practitioners, the researcher designed three separate checklists for effective instruction, assessing learners and evaluating the teaching of ABET programmes respectively. The construction of the three checklists was

based on facts contained in the model and its guidelines as set out in the theory chapters. The checklists were thus linked to the theory aspect of the study. The purpose of the guidelines is to assist practitioners to find out if they are doing what they are expected to do (ie. Teaching, assessing and evaluating ABET projects). The checklists were further used in the construction of questions for the focus group discussions in chapter five.

4.6.2 Checklist for effective instruction in ABET programmes

		YES	NO
*	Are the aims and objectives of ABET instructional programmes clearly stated by the instructor?		
*	Does the instructor prepare a lesson plan to guide the instructional dialogue and procedures?		
*	Does the instructor of ABET programmes utilise advance organisers as a way of aiding adult learners to understand the instructional dialogue?		
*	Does ABET instructional dialogue proceed sequentially from the known to the unknown, simple to complex and concrete to abstract?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue in ABET aim at changing or modifying behaviour of the adult learner?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue offer appropriate insight to adult learners?		
*	Is the instructional dialogue based on appropriate two-way communication and appropriate media support to enhance comprehension?		
*	Is the ABET instructional dialogue (approach) holistic and does it pay attention to the adult learner as a totality?		
*	Is the instructional dialogue based on experience of the adult learner?		
*	Is the instructional dialogue in ABET based on case studies to make it real to adult learners?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue occur in such a way as to have motivational effects on adult learners?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue assist adult learners to undertake meaningful projects?		
*	Does the ABET instructional dialogue consist of appropriate learning content?		
*	Is ABET instructional dialogue based on learning needs of participants?		
*	Does the ABET instructional dialogue make room for individual differences?		
*	Does the instructional approach in ABET encourage or enhance co-operative learning among adult learners		
*	Does the instructional dialogue in ABET involve repetition and reinforcement?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue in ABET aid recall and retention?		
*	Seeing that people learn effectively by doing; is there an active role for adult learners in the instructional dialogue?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue encourage creative and critical thinking among adult learners?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue techniques offer adult learners learning opportunities?		

*	Does the instructional dialogue involve a discussion between instructor and adult learners?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue make room for group activities?		
*	Are instructional aids and resources other than human voice employed in the dialogue?		
*	Does instruction dialogue give room for clear perceptibility when and where multi-media techniques are utilised?		
*	Does the instructor make use of modern technological devices such as overhead projector and or audio visual materials and techniques?		
*	Is the instructional dialogue based on a variety of instructional media (multi-media), and suitable and appropriate methods throughout the discourse?		
*	Does the ABET instructional dialogue provide adult learners with a supportive learning climate?		
*	Does the ABET instructional dialogue allow facilitation?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue in ABET offer adult learners true guidance?		
*	Does the instructional dialogue in ABET allow reflection (introspection) among adult learners?		

4.6.3 Checklist for assessing learners in ABET programmes

		YES	NO
*	Does the assessment procedure in ABET programmes measure learners' performance against particular objectives?		
*	Are the procedures for assessing ABET learners specific and purposeful?		
*	Is the assessment of ABET learners holistic?		
*	Do test items cover all aspects of the curriculum?		
*	Is the assessment of learners conducted in a conducive atmosphere?		
*	Does the method of assessment of ABET learners cover formal and informal assessment procedures?		
*	Is the assessment of ABET learners continuous?		
*	Does the assessment of ABET learners cover both internal and external measurement techniques?		
*	Are the assessment techniques for ABET learners reliable and valid?		
*	Does the assessment of ABET learners allow for creativity?		
*	Does the assessment of learners cover diagnostic, formative and summative techniques?		
*	Are the assessment activities related to aims and objectives of curriculum and instruction?		
*	Does the assessment exercise promote motivation among learners?		
*	Is the assessment programme among ABET learners planned in order to produce good results?		
*	Are ABET learners informed about results timeously?		

4.6.4 Checklist for evaluating the teaching in ABET programmes

YES NO

		YES	NO
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional activities well planned to enhance data collection?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET instructional programme offer participants clear direction?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes holistic?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes scientifically based?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes cover content and aims and objectives of curriculum?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes provide feedback to stakeholders?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes make the exercise known to whole staff?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes a shared activity?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes piloted?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes purposeful and specific?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes preceded by instruction?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes outcomes based?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes include projects undertaken by learners?		
*	Is the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes done in a conducive atmosphere?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes take the sensitivities of participants into consideration?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes focus on issues that interest stakeholders?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET programmes allow for unexpected or unintended data?		
*	Does the evaluation of ABET programmes end with the exhibition of gratitude to participants?		

5 SUMMARY

In the foregoing chapter a model for the effective instruction and evaluation of ABET programmes has been proposed. In arriving at the model a host of literature on didactics in general and in ABET in particular was consulted.

The proposed model has two main arms: instruction and evaluation.

The instructional branch of the model is made up of five categories. It has been postulated that instructional activities in ABET programmes should be outcomes based, relevant, learner centred, and induce critical and creative thinking and meaningful assessment. Out of these five categories 35 instructional guidelines were formulated.

The evaluation branch of the model developed into two sections, namely, evaluation of instruction, and assessment of learners. Each of the two branches of evaluation has design, process, product and context as its categories. Eighteen guidelines were developed from the categories for evaluation and sixteen for assessment.

Finally, checklists for instruction, assessment and evaluation of ABET programmes were compiled.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, a model for evaluation of ABET programmes was proposed and various guidelines emanating from the proposed model were formulated. This chapter elucidates the methods employed to gather data which were used to substantiate the model for evaluating the delivery of ABET at the classroom interface. The chapter therefore presents an exposition of the methodological approach used in this study. It should be viewed against the background of the model outlined in the previous chapter.

This chapter outlines two different research methods, which were employed to validate the proposed model. The investigation was based on the premise that practitioners themselves should be able to discern the relevance of various items outlined in the evaluation instrument. The chapter proceeds to outline how the sample of practitioners used to validate the model was selected, and how the exploration proceeded, using qualitative research methods.

The chapter thus covers a limited qualitative research project conducted in the field in order to validate the proposed model. According to McKay (1999:1) "a method that gathers information about issues that are not easily 'measurable' or 'countable' is called qualitative research". Gredler (1996:189) also says, "Qualitative inquiry refers to research traditions or paradigms that are non-manipulative and that collect data in the form of words". One can therefore deduce from these two descriptions that qualitative research is an investigation that collects and collates views of identified individuals or groups of people, which are pertinent to a particular issue.

In order to gain insight into the feelings and attitudes of the respondents, it was necessary to employ qualitative methods, which could yield the data required to validate the model outlined in chapter four of this study.

5.2

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

It was necessary to formulate a research design according to which the investigation would proceed. A research design deals with the overall planning and execution of a research project or study. In other words, a research design involves the strategy, the plan and structure of a research project. Leedy (1980:96) for instance recognises that a research design is the “common sense and clear thinking that is necessary for the management of the entire research endeavour, the complete strategy of attack upon the central research problem”. The research design as elucidated in this chapter is founded on the importance of engaging the research subjects who are involved in the investigation process in a dialogue that reveals their perceptions of the relevance of various items outlined in the evaluative model. It was also necessary for the researcher to obtain as much documentary information as possible about the philosophy underlying the training of the practitioners since this would have a bearing on the data that was gathered concerning their understanding of the items included in the evaluative instrument, the companies concerned. To fulfil these requirements, the following research methods were employed:

- Firstly, in order to identify the sample of practitioners who would be involved in the qualitative component of the study a random sample was drawn, and this sample was required to participate in the focus group discussions. The sample was drawn from the “universe” of approximately one hundred students who were part of the researcher’s tutorial group. The selection of the participants was purposive, and was stratified according to the year of study of each of the participants. This is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section, which deals with the sampling employed in the study.
- Secondly, to provide background information as to the type of training the participants had undergone – since this might have had a bearing on the selection of items in the validation process -- a documentary study was

conducted. The data obtained in this way were helpful in the interpretation of findings discerned in the subsequent phases. The documentary study also offered a backdrop against which the participants might consider whether certain aspects in the proposed evaluatory instrument were more relevant than others.

- Thirdly, in-depth focus group discussions were carried out. These were analysed and according to each practitioner's year of study and in terms highlighted in the evaluatory instrument.

5.2.1 The rationalisation for the sample and gaining access to relevant documentation

As with all field research, a sample of respondents had to be selected for this study. Hornby et al (1974:754) define a sample as a "specimen, one of a number, part of a whole taken to show what the rest is like". A sample is therefore a selected representative of an entire population. The entire population for this study comprised all the Unisa ABET certificate and diploma students scattered all over South Africa and beyond. However in order to make the research process manageable, it was necessary to select a sample.

Since the researcher was involved in the teaching of the ABET practitioners' course at Unisa, he had easy access to the Unisa's student list of some 20 000 practitioner students. It was therefore necessary that the researcher select a sample of students who were accessible to him, and it was equally important to gain access to a sample from whom he could obtain personal accounts of classroom practices to use as the basis for the validification of items on the evaluatory instrument. The following section highlights the way in which these requirements were met.

5.2.2 Selecting the sample

In order to assist the researcher in gaining access to test participants, a sample of *convenience* was selected. The entire list of practitioners from the Taung,

Vryburg, Kimberley, Kuruman, and Lime Acres regions formed the universe from which a sample was selected for this study. From this group it was considered necessary to draw a smaller grouping which would enable the researcher to arrive at conclusions from which he could validate items on the instrument. Since this study is not contingent upon quantitative validation, the rigors employed by orthodox scientific (positivist-inspired) approaches were not considered as the main in the selection of the sample. However in order to make the process of selecting the sample unbiased and more objective, the researcher made use of quantitative sampling techniques. It was considered necessary simply to ensure that the sample included students from each level or year of study – in this sense, the sample was stratified.

In selecting the samples, the researcher made sure that every member of the tutorial groups mentioned above stood an equal chance of being selected. To accomplish this the researcher employed a random-sampling computer technique. The Unisa student registration numbers of all 125 registered ABET certificate and diploma students at Dithakong, Mothibistad (in Kuruman), Taung, Kimberley and Lime Acres tutorial centres were randomly drawn to select 36 students for this research project. The 36 selected students who participated were themselves ABET practitioners in their respective communities. Citing Schön (1991), McKay (1998:31) says “The purpose of action research is to generate insights by working with practitioners within particular, local practice contexts in exercises which are relevant to local contexts”.

The same technique was followed in dividing the 36 students into six focus groups for the purpose of the research. Each focus group thus comprised six members. The researcher decided to make each group small enough to make group discussion possible, effective and meaningful for the purpose of the research. The six focus groups were made up two-groups from the ABET certificate course, two groups from ABET diploma course I and two from the ABET diploma course II respectively. Although an attempt was made to select a sample for this investigation, it is not contended that the findings can be generalised to apply to all programmes.

All the respondents selected were involved in the presentation of ABET classes of some sort. The respondents were, therefore, experienced enough to be able to single out those aspects of the evaluative instruments which they deemed to be of critical importance. The focus discussions referred to in the next section were crucial to the study in that maximum benefit was gained from the groups' personal experiences and their perceptions of the teaching / learning interface.

The researcher was also able to access documentation that had some bearing on the project. Apart from the usual library searches employed to obtain such documentation, the director of the ABET Institute (UNISA) suggested documents that were of relevance to this stage of the research.

5.2.3 Selecting the documentation

As with all research, the survey of the general literature outlined in the previous chapter, played a significant role in this investigation. In contrast to the usual methods of experimentation and observation which almost always require that the field be delimited by sampling, Bailey (1987:291) suggests that "document study ... can often use a larger sample". As indicated above, all documents provided by the key players were used, as well as documents that the researcher became aware of during the course of the investigation.

While the usual protocols of validation do *not* apply to documentary research, many of the findings from the investigation of the documents were refined and validated in the interviews with the organisational leaders.

In order to obtain first-hand information about areas of investigation that could serve as the basis for subsequent phases of the research, it became necessary to examine some relevant documents relating to the Unisa ABET Institute programme.

Through the courtesy of the director of the Institute the researcher obtained access to documents pertaining to the mission or role of the ABET Institute within the Unisa context, and two recent external evaluation reports on the Institute programmes.

As summarised by the director of the Institute, Prof McKay (1997:9) the role of the ABET Institute is to “train practitioners – in many instances nurses, community workers or adult educators -- who will be able to teach skills like basic literacy, numeracy or health education but with development bias”. This mission statement was later validated by the two external evaluation reports of 1998 and 1999 respectively.

In the two separate external evaluation exercises, focus group discussions (involving part-time tutors and ABET practitioners) were used by the evaluators as part of the techniques in gathering in-depth information on the Institute’s ABET programmes. Both separate reports of 1998 and 1999 contained illuminative evidence of the programmes’ positive impact on participants and their communities at large. The two reports specially commended the ABET Institute for equipping participants on the programmes with entrepreneurial skills, which have made many of the ABET certificate holders community builders, educators and creators of jobs instead of job seekers.

Although the two reports focused on the impact of the ABET programme on its clients, of much significance to this research project was the reference (both direct and indirect) that they made to the proposed guidelines of the study. A perusal of the 1998 evaluation report by Flood and Romm showed that evaluation of adult basic education and training programmes should:

- be a process
- determine effectiveness, efficiency and meaningfulness of the programmes
- be planned and have direction
- involve all stakeholders (tutors, learners and staff)

- involve a variety of methods (eg interviews, observation and questionnaires).

The 1999 external evaluation on the ABET institute programmes by Lalage Bown made the following references to the proposed guidelines:

Instruction in ABET programmes should

- induce critical thinking and creativity among learners
- be learner centred
- have direction and goal
- include projects undertaken by participants
- modify or change behaviour of participants
- be holistic (ie it should include both theory and practice)
- the curricula of the programmes should be contextualised.

Evaluation of ABET programmes should

- be a continuous exercise
- be collaborative (ie involve staff, practitioners, tutors, funders, organisers and students)
- be holistic (ie involve all aspects of the programme such as instruction, curricula content, learning and course materials)

The data obtained from the documents provided information for the research project and are considered relevant in this study as offering a background against which the training and practices of the educators can be considered.

5.2.4 Strengths of the documentary analysis technique

Bailey (1987:291) refers to various advantages of the documentary approach. He indicates that “documentary research allow(s) research on subjects to which the

researcher does not have physical access and thus cannot study by any other method". The approach was utilised in this instance since it proved to be a valuable way of gaining access to the background of the UNISA ABET Institute.

Researchers often cite the fact that documents which are not standardised tend to make comparisons problematic. In this study, this difficulty was overcome by adjusting the way in which the data was approached. The way in which the documents were approached depended on which document was being analysed. This meant that the method of analysis was shaped by the type of document under study. For example, internal company documents such as annual reports answered questions about *processes* and the *functioning* of groupings while company newsletters and in-house magazines more easily lent themselves to providing an understanding of changes as they occurred over time.

5.2.5 Rationale for documentary study

In order to locate the practitioners in this study within the wider context of their knowledge and skills, the researcher carried out documentary study in contrast to the methods of experimentation and observation, which almost always require that the field be delimited by sampling. Bailey (1987:291) as we have seen, suggests that "document study can often use a larger sample". Nevertheless, some form of "sampling" did occur. Accordingly, the study reviewed materials which influenced the training of the practitioners, and also reports compiled by external evaluators who were commissioned to evaluate the Unisa ABET project and in the process devoted a certain amount of consideration to the delivery by the practitioners.

The documentary study of both external and internal sources was thus considered to be invaluable to the research methodology utilised for this study, in that it validated the sample, highlighted areas to be explored, and provided a good overview of the organisation's position in terms of both its approach to and progress in organisational transformation. In order to validate the context as defined above, focus group discussions were conducted. The data obtained

through these provided useful background against which to interpret the documentation and the findings of the subsequent phases of the study.

5.3 PILOT STUDY

Before embarking on focus group discussions with all six groups it became necessary to conduct a “pre-run” or pilot discussion to assist in refining the interview guide.

A pilot study is a smaller-scale or trial run of a major research project. For example, ambiguity in the design of interview questions could result in respondents being unable to understand the questions asked. A major cause of such a problem could be the researcher’s failure to spend enough time and care in defining the purpose of each question. It could also be that he or she has not phrased questions for the interviews with meticulous precision of language in order to elicit the type of answers the researcher is seeking.

To avoid such pitfalls, which could have jeopardised the research, the researcher undertook a pilot study to test his data-gathering instrument on a smaller population. Indeed, the pilot study was made on four tutors to ascertain the suitability of the questions formulated for the group interviews. The objective was to check for precision of expression, relevance and suitability to the problem situation, and the probability of favourable answers. Brink (1996:174) recognises that “the purpose of the pilot study is to investigate the feasibility of the proposed study and to detect possible flaws in the data-collecting instruments (such as ambiguous instructions or wording, inadequate time limits and so on, and whether the variables defined by operational definitions are actually observable and measurable)”.

After trying out the interviews on four part-time tutors the researcher received some suggestions and criticisms from the respondents which helped him to make the necessary adjustments and corrections to suit the purpose of the questions. For example, the researcher corrected the wording and phrasing of unclear and

ambiguous questions in order for participants in the groups to discuss them with ease.

5.4 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

As suggested earlier, in-depth focus group discussions were an important method of collecting data for this study. The data obtained through the focus groups were crucial in validating the evaluatory instrument. As a qualitative approach to obtaining information, the focus groups enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth material on the teachers' experiences of the various items included in the test. The focus groups were included on McKay and Kotze's (1998) suggestion that educational research, especially *evaluative research*, should strive to involve educators in adjudicating the criteria to be employed.

Hence, within the limitations imposed by scope of this study, an attempt was made to involve educators in adjudicating the criteria contained in the instrument. The exploration was based on a participatory and qualitative research process, which was designed to give sensitive insight into the views of practitioners who had first-hand ABET teaching experience.

5.4.1 Focus group interviews

Using a focus group approach for gathering information is among the most important in a large and growing repertoire of qualitative research techniques. McKay (1999:8) states that the "focus group approach is intended to engage the research subjects in a conversation in which the researcher encourages them to relate, in their own terms, experiences and attitudes that are relevant to the issues under investigation". She argues that it affords the researcher the opportunity to probe deeply and to explore dimensions of the areas under investigation.

Walker (1985) explains that the focus group brings together small numbers of people to discuss various topics on an interview agenda. The group interviewer acts as a facilitator to ensure that, through the exchange, individuals are given the

opportunity to speak their minds and also to respond to the ideas of the other members of the group. In the course of a series of focus group interviews carried out for this study, the research subjects responded to the issues outlined in the interview schedule.

5.4.2 The interview schedule

In focus group interviews, the researcher usually makes use of (but is not bound by) an interview questionnaire or schedule. In this study, the schedule provided a framework that ensured that the same issues were discussed across the various groups. The researcher, however, allowed the respondents the latitude to elaborate on any ideas that they felt warranted further exploration, and encouraged them to relate their own perspectives on the issues under discussion to those issues within the context of the ABET programme. The following issues were explored:

A FIRST SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Do thorough planning for ABET instruction, and basing ABET instruction on goals and outcomes by the ABET practitioner/facilitator make a contribution to the learning success of ABET learners? If so, why? If not, why?
- What influence does the relevance of both the ABET curriculum and learning experience of ABET learners have on the learning success of ABET learners? Give reasons for your responses.
- “ABET instruction should be learner-centred”. Comment on this statement and give reasons for your responses.
- How can critical and creative thinking be induced during ABET programmes? First comment on the importance of inducing critical and creative thinking in the context of ABET and then discuss ways of achieving it.
- “Meaningful assessment is essential to obtain successful learning”. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your responses.

B SECOND SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why should assessment in ABET programmes be continuous?
- “Assessment in ABET programmes should seek demonstration of creativity among learners”. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your response.
- “Assessment in ABET programmes must be both internal and external”. Comment on this statement and give reasons for your response.
- Why should assessment of learners in ABET programmes reflect goals or outcomes of curriculum and instructions?

C THIRD SET OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Who should be involved in the evaluation of ABET programmes and why?
- Does proper planning have any effect on the success of evaluation of ABET programmes?
- “Evaluation of ABET programmes should provide feedback to all stakeholders”. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your responses.
- What is the effect of a conducive atmosphere on ABET evaluation exercises?

Participants were required to respond to the above issues and were encouraged to relate their responses to their own experiences, to agree or disagree, and to substantiate their opinions concerning the items on the interview agenda. The groups involved in the focus interviews came from the following ABET Institute programmes:

- A Certificate
- B Diploma I
- C Diploma II

5.4.3 Group discussion as an appropriate method of investigation

- Ideally, group discussions should be held in an informal atmosphere. In this investigation, the interviews were conducted in the same venues that the practitioners used for their Unisa tutorials – venues with which they were all familiar.
- All the group interviews were tape-recorded so that a thorough analysis of the data could be undertaken without the researcher's needing to rely on note-taking or memory.

The group dynamic:

Although many authors cite the factor of group dynamics as being one which impacts negatively on the focus interview, in this study it was regarded as an advantage. In each of the interviews, the views expressed by the group were influenced by the group's dynamics. Often, ideas which would not have occurred to any one member of the group tended to be generated in the group context. The "group-think" function of the group interview allowed for a degree of group validation to occur and the group was expected to validate the final outcome of each item on the interview schedule.

While some researchers may regard the "collective group thinking" of focus as a problem, McKay and Kotze (1998) state that in this type of investigation, interpretations and findings of a collective-participative nature could be seen as being advantageous in that emphasis is placed on group "validification". Hence what is usually perceived as a methodological limitation should, according to

McKay and Kotze (1998) be seen as an *advantage*, since it enhanced the attainment of data and offered an enrichment of the various nuances of meaning.

Standardisation of the interviews:

Although each interview proceeded in a unique way depending on the particular group dynamics at play, the researcher followed the questions on the schedule and was therefore able to probe similar issues in order that comparison of the findings and experiences could be made between the various groups.

Bailey (1987:174) refers to several advantages of group interviews. The following advantages outlined by him were beneficial in this study:

Flexibility:

The interview is flexible, so the interviewer can probe for more specific answers and repeat questions where it appears that they have been misunderstood. The researcher is also able to follow other cues that the group might give, so the interview is not limited to items on the agenda.

Non-verbal behaviour:

The fact that the interviewer is present to observe non-verbal behaviour is an added advantage. Often, during this study, the paralingual cues in the discussions gave the researcher an indication that a participant disagreed inwardly but felt compelled to agree as a result of group pressure. These cues helped the researcher understand the true feelings of the participants.

Spontaneity:

Many of the answers given by the participants were spontaneous. This is often not the case with written questionnaires where the respondent has more time to think about his or her responses. The respondents often clarified their own responses

and on several occasions, respondents described what they thought the other group members meant. This type of interaction was often useful in exploring issues in depth and frequently led to the group's verifying particular answers. It also ensured that questions were answered completely.

Greater complexity:

The method of group discussion can explore issues that may be too complex for incorporation into another method of enquiry, such as a questionnaire.

5.4.4 Using the focus group approach

During the interviewing process, the researcher endeavoured to assume a supportive and non-argumentative attitude. This was necessary to establish rapport with the groups and to create a warm and accepting atmosphere. In each case, it was pointed out what the purpose of the interview was, and in what way the information contributed would be used.

The interviews were shaped by the questions outlined in the interview schedule given above. It appeared, from the ease with which they discussed matters and the flow of conversation that the subjects did not feel threatened in any way. The researcher did not represent any level of authority – his role was seen as neutral and committed, to the processes, yet detached from the results of the project. The researcher attempted to create space for openness and informal and relaxed discussion.

All interviews were taped and the data obtained from the tapes were transcribed into notes on the subjects' accounts of their experiences. These were slotted under the appropriate headings from the interview guide and used in supporting or opposing the items contained in the evaluatory instrument.

5.5 FINDINGS OF THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

5.5.1 Introduction

Instruction is the pivot around which learning revolves. In this regard, views on various aspects of instruction were solicited from the six focus groups in order to validate the proposed instructional guidelines and the model as a whole.

The findings on the various guidelines for instruction will be reported on under the following five main categories, namely:

- outcomes based education
- relevance to needs of learners
- learner centred education
- critical thinking and creativity
- meaningful assessment

5.5.2 Findings on outcomes based education

One of the central aspects explored in the focus groups was the respondents' perception of outcomes based education. This information was gathered during various phases of the focus group discussions and cut right across discussions on planning, learner-centredness, critical thinking and creativity, and assessment.

During the focus group interviews, consideration was given to the relationship between planning and successful learning.

Based on the responses given by all six focus groups it is clear that both certificate and diploma students at all levels agree on the importance of basing ABET instructional discourses on goals and outcomes in order to facilitate learning success. The groups were in agreement that thorough planning of instructional activity, based on expected instructional outcome, gives both the practitioner and

the learner direction. This response is laudable because as educators we can get to where we want to go only when we know how to get there. Instructional discourse cannot be successful if there is no direction, and this is something that can only emanate from prior, thorough planning. The response for the above item is in line with the instructional guideline which states that ABET instructional activities should be outcomes based. The response therefore validates the instructional component of the model since all the groups support outcomes based instruction. This viewpoint was ascertained from the discussion relating to planning.

Out of the six focus groups, three were in favour of making ABET instructional activities outcomes based. Three of the groups held that learners who are involved in learning activities become committed and will therefore work towards achieving desired learning outcomes. It was felt that learner-centred instruction accommodates individual efforts and differences among learners. The response of the groups is in line with the guideline that instructional dialogue in ABET programmes should have a direction, a goal and an objective. This response therefore validates the outcomes-education component of the model.

On item 5 (meaningful assessment) two of the six focus groups supported outcomes based instruction (education). These two groups argued that for assessment to be meaningful, learners should usually be given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learnt in practical terms. Indeed, assessment in ABET programmes should aim at revealing the outcomes of instruction and learning. Such outcomes can assist both educators and learners to re-position themselves in order to achieve greater success. The response validates and re-affirms the outcomes based component of the model.

5.5.3 Findings on the relevance of ABET instruction

In addition to supporting the notion of outcomes based education, the groups considered formal ABET instruction to be crucial in enabling learners to address their learning needs. However, it was clear from their discussion that this was

secondary to the necessity for the programme to be relevant to the life-worlds of the learners.

Four out of the six groups also supported the importance of thorough planning to ensure relevance in ABET instructional programmes. Thorough advance planning helps the practitioner to meet the learning needs of his learners and the groups felt that, without it, no instructional activity can truly meet those needs. This response validates the instructional guideline that instructional activities in ABET programmes should be planned to be relevant to the learning needs of learners.

On item two, three focus groups out of the six were also of the opinion that the ABET curriculum should be relevant not only to the learning needs of learners but should also relate to their experiences in life. Recognition should be given to prior learning experiences of learners so as to build upon their existing skills in accordance with the focus of education today. It is therefore of the highest importance that the ABET curriculum should be relevant to the experiences of learners. The responses of the three focus groups validate the guidelines in the model, which stressed the need for relevance.

Over and above the overwhelming support for learner-centred instruction, three focus groups recognised the importance of making the approach in ABET instruction relevant to the needs of learners. They contended that when a variety of relevant media are employed in instruction they can bring about the sensory reinforcement which may lead to learning success. This implies that ABET instructional methods should be relevant to the learning needs of different learners in order to promote successful learning. The three focus groups were also of the view that in order to make instructional discourse relevant to the needs of learners, it should be holistic (ie it should be broad-based and involve the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical faculties of the learner. The responses of the three focus groups thus validate the need for relevance as shown in the model and support the views of Duminy and Söhnge (1986:20) who say "man is now seen as a unity; a totality or a whole".

5.5.4 Findings on learner-centredness

During the focus group discussions, much support was given for learner centred teaching. It was found that all six focus groups considered learner-centredness to be crucial to the successful delivery of ABET programmes.

According to the respondents, when instruction is thoroughly planned the practitioner has enough time to attend to individual learners, which leads to learning success. Indeed the individual attention given by an educator to his or her learners acts as a stimulus which boosts learner confidence and thus motivates the learner to achieve success. This response validates the learner-centred component of the model.

The groups showed overwhelming support for learner-centred instruction as a way of making a curriculum relevant to the prior experience of learners. These sentiments are expressed by authors such as Clark and Starr (1996:14) who stress the need to find out the learning needs of students so that the educator can plan experiences to help them satisfy their needs. The spotlight on education now (and, therefore, on instruction) is on desired outcomes displayed by learners as a result of instruction. It is therefore appropriate that the five groups recognise the need to make instruction more learner-centred in order to build on the prior experiences of learners. The groups recognised the fact that the learner must play an active role in the instructional discourse if he or she is to master the skills and knowledge being taught as in most cases humans learn by doing. Most of the respondents added that, for effective participation of learners in learning tasks, the curriculum should have reference to prior experiences of learners. The response of the five groups therefore validates the guideline that states that instructional dialogue should be based on experiences of learners.

All six focus groups were in agreement that ABET instructional activities should be learner centred. The general consensus of all the six focus groups was that, as humans learn by doing, it is only when an individual is exposed to practice that he or she can achieve success in learning. In order to help learners achieve success,

instructional dialogue should allow for active participation in learning. The educator should therefore support learners and offer them enough time and opportunity to practice what they are taught. This response validates the learner-centred aspect of the model.

The notion of learner-centredness was also highlighted in the discussion on how critical and creative thinking may be induced during ABET instruction. The respondents stressed learner-centred instruction as the best way of inducing critical and creative thinking. They were of the view that, when a practitioner uses the discovery learning method of teaching, learners are encouraged to think critically and creatively, which leads them to become independent thinkers. The respondents added that critical and creative thinking can be induced through the use of substitutional experience devices such as the use of learning aids during instruction, especially when learners are given the opportunity to interact with teaching materials, express themselves and practise what they are learning. The responses of the focus groups therefore validated the learner-centred component of the model.

In their discussion of meaningful assessment, two of the focus groups emphasised the importance of ABET learners being involved in the assessment procedures. In other words, assessment should be learner centred. The two focus groups, who were in their third year of study and had been introduced to learner-centred approaches of assessment, contended that when assessment is learner centred it can make learners reflect on their work and thus bring about introspection in learners. This self-evaluation can make learners aware of their strengths and weaknesses, which can encourage them to work harder. The responses of these two groups strongly validated the learner-centred aspect of the model.

5.5.5 Findings on critical thinking and creativity

The need for creativity and critical thinking was supported at different stages of the focus group discussion.

Two of the focus groups recognised the importance of critical thinking and creativity in a curriculum that relates to the experiences of ABET learners. These groups contended that when the ABET curriculum relates to the prior experiences of the learners it makes them understand new learning tasks sooner. This means that prior learning experience aids critical thinking and creativity among learners as they grapple with new learning tasks. Indeed, during instruction educators normally proceed from the known to the unknown, that is, from previous knowledge to new learning matters. Learners' experiences thus serve as foundation and stepping stones for acquiring new skills and knowledge. The responses of these two focus groups validated the guidelines, which called for critical thinking and creativity.

Over and above the general support of all the six focus groups for learner-centred instructional activities in encouraging critical and creative thinking, one group (while voicing the opinions described above) particularly emphasised the value of involving learners physically, mentally and emotionally in all learning activities. Their response validates the guideline concerning thinking and creativity, and supports the view expressed by Clark and Starr (1996:237) that "you cannot teach thinking skills if you limit yourself to textbook teaching alone. Teaching for thinking requires additional hard work, creative instruction and hours of practice."

5.5.6 Findings on meaningful assessment in ABET instructional programmes

All the respondents provided some form of validation for the importance of meaningful assessment in ABET programmes.

The focus groups were of the view that thorough planning could lead to meaningful assessment. They argued that thorough planning of instructional discourses was necessary to make educators and learners aware of exactly what they were expected to do during instruction – learning in order to achieve learning outcomes. This is true because teaching is a two-way affair. The educator presents the lesson to learners, who must also undertake some tasks in order to

achieve success. The response validates recommendations for the meaningful assessment as indicated in the model.

All the six focus groups support the view that meaningful assessment can lead to successful learning. The respondents argued that through meaningful assessment learners become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This awareness can spur them on to work harder in order to improve their performances and achieve greater success. Assessment should therefore not be regarded as a way of encouraging learners to work harder for more success in learning. Assessment should therefore provide for self-evaluation by learners. Meaningful assessment, however, can only occur in an atmosphere where learners are relaxed. The meaningful assessment component of the model is validated by the responses of the six focus groups.

5.5.7 Findings on the evaluation aspect of the model

According to Fraser et al (1990:90-91) “evaluation reflects upon and provides value judgements concerning the quality and effectiveness of didactic activities”. Evaluation is thus the process of determining the extent to which the outcomes and assumptions of instructional/learning activities and a curriculum have been realised. The aspect of evaluation in the proposed model deals with how ABET learners are assessed and how instruction (teaching) is evaluated in ABET programmes. Four items were asked on assessment of learners and evaluation of ABET programmes respectively. It was posited that, in assessing learners and evaluating instruction in ABET programmes, the exercise should be designed, be a process, have a product and have a context. The findings on assessment of learners and evaluation of instruction in ABET programmes will be discussed in that order.

5.5.7.1 Findings on assessment of learners in ABET programmes

The respondents showed support for assessment in ABET programmes across various points of discussion in the focus group. This support was discerned in particular in discussions around creativity, planning and the attainment of goals. While all respondents demonstrated support for designed and well-planned

assessment, the following synopsis of their discussions indicated how this support was manifested at various points in the discussions.

DESIGNING STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSING ABET LEARNERS

Three out of the six focus groups were of the view that, in assessing learners in ABET programmes, the exercise should be designed or planned well so that all aspects of instruction and learning may be covered. The respondents argued that it is only when an assessment programme is planned that it can be implemented successfully. Planning is thus seen as the foundation of a successful assessment activity. The implication here is that a well-planned assessment programme gives direction to implementation. Planning they argued can also assist the assessor to know the relevant assessment tools to be used in order to achieve the goals of the exercise. This response validates the assessment component of the model.

In a discussion of how “assessment in ABET programmes could make a contribution towards developing creativity among learners”, one of the six groups stressed that it was important to plan or design the assessment procedure to enable learners to show exactly what they can create as a result of instruction and learning. The group was of the view that in order to make learners demonstrate creativity the programme of assessment should give them direction, and this can only be determined when the exercise has been planned in advance before implementation. The plan thus allows learners to know exactly what is expected of them and the role they should play in order to demonstrate what they have learnt. This response is in accordance with the guideline stating that instructional discourse in ABET programmes should allow for demonstration of creativity among learners. It therefore validates the assessment component of the model.

Support was also obtained for planned assessment during the discussion on whether assessment of ABET learners should be both internal and external.

One group said assessment of ABET learners should be planned or designed to cover both internal and external inputs. The group contended that a plan for

assessment will indicate the input of both the educator and the external assessor. Where there is no plan, duplication may occur, affecting the overall results of the assessment exercise. A plan would spell out which aspects of the learner's work should be covered by internal assessment and which should be taken care of by external assessment. This response too validates the design aspect of the model because the group contend that the design of assessment should be factored into ABET programmes.

The discussion on the topic "assessment of learners in ABET programmes should reflect the goals and objectives of curriculum and instruction," also revealed support for well-planned assessment.

Two of the six focus groups gave their support to the importance of design in regard to the goals and objectives of a curriculum. The groups argued that for the assessment of ABET learners to reflect to the goals and objectives of the curriculum and instruction the whole episode (of assessment) must be well designed. The design will then show the relationship between the assessment exercise, curriculum and instruction. Thus, since learning programmes aim at achieving what has been set out in the curriculum and instruction, assessment of learners should be designed to measure the achievement of such goals. The responses given by the two groups are in line with the design aspect of assessment in the model, and thus validate that component.

THE PROCESS OF ASSESSING ABET LEARNERS

The focus interviews also paid attention to the process of ABET assessments. Most of the respondents stressed that such assessment should be continuous and formative rather summative.

Four out of the six focus groups gave support to the need for assessment to be an ongoing process. The four groups contended that assessing learners in ABET programmes should be a process, (ie it should be continuous and should follow logical steps) in order to be successful. The respondents added that when

assessment is seen as a process it may provide records of all the learning tasks undertaken by learners throughout the year. The views expressed by the four focus groups validate the process aspect of assessment in the model.

While discussing the assessment process, it is important to note that one of the six focus groups recognised the importance of an ongoing process in assessing learners' creativity in ABET programmes. The group argued that learners have more opportunity to demonstrate creativity in practical terms when the assessment exercise is seen as a process and done continuously. This implies that, in order to make learners demonstrate skills and knowledge in practical terms, assessment should be conducted throughout the duration of the instructional learning programme. This response is in line with the guideline on the model which states that assessment of ABET learners should allow for demonstration of creativity. It therefore validates the process component of assessment in the model.

One of the six focus groups was of the view that the process of assessment of learners in ABET levels 1 to 4 should involve two parties – the educator as internal assessor and the IEB (Independent Examinations Board) as external assessor. The group supports the need for two parties in ABET learner-assessment because the respondents see the input of the educator as crucial in the proper assessment of learners. The view expressed by the group validates the guideline that sees assessment as a shared activity. The view point therefore validates the process aspect of the model.

One of the six focus groups recognised the value of making assessment reflect the goals and instruction as a process. The group argued that since instruction takes place to bring about learning, the assessment of learners should be seen as a process that takes place on an ongoing basis to find out how the goals of curriculum and instruction have been achieved. By implication, this group does not lend support for summative or "single shot" assessment alone, as that might not lead to the realisation of curricular and instructional goals. The group thus advocated the need for a continuous assessment of learners. Indeed, for assessment to reflect the goals and objectives of curriculum and instruction, the

whole process should be carried out throughout the course of the programme. This response is in line with the holistic and continuous assessment aspect of the model. The response therefore validates the process component of assessment as indicated in the model.

THE PRODUCT OF ASSESSING ABET LEARNERS

The process of assessment was also highlighted in discussions on the attainment of learning outcomes.

Two of the six focus groups said that assessment of ABET learners should be continuous in order to produce outcomes. The respondents were of the view that assessment of learners should end by giving feedback on learners' achievements and this feedback may be obtained more fairly when the whole exercise is continuous. By this they meant that assessment of learners in ABET should yield data which informs both learners and educators what they have achieved. Thus for assessment to show positive results it should take into consideration all the activities educators and learners perform during the instructional discourse. These groups emphasised that the assessment of ABET learners should not be seen as a punitive measure; instead it should encourage learners to work hard in order to achieve more success. The response given by the two focus groups validates the product component of the model.

Three of the six focus groups gave support to the outcome or product of assessment. They were of the view that assessment in ABET programmes should encourage learners to show their readiness to become creators of jobs through exhibition of the skills they have acquired. A person can only show that he or she knows how to do something by actually doing it practically. This response is in line with the guideline which states that instructions dialogue should aim at changing or modifying behaviour of learners. The behaviour of learners may be regarded as changed when they can practically demonstrate skills and knowledge they did not have prior to instruction. The response therefore validates the outcomes component of assessment in the model.

Two of the six focus groups gave strong support to the outcome or product of internal and external assessment. The two groups argued that a certain percentage of the final mark of the learner should be awarded by the educator and a certain percentage by the external assessor. By this they suggest for assessment to be fair, both the educator and the institution that offers the course should have input. Thus the final mark awarded to a learner should be the product of internal and external assessment conducted on the learner. The respondents felt that, apart from being fair, such assessments would contribute to ensuring a more reliable and arguably more valid assessment. Piek and Mahlangu (1990:205) aptly say "the accuracy with which a test measures what it is intended to measure is known as its empirical validity". The views expressed by the groups validate the outcome component of the model.

Of the six focus groups three showed support for the fact that the assessment of the ABET learner can lead to outcomes if the exercise reflects the goals and objectives set up by curriculum and instruction. This response is laudable because instructions usually precede assessment and instruction is based on the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Thus, for assessment to lead to outcomes of learning, the exercise must reflect the goals and objectives of the curriculum and the instruction. The response from the three groups reflects the guideline in the model which states that instruction should precede assessment.

THE CONTEXT OF ASSESSING ABET LEARNERS.

In considering the context of assessment, one of the focus groups expressed the view that for an assessment to show clearly what learners can achieve, it should be holistic, that is, it should go beyond pencil-and-paper tests. This implies that every activity performed by the class, as well as the learners' files, notebooks and portfolios, should be included in the assessment in order to take into consideration the context within which learners learn. Assessment should not be conducted using only one method, since that could not take cognisance of the whole context within which learners learn. This response conforms to the contextual aspect of assessment in the model and therefore validates it.

Two other groups, while reflecting these views, were more concerned that assessment of ABET learners should be both internal and external in order to take care of the context within which learners learn. The two groups argued that local conditions under which ABET learners are taught should be considered when assessing them. This implies that since conditions differ from place to place the educator should have an input in the assessment of his or her own learners. This response validates the contextual aspect of assessment as stated in the model.

5.5.7.2 Findings on evaluating teaching in ABET programmes

THE DESIGN OF EVALUATION

The focus group interviews were also directed at engaging the respondents in a discussion on the importance of evaluation in ABET.

When asked to discuss who should be involved in the evaluation of ABET programmes and why, one of the six focus groups supported the view that evaluation should be planned or designed in such a way that it takes on board all the stakeholders in ABET delivery: learners, educators, institutions, policy makers, donors and government departments involved. The group argued that thorough planning would not only give direction to the exercise but also spell out the role of the various stakeholders and interest groups in the evaluation. This group, by implication, saw evaluation as a shared activity which should not be regarded as the task of a particular interest group. Indeed, if evaluation of instruction in ABET programmes is to be successful it should be properly planned to involve all stakeholders. The response therefore validates the evaluation aspect of the model.

Support for a well-designed evaluation undertaking was also given when respondents were requested to relate their views on whether proper planning has any positive effect on the success of evaluation. Four of the six focus groups lent their support to the planning of evaluation. They argued that careful planning could assist the evaluation team to determine the variables that would be targeted

in the evaluation exercise. This implies that evaluation can only be properly directed when it is well planned. Dressel (1976:3) voices similar sentiments: "With careful advance planning, student performance or other appropriate results provide feedback for diagnosing deficiencies and improving programmes". Thus proper planning for evaluation has a positive impact on the success of evaluation in ABET instructional programmes. The response of the four groups validates the design aspect of evaluation as indicated on the model.

The discussion on the aspect: "evaluation of ABET programmes should provide feedback to stakeholders", also yielded data on the importance of the design components of ABET evaluation.

Of the six focus groups, two of them supported the importance of design in evaluation in order to provide feedback to stakeholders. The two groups argued that the hallmark of success in programme evaluation is planning. Proper planning or design gives direction to the exercise by spelling out its objectives. It also enables the evaluator to determine the variables to be evaluated in order to obtain the needed feedback for stakeholders. Proper planning is a crucial element in the evaluation exercises. This response validates the planning aspect of evaluation as indicated on the model.

Finally, support for a well-designed evaluation component was also given in the discussion which asked respondents what effects or influence a conducive atmosphere has on ABET evaluation, and how this can be achieved.

Two of the six focus groups argued in favour of good planning as a way of achieving conducive atmosphere in evaluation of instruction and learning in ABET Programmes. The two groups argued that many people fear evaluation because they do not want their weaknesses to be exposed. Planning assists the evaluating team to take steps to dispel the fears of participants for instance by arranging a meeting to discuss the evaluation procedure before the exercise begins. Good planning brings about co-operation and makes participants more relaxed during the evaluation. The groups' response validates the model.

THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

The focus groups were required to discuss the notion of the processual nature of evaluation.

One of the six groups said that evaluation of instruction in ABET programmes should be a process involving the three main levels of education. As a process, evaluation must be logical. When evaluation is done step by step, the evaluation team can allocate roles to all stakeholders so that each knows what he or she is expected to contribute to the exercise. The group was of the view that as a process evaluation at the three main levels – macro, meso and micro -- could spell out the role of the national department, the institution offering the programme and the educator in the evaluation exercise. They felt that it is only when all these levels are taken on board and given specific roles and inputs that evaluation can be successful. Fraser et al (1990:168) support this view when they say, “It is important that all interested parties are involved in such evaluation in order to ensure reliable input”. This response validates the process aspect of evaluation as indicated in the model.

In discussing the processual nature of ABET evaluation, another focus group supported the view that evaluation is a process, but argued that, as a process, evaluation should be concerned with specific procedures that can be used in collecting data for the evaluation exercise. They felt that when evaluation of instruction is sequentially arranged the process can avoid pitfalls and thus lead to achievement of success. Cangelosi (1991:148) rightly suggests, “The evaluation team meets to determine the variable to be targeted ... establish procedures, determine data sources and schedule activities”. The group’s response is valid, because systematic arrangement and procedures can indeed assist evaluators to minimise mistakes, as they ensure that the exercise is done step by step, so that all pertinent issues and variables are considered. This response validates the process aspect of evaluation as indicated in the model.

Of the six focus groups two supported the process of evaluation as a means of obtaining feedback for stakeholders. The two groups recognised evaluation as a process which is continuous and argued that the process should take cognisance of results of instruction and learning at every phase of the activity in order to achieve accumulated results which can be given to educators, institutions, learners and funders. By implication, this group does not seem to support a single, summative evaluation exercise, since that would not give a comprehensive, clear picture of the outcome of instruction and learning. The response is in line with the process aspect of evaluation and therefore validates the model.

One of the six groups argued in favour of establishing a rapport between the evaluating team and participants on the evaluation throughout the duration of the exercise. According to the group, evaluation is an ongoing process and a conducive atmosphere should be established and nurtured for as long as the exercise goes on. The group argued that this could make the evaluation atmosphere more relaxed for participants during the evaluation exercise. This would be worthwhile because if participants are suspicious of the exercise they may not co-operate with the evaluation team. The response reflects the process aspect of evaluation as indicated in the model.

THE PRODUCT ASPECT OF EVALUATION

The groups were required to focus on the importance of the 'product' aspect of evaluation. By this it is implied that evaluation conducted in ABET programmes by all stakeholders should yield some worthwhile results. This view became apparent across various stages of the discussion as indicated in the following paragraphs.

Two out of the six focus groups supported the need for some outcome or product of evaluation. The groups were of the view that evaluation should be a shared activity among all stakeholders of ABET in order to produce valid and acceptable results. According to the groups, all stakeholders should be involved in evaluation of instruction, because each has a contribution to make towards the achievement of

evaluation goals. Thus, if evaluation of ABET instruction is to be successful or lead to achievement of goals, it should be a collaborative exercise. In the words of Bown (1999:vii) "It should involve all staff, practitioners, tutors, funders and organisers". The response of the two groups validates the outcomes component of the model.

One of the six focus groups emphasised that proper planning can lead to the achievement of evaluation goals. According to this group, proper planning can clarify the focus of evaluation, determine its purpose, and thereby lead to realisation of outcomes. Evaluation of instruction may seek to show how far instruction has brought about desired learning outcomes, or, in the words to McKay (1998:133) "to tell us how a learner compares with other learners on the same level". One can therefore argue that no effective evaluation can be carried out without planning toward the realisation of instruction and learning outcomes. This response component of the model.

Out of the six focus groups, two supported the outcomes aspect of evaluation as a way of giving feedback to stakeholders. The two groups argued that the people who give money to the instructional / learning programme want to know that the money is not being wasted. The educators, supervisors, course organisers and lecturers also need to know if and how their work can be properly conducted in order to produce an outcome that can help stakeholders in making decisions. This response is in line with the outcomes aspect of the model and therefore validates it.

Of the six focus groups, two supported the fact that evaluation can produce good outcomes only when it is conducted in a conducive atmosphere. The two groups argued that people are unwilling to co-operate with evaluation teams because of fear. Therefore, in order to produce good outcomes for evaluation, participants should be told about the positive aspects of the exercise. When this is done people will feel more confident about contributing fully toward its success. Such a positive attitude can only be achieved within a conducive atmosphere. This response therefore validates the product or outcomes of the model.

THE CONTEXT OF EVALUATION

The focus group discussions also requested respondents to give attention to the context within which evaluation is carried out in ABET programmes.

One group was of the opinion that in view of the various different conditions under which evaluation of instruction is conducted in ABET, all stakeholders should be involved. This, the group argued, could take care of the different contexts, conditions and environments in which instruction occurs. This response is reasonable because the various tutorial centres where instruction occurs are not the same. Some places have teaching and learning facilities such as videos, televisions and telephones, while others do not even have proper classroom accommodation. The response therefore validates the contextual component of evaluation as indicated in the model and corroborates the views of Dressel (1976:169) who says "environmental influence is any characteristic constituting a potential stimulus capable of changing the student's sensory input".

One focus group held that the context under which evaluation of instruction is done has an effect on the achievement of acceptable outcomes. They argued that in order for evaluation to be successful and valid, local conditions should be taken into account. Since instruction takes place in different contexts or circumstances, it is crucial that in planning an evaluation activity consideration should be given to local conditions. When this is done evaluation can yield outcomes which are generally acceptable to all stakeholders. The response of this group validates the contextual aspect of evaluation as indicated on the model.

One of the six groups argued that consideration of the context or situation in which evaluation is conducted is crucial to the gathering of valid information for stakeholders.

The group argued that evaluation should result in feedback. This can only be achieved when local situations under which teaching and learning occur are considered during evaluation. In order to cater for various situations under which

instruction and learning occur, a variety of methods must be employed in evaluation exercises.

The importance of the context or situation under which evaluation is conducted is supported by this response. The response therefore validates the contextual aspect of evaluation as indicated in the model.

Of the six focus groups, one stressed the importance of the context or climate in which evaluation of instruction in ABET programmes would be successful. The group contended that a conducive atmosphere is crucial to the achievement of evaluation goals. The group said that evaluation should be conducted under non-threatening conditions. Thus participants in the evaluation exercise should be made to feel secure in order for them to co-operate fully in the exercise. When evaluation is done in the context of freedom of expression it leads to objectivity and success. This response is in line with the guideline that states that evaluation should be conducted in a conducive atmosphere. It therefore validates the model.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with two aspects pertaining to the empirical component of the study

In the first section, the chapter outlined the model employed to conduct “field investigation” and also the documentary component.

In ascertaining the views of the research subjects, the researcher utilised a series of focus groups to enable them to deliberate in detail about the various items listed in the interview schedule. As indicated in this chapter the schedule was formulated according to various items posited in the model for evaluation (see chapter 4).

In the second section of this chapter, the researcher presented the views of the subjects as they either corroborated or diverged from the items in the schedule (and hence in the model for instruction, assessment and evaluation).

It was found, however, that the model was indeed appropriate for conducting assessment and evaluation and that the subjects showed general support for the model, albeit in varying degrees.

In the next chapter, the researcher draws various conclusions from the investigation.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The present study (made up of six chapters) set out to propose a model for the evaluation of ABET programmes. In chapter one the need for ABET and an all inclusive curriculum for its programmes was stressed. Chapter two reviewed adult education in general and its delivery strategies. The development of adult education and the role of multi-media in its delivery were highlighted. In chapter three evaluation of ABET programmes was discussed. The focus was on various aspects of evaluation such as types, purpose, evaluation of distance education programmes and the criteria for evaluating distance education activities. Chapter four discussed the proposed model for the evaluation of ABET programmes. Here the various guidelines that emanated from the proposed model were discussed. Chapter five discussed the research design and methodology employed in the study. The use of documentary sources vis-à-vis focus group discussions (as main research tools) and findings of the field work were outlined. This last chapter attempts to elucidate the conclusions that can be drawn from the various aspects of the study and offers some recommendations.

The conclusions pertain to specific objectives of the study, namely, proposing a model for evaluating ABET programmes, and prescribing guidelines for the instruction, assessment and evaluation in ABET programmes. The conclusions drawn from the main components of the study (ie the study of relevant available literature and the empirical research) will be discussed in sequence in this chapter.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS ON THE STUDY OF THE LITERATURE

6.2.1 Introduction

As noted in chapter one, the relevant available literature on Adult Basic Education and Training formed the basis of part of this study. The review of the literature covered various topics including the nature and scope of ABET, its historical perspective and value, the basic tenets for teaching ABET, a multi-media approach to ABET delivery, an evaluation of educational programmes, an evaluation of distance education programmes, criteria for evaluating distance education programmes, principles guiding the conduct of successful evaluation in ABET programmes, and guidelines for the instruction, assessing and evaluation of ABET programmes.

6.2.2 Conclusions on the nature and scope of ABET

From the literature study detailed in chapter two, it can be concluded that ABET is a very broad educational endeavour which covers all learning activities organised for adults outside the formal school system. ABET thus traverses every degree of learning level, curriculum or purpose relating to the education of adults.

6.2.3 Conclusions on the development of ABET in ancient cultures

From the literature study on the historical development of ABET (see chapter 2, second paragraph) it can be concluded that adult basic education was an important part of the ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures among others. The Jewish synagogues served as schools where adults were engaged in learning various aspects of religious doctrine.

6.2.4 Conclusions on the development of adult basic education in England

As noted in chapter 2 (on the historical perspective of adult education) the pioneer work in providing education for adults in England was undertaken by the Christian

missionaries who arrived there in AD 597 and began educating adults in matters pertaining to religious faith.

6.2.5 Conclusions on the development of adult basic education in South Africa

As noted in chapter 2, section 2.6, history shows that the apartheid government did not promote the education of black adults (or children for that matter) on the grounds that educating blacks would create competition between whites and blacks for white-collar jobs.

6.2.6 Conclusions on international concern for ABET

Chapter two notes that since its formation in 1945 the United Nations, through its international conferences, has been urging its member states to accept and recognise adult basic education and training as a tool for development, alleviation of poverty and ignorance, protection of human rights and promotion of democracy.

6.2.7 Conclusions on the value of ABET

Based on the facts indicated in chapter 2 (section 2.4) one may conclude:

- that the value of ABET lies in offering adults training in skills and knowledge in order to help them to make a positive adjustment to the socio-economic and political conditions of the contemporary world.

6.2.8 Conclusions on the basic tenets of ABET instruction

As mentioned in chapter 2 (section 2.5) the basic tenets of ABET delivery are nurturing and sustaining learners' motivation, providing a caring educative environment, recognising prior learning of adults, placing emphasis on learning rather than teaching and planning effectively before teaching.

From the literature study detailed in chapter 2 and the focus group discussion findings reported in chapter five it can be concluded:

- that for effective delivery of ABET instruction, learners should be motivated and provided with a supportive learning environment in which effective planning, a holistic approach to teaching and the recognition of individual differences are of paramount importance.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS ON A MULTI-MEDIA APPROACH TO ABET DELIVERY

6.3.1 Introduction

As mentioned in chapter 2 (section 2.6.1) face-to-face education may not be possible for many adults in view of socio-economic responsibilities. As a result of this reality and also the fact that human contact alone might not be enough in the acquisition of knowledge and skills, it can be concluded:

- that the application of modern technological devices to ABET delivery has been motivated by the need to make education more accessible to all potential learners no matter what their location or socio-economic status.

6.3.2 Conclusions on media selection and planning for ABET programmes

From the discussion on the selection of media in chapter 2, the following conclusions may be drawn:

- The inclusion of media in instruction has been a characteristic of education since the Stone Age and it will probably continue to play a major role in instruction for many years to come.
- The modern educator has a variety of instructional media from which to choose. However, the selection of media for instruction should be based on

considerations such as financial feasibility, didactic significance or effectiveness, and accessibility to learners.

- Although the proliferation of media on the market, lack of guidelines and the ignorance and negative attitude of some educators make selection of the best medium difficult, media selection is a vitally important step in planning any instructional discourse. In selecting media for instruction, educators should review and preview all media items in order to choose the best.
- The design, planning and selection of media for instruction should be determined by factors such as lesson outcomes, attributes of various media, and learner characteristics and needs.
- In designing and planning media for instructional purposes determination should be made regarding which media to use, in which form and at what stage in instruction it will be effective or provide the most relevant experiences to learners.

6.3.3 Conclusions on media integration in ABET programmes

From the discussion on media integration in ABET programmes (see chapter 2, section 2.6.3) it can be concluded that media integration in these programmes not only makes the various components support each other but also appeals to all senses of the learner and thus serves valuable instructional, informational and motivational purposes as well.

6.3.4 Conclusions on a multi-media approach to ABET programmes

The discussion on a multi-media approach to ABET programmes in chapter 2 (section 2.6.5) clearly shows that a multi-media approach to teaching can provide instruction to learners on topics that require more realistic methods than mere symbols, diagrams or verbal explanations.

- The search for an alternative means of instruction which suits many adult learners has made multi-media an accomplished fact in education in general and also an indispensable part of ABET instruction.

6.3.5 Conclusions on media and technology in rural communities

From the discussions on media and technology in chapter two of the literature study it is apparent that the empowerment of disadvantaged rural people through education can be enhanced by the use of powerful mass media. However, owing to the lack of electricity in most rural areas, the most effective means of reaching distance learners and supplementing face-to-face instruction are radio broadcasts and the use of wind-up radios (which do not operate on batteries).

6.3.6 Conclusions on distance education and ABET programmes

In considering the facts discussed in chapter 2 (section 2.6.8) of the literature study on distance education and ABET programmes, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Since in distance education both learners and educators are separated from each other, and communication is central to teaching and learning, the use of modern technological media is crucial to ABET instruction.
- The application of multi-media to distance education has not only widened the frontiers of education available to adults but can also modernise society.
- The audio-cassette (as a cheap but powerful medium), in combination with other audio-visual media, can motivate learners, widen the scope of teaching-learning, and assist learners to structure their study methods and habits.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS ON THE EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

From the literature study in chapter 3 and the findings from the focus group discussions on outcomes based education (chapter 5, section 5.5.2) the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Evaluation of educational programmes relates to judgement of quality, value, effectiveness or impact of instructional activities on learners; and this evaluation can be made at three levels – macro, meso and micro. Formative evaluation is made (while the instructional programme is in progress) to seek evidence on the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities in order that decisions may be taken regarding improvement, revision, changes, and whether to continue or discontinue certain aspects of the programme.
- Product, or summative, evaluation takes place in order to assist educators to take decisions regarding promotion of learners, repetition of courses, improvement in instructional programmes and expansion of existing courses.

6.4.1 Conclusions on the pertinent reasons for evaluation of educational programmes

The discussion (in chapter 3, section 3.5) on the reasons for educational evaluation show

- that evaluation may be done for educational, political or economic reasons in order to monitor educational activities, improve instruction, show accountability to the public, improve existing learning programmes and justify their existence

6.4.2 Conclusions on evaluation of distance education programmes

As noted from the literature study on the evaluation of distance education programmes in chapter 3 (section 3.6) and from the findings on the documentary study (chapter 5, section 5.2.2):

- Evaluation may be either baseline (diagnosis), process (formative) or product (summative) and it is done as a quality-control measure.
- The aspects of distance education which ought to be evaluated are the aims, goals and outcomes of the programme, instruction, learning, curriculum, content, study materials, learner support systems, administrative or delivery system, physical settings (facilities) and assessment procedures.

6.4.3 Conclusions on criteria for evaluating distance education programmes

In considering the discussions on the criteria for evaluating distance education programmes (chapter 3, section 3.7) and from the opinions expressed by the participants of the focus group discussion in chapter 5, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The criteria for evaluating distance education programmes should include the relevance and suitability of distance education curricula to the needs of learners, instructional methods, attainability of aims, goals (outcomes), quality of study materials and learning experiences, reliability and effectiveness of the learner support system, competency, effectiveness and accessibility of communication network, adequacy of facilities and quality and reliability of assessment procedures.

6.4.4 Conclusions on the principles underlying the conduct of successful evaluation in distance ABET programmes

Based on the information obtained from the literature study in chapter 3 (section 3.8) and the findings resulting from both the documentary study and the focus group discussions in chapter 5 (sections 5.2.2 and 5.5.1 respectively) the following conclusions can be drawn on how to conduct a successful evaluation in distance ABET programmes:

- Effective instruction and learning on stated instructional objectives (outcomes) should precede the evaluation exercise.
- It is necessary to identify and select legitimate interest groups as well as the participants (eg tutors and learners) whose activities are to be evaluated.
- It is necessary to devise accurate and reliable instruments of evaluation.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

6.5.1 Conclusions on ABET instruction and outcomes based education

As noted in the literature study on instructional guidelines (chapter 4) and the findings from both the documentary study and focus group discussions in chapter 5 (sections 5.2.2 and 5.5.2 respectively) if distance ABET instruction is to be outcomes based, it should have directions, goals or outcomes, be structured or planned, recognise the prior learning of participants and aim at modifying and changing the behaviour of learners.

6.5.2 Conclusions on ABET instruction and relevance

From the findings on the relevance of ABET instruction in the literature study in chapter 4 (section 4.3) and the focus group discussions in chapter 5 (section 5.5.3) it is obvious that for ABET instructional activity to be relevant to the needs of

learners it should be based on experiences of learners, provide insight to learners, provide effective communication, be holistic, be based on case study methods, have a motivational effect and help learners to demonstrate practically what they are capable of doing.

6.5.3 Conclusions on ABET instruction and learner-centredness

As noted from the literature study on instructional guidelines in chapter 4 and the findings of the documentary study and the focus group discussions in chapter 5 (sections 5.2.2 and 5.5.4 respectively), we can conclude

- that for ABET instructional activities to be truly learner-centred they should be based on the needs of learners, regard learning as a social or co-operative activity that emanates from efforts of individual learners, make learner participation in learning activities a paramount feature of instruction, make room for recall and reinforcement and include a variety of methods in the instructional activities.

6.5.4 Conclusions on ABET instruction and the inducement of critical and creative thinking

From the discussion (in chapter 4) of instructional guidelines and based on the literature study and the findings from both the documentary study and the focus group discussions in chapter 5 (see sections 5.2.2 and 5.5.5) we can conclude

- that for ABET instructional activities to induce critical and creative thinking they should relate to learners' prior learning experiences, and provide a supportive learning climate which offers learners opportunities for group work and the sharing of ideas through discussions. The instructional activity should also make use of substitutional experiences through multi-media applications.

6.5.5 Conclusions on ABET instruction and meaningful assessment

From the discussions on instructional guidelines in chapter 4 and the findings of the focus group discussions (chapter 5, section 5.5.6) the following conclusions can be drawn on ABET instruction and meaningful assessment:

- For assessment of ABET instructional activities to be meaningful it should be thoroughly planned, and should take place in an environment that is not only conducive to learning but also encourages and guides learners and offers them opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation.

6.5.6 Conclusions on assessment of learners in ABET programmes

6.5.6.1 Conclusions on the design of assessment of ABET learners

As noted from the literature study on assessment guidelines in chapter 4 (section 4.4) and from the findings of the focus group discussions (chapter 5, section 5.5.7.1) it can be concluded that

- in order for the assessment of ABET learners to succeed it must be well-designed (planned), so that it will be conducted in a conducive atmosphere, holistic (ie include all aspects of learning activities), specific and purposeful and have clear direction.

6.5.6.2 Conclusions on the process of assessing ABET learners

In considering the discussion on the guidelines for assessing ABET learners in chapter 4 (section 4.4) and the findings from both the documentary study and the focus group discussions in chapter 5 (5.2.2 and 5.5.7.1 respectively) it can be concluded:

- that for assessment to be worthwhile it should be a continuous process, both formal and informal, internal and external, which includes alternative means of evaluation.

6.5.6.3 Conclusions on the product of assessing ABET learners

The literature study on assessment guidelines in chapter 4 and the findings from the focus group discussions (chapter 5, section 5.5.7.1) show that

- for an outcomes based form of assessment of ABET learners, it should be preceded by effective instruction, have a motivating effect on learners, offer them feedback on their learning efforts, it should be reliable and valid, and allow for creativity and summative measurement procedures.

6.5.6.4 Conclusions on the context of assessing ABET learners

On the basis of the facts gathered from the guidelines on assessment of learners in chapter 4 and the findings from the focus group discussions (chapter 5, section 5.5.7.1) it can be concluded

- that since conditions under which instruction and learning occur differ from place to place, assessment of ABET learners should be holistic (ie it must include all aspects of learning activities), reflect the aims and objectives of the curriculum and instruction, and be properly designed in order to have direction.

6.5.6.5 *Conclusions on evaluation of ABET instructional programmes*

6.5.6.5.1 *Conclusions on the design of evaluation in ABET instructional programmes*

From the literature study on guidelines for evaluation (chapter 4) and the findings from the documentary study and the focus group discussions in chapter 5 (sections 5.2.2 and 5.5.7.2 respectively), it can be concluded

- that for evaluation of ABET instructional programmes to achieve its objectives it must be planned, have clear direction, include all important stakeholders in ABET delivery, cover all aspects of instructional activities and have a scientific basis.

6.5.6.5.2 *Conclusions on the process of evaluating ABET instructional programmes*

A consideration of the evaluation guidelines in the literature study (chapter 4) and the findings from the documentary study and the focus group discussions (see chapter 5, section 5.5.7.2) shows

- that in order to evaluate ABET instructional programmes holistically and objectively the exercise should be a continuous process, a shared activity, which involves all staff of ABET programmes, and should offer feedback to all the stakeholders.

6.5.6.5.3 *Conclusions on the product of evaluating ABET instructional programmes*

On the basis of the discussion on evaluation guidelines (see chapter 4) and the findings from the focus group discussions (chapter 5, section 5.5.7.2) it can be seen

- that in order for evaluation of ABET instructional programmes to produce the desired results, the exercise should be outcomes based, conducted in a conducive atmosphere, preceded by instruction and learning, be purposeful and specific and involve practical projects undertaken by course participants.

6.5.6.5.4 Conclusions on the content of evaluating ABET instructional programmes

From the literature study on evaluation guidelines in chapter 4 and the findings from the focus group discussions (chapter 5, section 5.5.7.2) it can be concluded

- that the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes should take into consideration the sensitivities of participants, the conditions under which both instruction and learning occur and the possibility that the outcomes may not be exactly as anticipated.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study a model was proposed, with suggested guidelines for the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes. Certain recommendations became apparent during the course of the study. The recommendations are summarised as follows:

6.6.1 Recommendations to institutions offering ABET study programmes

- There is a need for institutions offering distance ABET training programmes to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional techniques with a view to improving them.
- It is considered imperative that more research be undertaken in ABET programmes, not only to find appropriate and suitable methods for instruction, but also to improve the delivery skills of ABET educators.

- There is an urgent need to train ABET practitioners (educators) in modern assessment approaches which are deemed appropriate for assessing adult learners.
- There is an urgent need to train ABET practitioners in evaluation techniques in order to help them to appraise the projects in which they are involved.
- There is the urgent need to encourage ABET practitioners (especially those with little or no training in ABET) to study further in that field, not only for purposes of remuneration but also to acquire suitable skills for ABET delivery.
- Since ABET is a relatively new field of formal study in South Africa there is a pressing need for all institutions offering such training programmes to continue to work through initiatives such as the Standard Governing Bodies (SGBs) to ensure ongoing maintenance of standards.
- There is a need for institutions offering ABET programmes to either develop or seek out cheaper and more powerful technological devices that may be utilised as effective instructional media for distance ABET programmes.

6.6.2 Recommendations to departments of education

- There is a grave need for departments of education (national and provincial) to engage the services of qualified and dedicated ABET educators who have the skills to establish ABET firmly in all corners of the country in order to reduce illiteracy and its concomitant problems. The misconception by some people in authority that “for ABET delivery anybody can do it” will not help the nation to achieve the important goals of ABET.
- There is an urgent need for departments of education to realise the fact that ABET is development-oriented, and thus assists participants to develop skills for self-employment. ABET goes beyond merely offering adults matriculation or literacy classes.

- There is a need for the National Department of Education to establish separate sections for ABET in all the provinces in order to make them fully functional and accountable to the public and the government.

6.7 SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY

The study set to provide a model for the evaluation of ABET instructional programmes. In view of this it focused mainly on the aspects of instruction, assessment and evaluation within the context of ABET. The study has the following shortcomings:

- On the assumption that other institutions and students face similar challenges and that the results of the study could be used by all, the study focuses on the Unisa training programme and shows little or no contextual consideration of the way other institutions train ABET practitioners.
- During the empirical stage the researcher engaged comparatively few ABET practitioners in the in-depth group discussions to obtain their views on the guidelines suggested by the model. The views expressed by such a small sample of practitioners might not be representative of the feelings of ABET practitioners in general.

6.8 FINAL CONCLUSION

This study – a model for the evaluation of ABET programmes – has developed a model and guidelines which the researcher hopes may assist educators, practitioners and ABET stakeholders in the effective instruction, assessment and evaluation of their programmes, thus amplifying the positive impact which these programmes are already making on so many lives, both within South Africa and beyond.

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