

**AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE ON  
LANGUAGE LEARNING IN  
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
PROGRAMMES**

**by**

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# summary

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The Directorate of Adult Education and Training of the national Department of Education views Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) not merely as literacy, but as the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development. This includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes which are needed for social, economic and political participation and transformation. These skills will assist learners in becoming more active participants in their communities, their workplaces and contribute towards the development of South Africa.

This study aims to examine whether ABET programmes prepare learners to acquire the language which is needed to achieve this objective. It falls within one of the eight learning areas defined by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), namely the *language, literacy and communication* learning area. In order to research the effectiveness of learning within this area, it is important to analyse the interaction which takes place within a classroom; the type of questions both educators and learners ask; the type of errors learners make in the classroom; and how the educators treat these errors. What is also of paramount importance is whether the language skills learnt in the classroom are transferred to outside the classroom.

To examine this, various authors' views on classroom interaction; questions; errors; treatment of errors; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning are presented. Instruments were designed to analyse these aspects within an ABET programme, and include:

- the framework used to undertake the classroom interaction analysis,
- the instrument used to explore the type of questions educators and learners ask in the classroom,
- how an error analysis is used to identify typical learners' errors which occur

frequently,

- the methodology used to uncover how educators treat their learners' errors, and
- the various stakeholders' questionnaires which were used to ascertain the effectiveness of learning at an ABET Centre.

The research findings are presented and interpreted in order to provide recommendations for the development of language learning and teaching within the ABET field. The findings also gave rise to recommendations for classroom practices for ABET educators, and particularly the need for educator training and development. Recommendations for curriculum designers of ABET materials are also presented.

**KEY WORDS:** Adult Basic Education and Training; Language learning and teaching; Second language acquisition; Literacy; Classroom interaction; Classroom questions; Language errors; Error analysis; Treatment of errors; Evaluating the effectiveness of language learning.



# table of contents

---

## **CHAPTER 1            STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

|     |                               |   |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|
| 1.1 | Introduction.....             | 1 |
| 1.2 | Context .....                 | 1 |
| 1.3 | Statement of the problem..... | 2 |
| 1.4 | Aim of the study .....        | 6 |
| 1.5 | Method of research.....       | 7 |
| 1.6 | Chapter division.....         | 8 |

## **CHAPTER 2            REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
| 2.1   | Introduction.....  | 9  |
| 2.2   | Classroom interaction.....                                 | 11 |
| 2.2.1 | Introduction .....   | 11 |
| 2.2.2 | Historical perspective .....                               | 11 |
| 2.2.3 | Input in second language acquisition (SLA).....            | 12 |
|       | 2.2.3.1      The three views of input in SLA .....         | 12 |
|       | 2.2.3.2      Input .....                                   | 14 |
|       | 2.2.3.3      Input features.....                           | 16 |
| 2.2.4 | Interaction in second language acquisition .....           | 17 |
|       | 2.2.4.1      Interactional features.....                   | 18 |
|       | 2.2.4.2      The pedagogic importance of interaction ..... | 19 |
|       | 2.2.4.3      The social nature of interaction.....         | 19 |
|       | 2.2.4.4      Aspects of interaction management .....       | 20 |

|       |         |  |    |
|-------|---------|--|----|
|       | 2.2.4.5 | The management of learning .....           | 20 |
|       | 2.2.4.6 | Pedagogic implications .....               | 21 |
|       | 2.2.4.7 | Discourse analysis.....                    | 23 |
| 2.2.5 |         | Classroom discourse.....                   | 24 |
|       | 2.2.5.1 | The educator's language .....              | 25 |
|       | 2.2.5.2 | The educator's paradox .....               | 25 |
|       | 2.2.5.3 | The learners' language .....               | 25 |
|       | 2.2.5.4 | Turn-taking.....                           | 27 |
| 2.2.6 |         | Summary .....                              | 28 |
| 2.3   |         | Questions .....                            | 29 |
|       | 2.3.1   | Introduction .....                         | 29 |
|       | 2.3.2   | Overview .....                             | 29 |
|       | 2.3.2.1 | Different types of questions .....         | 29 |
|       | 2.3.2.2 | Problems associated with questions.....    | 31 |
| 2.3.3 |         | Questioning in the cognitive domain .....  | 33 |
| 2.3.4 |         | Questioning in the affective domain.....   | 39 |
| 2.3.5 |         | Questioning behaviour of the educator..... | 43 |
|       | 2.3.5.1 | Constructing the question.....             | 43 |
|       | 2.3.5.2 | Asking the question .....                  | 44 |
|       | 2.3.5.3 | Timing.....                                | 44 |
|       | 2.3.5.4 | Attending to learners' answers.....        | 45 |
|       | 2.3.5.5 | Follow-up questions .....                  | 46 |
| 2.3.6 |         | Summary .....                              | 48 |
| 2.4   |         | Errors .....                               | 48 |
|       | 2.4.1   | Introduction .....                         | 48 |
|       | 2.4.2   | Analysing errors .....                     | 48 |
|       | 2.4.3   | Historical perspective .....               | 49 |
|       | 2.4.4   | Errors and mistakes .....                  | 51 |
|       | 2.4.5   | Significance of learners' errors.....      | 52 |
|       | 2.4.6   | Sources of errors .....                    | 52 |
|       | 2.4.6.1 | Interlingual transfer .....                | 53 |
|       | 2.4.6.2 | Intralingual transfer .....                | 53 |
|       | 2.4.6.3 | Context of learning .....                  | 54 |

|     |         |   |    |
|-----|---------|---|----|
|     | 2.4.6.4 | Communication strategies .....                              | 54 |
|     | 2.4.7   | Stages of interlanguage development.....                    | 55 |
|     | 2.4.8   | Fossilization.....  | 56 |
|     | 2.4.9   | Summary .....   | 56 |
| 2.5 |         | Treatment of errors.....                                    | 56 |
|     | 2.5.1   | Introduction .....  | 56 |
|     | 2.5.2   | Historical perspective .....                                | 56 |
|     | 2.5.3   | Feedback.....   | 58 |
|     | 2.5.4   | Why treat errors? .....                                     | 61 |
|     | 2.5.5   | When to treat errors .....                                  | 62 |
|     | 2.5.6   | How to treat errors .....                                   | 63 |
|     | 2.5.7   | Which errors to treat .....                                 | 65 |
|     | 2.5.8   | Who should treat errors? .....                              | 68 |
|     | 2.5.9   | Summary .....   | 69 |
| 2.6 |         | Evaluating the effectiveness of learning.....               | 69 |
|     | 2.6.1   | Introduction .....  | 69 |
|     | 2.6.2   | What is evaluation?.....                                    | 69 |
|     | 2.6.3   | Why evaluate .....  | 71 |
|     | 2.6.4   | The role of evaluation.....                                 | 73 |
|     | 2.6.5   | Who should be involved in the evaluation process?.....      | 75 |
|     | 2.6.6   | The role of the stakeholders in the evaluation process..... | 77 |
|     | 2.6.6.1 | ABET learners.....  | 77 |
|     | 2.6.6.2 | Educators .....   | 78 |
|     | 2.6.6.3 | Supervisors/managers .....                                  | 78 |
|     | 2.6.6.4 | ABET Centre .....   | 79 |
|     | 2.6.6.5 | Union.....  | 79 |
|     | 2.6.7   | When should an evaluation take place? .....                 | 80 |
|     | 2.6.8   | Different methods on how to evaluate .....                  | 81 |
|     | 2.6.8.1 | Levels of evaluation .....                                  | 81 |
|     | 2.6.8.2 | Action research.....  | 84 |
|     | 2.6.8.3 | Formative and summative evaluations.....                    | 85 |
|     | 2.6.9   | What can be done with the information collected?.....       | 86 |
|     | 2.6.10  | Summary .....   | 87 |

|     |                  |    |
|-----|------------------|----|
| 2.7 | Conclusion ..... | 87 |
|-----|------------------|----|

## **CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 3.1 | Introduction .....                                 | 90  |
| 3.2 | Context .....                                      | 90  |
| 3.3 | Classroom interaction .....                        | 91  |
|     | 3.3.1 Introduction.....                            | 91  |
|     | 3.3.2 Framework to be used.....                    | 91  |
|     | 3.3.2.1 Classes of acts.....                       | 92  |
|     | 3.3.2.2 Classes of moves.....                      | 96  |
|     | 3.3.2.3 Types of address .....                     | 96  |
| 3.4 | Questions .....                                    | 97  |
|     | 3.4.1 Introduction.....                            | 97  |
| 3.5 | Errors .....                                       | 99  |
|     | 3.5.1 Introduction.....                            | 99  |
|     | 3.5.2 Written errors .....                         | 99  |
|     | 3.5.3 Oral errors.....                             | 100 |
| 3.6 | Treatment of errors.....                           | 100 |
|     | 3.6.1 Introduction.....                            | 100 |
|     | 3.6.2 Educator's treatment of errors .....         | 101 |
|     | 3.6.3 Error treatment forum.....                   | 101 |
|     | 3.6.4 Learners' responses to error treatment ..... | 101 |
| 3.7 | Evaluating the effectiveness of learning .....     | 101 |
|     | 3.7.1 Introduction.....                            | 101 |
|     | 3.7.2 Learner questionnaire.....                   | 102 |
|     | 3.7.3 Educator questionnaire .....                 | 104 |
|     | 3.7.4 Supervisor/manager questionnaires .....      | 105 |
|     | 3.7.5 ABET Centre questionnaire .....              | 107 |
|     | 3.7.6 Union questionnaire.....                     | 107 |
| 3.8 | Conclusion .....                                   | 108 |



## CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

|         |   |     |
|---------|---|-----|
| 4.1     | Introduction.....   | 109 |
| 4.2     | Classroom interaction.....  | 109 |
| 4.2.1   | Introduction.....   | 109 |
| 4.2.2   | Classroom interaction .....   | 109 |
| 4.2.3   | Breakdown of classroom interactions.....                                  | 111 |
| 4.2.3.1 | Initiations.....  | 111 |
| 4.2.3.2 | Responses .....   | 112 |
| 4.2.3.3 | Feedback .....  | 113 |
| 4.2.3.4 | Other .....   | 114 |
| 4.2.4   | IRF pattern .....   | 115 |
| 4.2.5   | IRF(F) pattern.....   | 116 |
| 4.2.6   | IRI pattern .....   | 117 |
| 4.2.7   | IR (learner initiated) pattern.....                                       | 118 |
| 4.3     | Questions .....   | 119 |
| 4.3.1   | Analysis of classroom questions at pre-level 1, levels 1, 2 and 3.....    | 119 |
| 4.3.2   | Analysis of questions of Independent Examinations Board examinations..... | 123 |
| 4.4     | Errors .....  | 127 |
| 4.4.1   | Introduction.....   | 127 |
| 4.4.2   | Written errors : pre-level 1 and level 1 .....                            | 127 |
| 4.4.3   | Written errors : level 2.....   | 132 |
| 4.4.4   | Written errors : level 3.....   | 139 |
| 4.4.5   | Oral errors.....  | 144 |
| 4.5     | Treatment of errors.....  | 149 |
| 4.5.1   | Introduction.....   | 149 |
| 4.5.2   | Educators treating their learners' errors .....                           | 149 |
| 4.5.3   | Error treatment forum.....  | 150 |
| 4.5.4   | Learners' responses to error treatment.....                               | 152 |
| 4.6     | Evaluating the effectiveness of learning .....                            | 152 |
| 4.6.1   | Introduction.....   | 152 |
| 4.6.2   | Learner questionnaire.....  | 153 |
| 4.6.3   | Educator questionnaire .....  | 156 |

|       |   |     |
|-------|---|-----|
| 4.6.4 | Supervisor/manager questionnaires ..... | 161 |
| 4.6.5 | ABET Centre questionnaire .....         | 169 |
| 4.6.6 | Union questionnaire.....                | 170 |
| 4.7   | Conclusion .....                        | 170 |

## CHAPTER 5 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

|         |   |     |
|---------|---|-----|
| 5.1     | Introduction .....  | 171 |
| 5.2     | Classroom interaction.....  | 171 |
| 5.2.1   | Classroom interaction .....   | 171 |
| 5.2.2   | Breakdown of classroom interactions.....  | 172 |
| 5.2.2.1 | Initiations.....  | 172 |
| 5.2.2.2 | Responses .....   | 172 |
| 5.2.2.3 | Feedback .....  | 172 |
| 5.2.2.4 | Other .....   | 173 |
| 5.2.3   | IRF pattern .....   | 173 |
| 5.2.4   | IRF(F) pattern.....   | 174 |
| 5.2.5   | IRI pattern .....   | 174 |
| 5.2.6   | IR (learner initiated) pattern.....   | 174 |
| 5.3     | Questions .....   | 175 |
| 5.3.1   | Analysis of classroom questions at pre-level 1, levels 1, 2 and 3.....  | 175 |
| 5.3.2   | Analysis of the levels of questions in the Independent<br>Examinations Board examinations for levels 1, 2 and 3 .....                         | 176 |
| 5.3.3   | A comparison between the questions asked in the classroom and the<br>questions asked in the Independent Examinations Board examinations ..... | 182 |
| 5.4     | Errors .....  | 182 |
| 5.4.1   | Written errors : pre-level 1 and level 1 .....  | 182 |
| 5.4.2   | Written errors : level 2.....   | 183 |
| 5.4.3   | Written errors : level 3.....   | 184 |
| 5.4.4   | Oral errors.....  | 184 |
| 5.5     | Treatment of errors.....  | 185 |
| 5.5.1   | Educators treating their learners' errors .....   | 185 |
| 5.6     | Evaluating the effectiveness of learning .....  | 186 |

|       |                            |     |
|-------|----------------------------|-----|
| 5.6.1 | Introduction.....          | 186 |
| 5.6.2 | Learners .....             | 186 |
| 5.6.3 | Educators .....            | 188 |
| 5.6.4 | Supervisors/managers ..... | 190 |
| 5.6.5 | ABET Centre.....           | 193 |
| 5.6   | Conclusion .....           | 195 |

## **CHAPTER 6            RECOMMENDATIONS**

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| 6.1   | Introduction.....  | 196 |
| 6.2   | Classroom interaction.....                               | 196 |
| 6.2.1 | Educator training .....                                  | 196 |
| 6.2.2 | A more communicative approach to language learning ..... | 197 |
| 6.3   | Questions .....  | 198 |
| 6.3.1 | Introduction.....  | 198 |
| 6.3.2 | Planning questions .....                                 | 200 |
| 6.3.3 | Asking questions .....                                   | 201 |
| 6.3.4 | Increasing learner-initiated questions.....              | 203 |
| 6.3.5 | Activities to stimulate the affective domain .....       | 204 |
| 6.3.6 | Effective questioning model.....                         | 206 |
| 6.3.7 | Checklist on questioning skills.....                     | 208 |
| 6.3.8 | Independent Examinations Board.....                      | 209 |
| 6.4   | Errors .....   | 211 |
| 6.4.1 | Error analysis .....                                     | 211 |
| 6.5   | Treatment of errors.....                                 | 211 |
| 6.5.1 | Introduction.....  | 211 |
| 6.5.2 | Differential correction .....                            | 213 |
| 6.5.3 | Correcting written errors .....                          | 214 |
| 6.5.4 | Peer correction.....                                     | 216 |
| 6.5.5 | Correcting oral errors .....                             | 217 |
| 6.5.6 | Learner self-correction .....                            | 217 |
| 6.6   | Evaluating the effectiveness of learning .....           | 218 |
| 6.6.1 | Stakeholders' questionnaires .....                       | 218 |

|       |                             |     |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----|
| 6.6.2 | Building relationships..... | 221 |
| 6.7   | Conclusion .....            | 223 |

|                  |                        |            |
|------------------|------------------------|------------|
| <b>CHAPTER 7</b> | <b>CONCLUSION.....</b> | <b>224</b> |
|------------------|------------------------|------------|

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b> | <b>228</b> |
|---------------------------|------------|

## **FIGURES**

|          |  |     |
|----------|--|-----|
| Figure 1 | Vigil and Oller's affective and cognitive feedback model ..... | 59  |
| Figure 2 | Stakeholders' involved in evaluating ABET.....                 | 76  |
| Figure 3 | Vaccarino and Witthaus effective questioning model.....        | 207 |
| Figure 4 | The transfer partnership.....                                  | 222 |

## **APPENDICES**

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Appendix A | Action words and phrases used at the various levels in the cognitive domain |
| Appendix B | Assessment options for the cognitive domain                                 |
| Appendix C | Matric used for the analysis of classroom language interactions             |
| Appendix D | Set of questions to promote affective outcomes                              |
| Appendix E | Learners' writings  |
| Appendix F | Learner questionnaire   |
| Appendix G | Learner questionnaire (Zulu)  |
| Appendix H | Educator questionnaire  |
| Appendix I | First supervisor/manager questionnaire                                      |
| Appendix J | Second supervisor/manager questionnaire                                     |
| Appendix K | ABET Centre questionnaire   |
| Appendix L | Union questionnaire   |
| Appendix M | Common spelling errors  |
| Appendix N | Reasons why learners want their errors corrected                            |
| Appendix O | Checklist for educators on questioning skills                               |
| Appendix P | Educator evaluation questionnaire   |



# Statement of the problem

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The importance of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) in the “new” South African context has been recognised by education and development policy makers. With this recognition comes the “mainstreaming” and formalising of adult basic education. This brings to the fore the need for a more academic approach to the teaching situation - with language development being an important component. It is this analysis of non-mother tongue English adult learners which this study explores. It is, however, crucial that the analysis is contextualised. This is one of the aims of this first chapter. In this chapter, the statement of the problem is also provided; the aim of the study is outlined; the method of research is stated; and the subsequent division of the chapters is presented.

## 1.2 CONTEXT

In order to have an understanding of this study, it is important to contextualise the current situation in South Africa with regards to Adult Basic Education and Training. The policy document for Adult Basic Education and Training issued by the Directorate of Adult Education and Training of the national Department of Education (1997:12), defines ABET as “the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills, attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts”. From this definition it is clear that ABET

is not merely literacy, but it proposes to address a range of social, economic, political and developmental roles, in order to redress the inequalities created by the previous government. ABET is also essential in building the self-esteem, confidence, and dignity of learners. The national Department of Education views ABET as an integral part of lifelong learning to ensure that learners can make use of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learnt through ABET in their daily lives in order to realise and develop their full potential whilst learning within a people-centred and success-centred system. Through ABET, learners can be equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which will assist them in becoming more active participants in their communities, their workplaces and contribute towards the development of South Africa. This study aims to examine whether ABET programmes prepare learners to acquire the language which is needed to achieve this objective. In order for ABET programmes to be effective, they need to be outcomes-based and not content-based. Outcomes-based education aims at developing learners who can problem solve and who can think critically in order to participate in the development of this country in a productive and active way.

The ABET policy is defined within the eight levels delineated by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and provision needs to comprise the seven critical cross-field education and training outcomes defined by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The focus of this study is on the language which is learnt in an ABET programme. This falls within one of the eight learning areas defined by the National Qualifications Framework, namely the *language, literacy and communication* learning area.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In order to research the effectiveness of learning in the area of *language, literacy and communication* within an ABET programme, it is important to analyse the interaction which takes place within a classroom; the type of questions both educators and learners ask; the type of errors learners make in the classroom; and how the educators treat these errors. What is also of paramount importance is whether the language skills learnt in the classroom are transferred to outside the classroom. This study will deal with the above issues.

In any learning situation which takes place in a classroom the dynamics between the parties involved, namely the educator and the learners, can enhance or impede learning. Classroom interaction is pedagogically important as interaction is an indispensable component of every classroom, and as Allwright (1984:159) claims, it is “an inescapable and inescapably crucial aspect of classroom life”. Interaction, however, is not something which is unilaterally in the hands of the educator. Interaction is in fact a co-production involving all the participants in the classroom. He (1984:166) further argues that classroom pedagogy can only progress through interaction which can only be managed jointly by the educator and the learners. However, Ellis (1990:77) and Malamah-Thomas (1987:vii) point out that in reality, educators control and dominate most of the interactions that take place in the classroom.

Many researchers state that the educator’s talking time is around 70%, therefore learners talk much less than their educators and carry out a much narrower range of language functions and are assigned relatively passive roles. Gruenewald and Pollak (1990:46) mention Amidon and Flanders’ “law of two thirds”, where two thirds of the time spent in classrooms is assigned to talk, two thirds of this talking time is taken up by the educator, and two thirds of the educator’s talk involves direct influence (Dunkin and Biddle 1974:54). Waller (1965:229), in fact talks of the didactic voice of authority and boredom where there is no emotion, no wonder, no question, no argument, as it merely imparts facts.

A typical two-phase pattern of natural discourse contrasts with the three-phase pattern found in language classrooms. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) found that this three-phase pattern, known as the IRF (educator *i*nitiation, learner *r*esponse, educator *f*eedback), was the predominant exchange structure in educator-centred discourse. Although learners perform a number of communicative acts when communicating with the educator, Ellis (1990:82) asserts that “the most common communicative act performed by the learner is that of replying to a teacher question”. Traditionally, learning has been seen as the reflex of teaching, where the educator’s action requires a corresponding reaction from the learner. In many situations outside the classroom, learners will be required not only to *respond*, but also to *initiate* and *develop* conversations. According to Ellis (1980:35), this IRF classroom discourse affords practice only in responding and in a narrow range of speech acts. McCarthy (1991:122) confirms this and adds that especially in large classes, learners are

restricted to these responding moves. Learners therefore only have a chance to practise a very impoverished range of utterance functions. He (1991:123) continues by stating that in such language classrooms, “learners rarely get the opportunity to take other than the responding role, and even in cases where students are encouraged to initiate, the follow-up move is often still in the hands of the teacher, and learners get little or no practice in this particular discourse function”.

Interactions between learners in a classroom could either be informal talks about personal issues or formal talks focusing on learning tasks usually initiated by the educator. The frequency with which such interactions occur in the classroom depends on issues such as interpersonal relationships among learners, and the level of communicative freedom which educators find acceptable (Ellis 1980:40). Learner to learner interactions follow the more typical two-phase pattern which is closer to what they would experience outside the classroom. This type of pattern affords learners the opportunity to use the language to initiate as well as respond through the performance of a number of speech acts. It follows that learners should therefore have more discourse opportunities in the classroom to practise using the language by working in pairs and even in groups. This is supported by the outcomes-based approach to education where co-operative learning in groups is promoted in order to facilitate effective learning.

In view of the above perspectives on classroom interaction, the researcher will undertake a classroom analysis in which the educator’s and learners’ language will be analysed to ascertain the interactional patterns which occur in ABET classrooms.

An interactional feature that is a fairly universal characteristic of educator-talk is questions. In addition, questions are a tool to assist learners to become more effective critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and decision makers. These skills assist learners in lifelong learning. As Ellis (1990:78) states, questions are the principal way in which the educator can keep control over the classroom discourse. However, it is imperative for language learning that learners are also afforded the opportunity to ask questions as this is a crucial aspect of communication. Clur (1994:39) aptly captures the importance of asking questions by stating that an individual needs “to learn which questions to ask and how and when to ask questions,



to ensure that he is 'empowered' with all the information needed to be able to resolve daily problems and accept greater responsibility". McCarthy (1991:145) argues that it is probably impossible to attain complete naturalness in the classroom, but it is important for the learner to engage in authentic activities and be taught genuine and naturally occurring structures and vocabulary of real-life talk.

From the classroom interaction analysis, the researcher will identify the types of questions asked by the educator and the learners, as well as establish the ratio between educator questions and learner questions, and how cognitively challenging these questions are. It will also determine whether these questions do in fact promote critical thinking as advocated by the ABET policy.

Brown (1987:169) states that "human learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes". This applies to language learning as well. It is important for ABET educators and curriculum developers to know what type of errors learners tend to make in the classroom. Corder (1967:167) believes that "a learner's errors ..... are significant in [that] they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language". It is the researcher's intention to provide an overview of the type of errors commonly made by learners at each ABET level, and to ascertain whether there are any specific types of errors which occur frequently. This would provide educators and curriculum developers with important information in terms of certain language items which need additional attention or remediation in the classroom.

Learners generally want and expect their errors to be corrected by the educator. Brown (1987:193) points out that too much negative feedback, that is "a barrage of interruptions, corrections, and overt attention to malformations" can often cause learners to stop their attempts at communication. On the other hand, he maintains that too much positive feedback, that is "willingness of the teacher-hearer to let errors go uncorrected, to indicate understanding when understanding may not have occurred" can in fact reinforce the learners' errors.

There is a debate as to whether learners' errors should or should not be treated. This study looks at how educators treat their learners' errors; why errors are treated; when they are treated; how to treat them; which ones to treat; and who should treat them.

Allwright (1984:156) postulates that "communication practice in the classroom is pedagogically useful because it represents a necessary and productive stage in the transfer of classroom learning to the outside world". One cannot expect learners to use what they have learnt in the classroom outside the classroom if they have not had enough opportunities to practice in situations similar to 'real life'. The main objective of education is to achieve a change in behaviour which enhances performance, yet so often, too little effort is put into establishing whether or not this is in fact so. An evaluation of some sort is always taking place as individuals are always making judgments about particular aspects of their lives, and this is true of education as well. Therefore it is important to undertake an evaluation of the learning which takes place in an ABET centre. It is the researcher's intention to undertake an evaluation in which all the stakeholders involved in the learning process take part, in order to determine whether learning is being transferred to the workplace.

Therefore the main issues which will be addressed in this study include:

- an analysis of classroom interaction to ascertain the language functions used in the classroom by the educator and the learners
- the type of questions the educator and the learners ask
- the type of errors made by the learners
- how the educators treat these errors, and
- an evaluation of the effectiveness of learning in an ABET centre.

#### **1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY**

In the light of the problems outlined above, this study aims to critically analyse language learning in the classroom and to explore the implications for andragogic practice in the context of Adult Basic Education and Training classrooms, and to ascertain language learning transfers from the classroom to the outside world.

In order to achieve this overall aim, the researcher will:

- conduct a full classroom interaction analysis in which various linguistic aspects are explored
- analyse the type of questions educators and learners ask
- analyse the type of errors learners make in written and spoken communication
- investigate how educators treat their learners' errors
- evaluate the transfer of learning to the outside world.

## **1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

In order to analyse the interactions that occur in the various ABET classrooms, raw data will be collected by means of video and tape recordings over a period of six months. These recordings will then be transcribed onto paper and categorised for analysis. To describe and analyse the data, a combination and adaptation of various frameworks will be used.

From the classroom interaction analysis, the researcher will:

- explore the various interactional patterns which emerge
- look at Bloom and Sanders question-asking skills hierarchy to identify knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation type questions
- analyse the type of errors which occur in spoken communication
- investigate how educators treat their learners' errors in the classroom.

In addition, the researcher will collect learners' written texts and analyse the errors occurring in order to compile a list of the most commonly occurring errors at the various levels.

In order to evaluate the transfer of language learning from the classroom to the outside

world, the researcher will design three questionnaires:

- A **learner questionnaire** will be used to find out from learners what activities and exercises they enjoyed in the classroom, how much they had learnt from such activities, and how much of this information/knowledge they were able to use outside the classroom. This will be completed by the learners every month over a period of six months.
- An **educator questionnaire** will be used to find out from the educators whether they think there has been a shift in the use of their learners' language.
- A **supervisor/manager questionnaire** will be given to the immediate supervisors or managers of the learners at the ABET centre to ascertain whether there has been a change in the learners' usage of the language outside the classroom. Supervisors complete two questionnaires, one at the beginning of their employees' course and one towards the end of the course.

Furthermore, in order to complete the evaluation process, a questionnaire will be designed for the management of the ABET centre concerned, as well as a questionnaire to be completed by the union concerned.

These are discussed more fully in chapter 3 where the various research instruments are elucidated.

## 1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION

In order to systematize the above, the subsequent chapters of this study are organised as follows: **Chapter 2** deals with a review of the literature, and includes classroom interaction; questions; errors; treatment of errors; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning. The research design and its various attendant components are elucidated in **chapter 3**, followed by an explanation and interpretation of the findings in **chapters 4 and 5**, respectively. In **chapter 6** recommendations arising from the aforementioned are discussed. Finally, in **chapter 7**, some general conclusions and suggestions for future possible research are given.

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Please note that in this study, the female pronoun, *she*, will be used in the odd-numbered chapters, while the male pronoun, *he*, will be used in the even-numbered chapters.

# 2

## review of the literature

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Having outlined the problem to be investigated within the South African context, this chapter deals with different authors' views on the issues referred to in chapter 1, namely classroom interaction; questions; learners' errors; treatment of errors by the educator; and the evaluation of the effectiveness of learning, in order to substantiate or disprove the language learning that took place in an ABET programme.

In the section on classroom interaction, input and interaction are discussed. Input is the language which a learner hears or receives and from which he can learn. Interaction is the discourse jointly constructed by the learner and his interlocutors. Researchers have attempted to provide evidence that it is not so much input (that is, obtaining second language data), as interaction (that is, engaging in communicative activities) that is important for second language acquisition. Various views of input in second language acquisition are presented, and Krashen's Monitor Model of second language learning is explained. Interaction in second language acquisition is elucidated with particular reference to interactional features; the pedagogic importance of interaction; the social nature of interaction; aspects of interaction management and the management of learning; pedagogic implications; and discourse analysis. The discourse which takes place in the classroom is presented by focusing on the educator's as well as the learners' language.

A pivotal interactional feature which occurs frequently in the classroom is the use of questions, both by the educator and by the learners. Therefore, questions are dealt with in the second section of this chapter as questions are fundamental tools to learning a language and communicating. This section explains the different types of questions used in the classroom. Bloom's taxonomy which classifies questions with reference to the development of intellectual or cognitive skills into six categories from the most simple to the most complex is elucidated. Questions relating to the affective domain are also presented and explained. As the way in which the educator asks questions in the classroom plays a critical role in the learners' acquisition of the language, the educator's questioning behaviour is explicated.

The next section of this chapter deals with the errors which learners make in the classroom and how this impacts on the acquisition of language, as well as the interaction which takes place in the classroom. In order to do this, an historical perspective regarding how educators have viewed errors in the classroom is provided; a differentiation is made between errors and mistakes; and the significance of learners' errors is explained. Various sources of learners' errors are presented; the four stages of interlanguage development are explained; and the concept of fossilization is introduced.

Linked to the section on errors, is the issue of how educators treat their learners' errors when they occur in the classroom. The section on treatment of errors explains Vigil and Oller's affective and cognitive feedback model and its application to the teaching and learning situation; various issues such as why errors should be treated; when errors should be treated; how errors should be treated; which errors should be treated; and who should treat errors are highlighted.

What is also important in language learning is to ascertain or evaluate whether the language learning that takes place in the classroom is effective, both in the classroom situation and outside the classroom, that is in the outside world. In this section of the chapter, evaluation is explained; the purpose and role of evaluation are elucidated; the key stakeholders involved in the evaluation process are identified and their roles in the process are explained; different ways of doing an evaluation are presented; and a brief account is given as to what can be

done with the information once the evaluation has taken place.

## **2.2 CLASSROOM INTERACTION**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

This section on classroom interaction provides an historical perspective on interaction; input in second language acquisition (SLA) is presented where the three views of input in SLA are explained, and Krashen's five central hypotheses of his Monitor Model are described, and the input features are presented; interaction in second language acquisition is presented where interactional features, the pedagogic importance of interaction, the social nature of interaction, aspects of interaction management, the management of learning, pedagogic implications, and discourse analysis are elucidated; and the discourse which takes place in the classroom is presented where the educator's language, the educator's paradox, the learners' language, and turn-taking are described.

### **2.2.2 Historical perspective**

An historical perspective of the trends in classroom interaction from audiolingualism in the forties to current views is presented in this section.

Audiolingualism's contribution to language pedagogy was that it stressed the importance of keeping learners active in the classroom. This meant reducing the amount of educator talk and increasing learner talking time. Learners had to talk to each other through group work or pair work. Unfortunately this took the form of highly controlled drills which were not always effective. A shift from what Allwright (1984:156) refers to as "getting them talking to each other", to "getting them communicating" took place. This was known as the *communicative approach*. Allwright (1984:156) offers a few reasons as to why an educator should get learners communicating:

- i. Pedagogically, communication practice in the classroom is very useful as it embodies a productive and necessary stage in transferring what is learnt in the classroom to the outside world. In many cases, learners have to make a big leap from classroom

communication to genuine communication. It therefore makes sense to give learners practice activities designed to simulate real life communication activities.

- ii. The process of communication is a learning process, that is, one learns by communicating. It is by using the language that a learner not only practises communicating but also extends his command of the language. Prabhu's (in Allwright 1984:157) Bangalore/Madras Communicational English Teaching Project is an example of such thinking. In this project, there is no language syllabus, there are no language exercises, but only problems to solve, in English. Furthermore, communication need not be interactive, that is, involving live face-to-face talk. It can involve learners working silently on their own, and even solving communication problems that arise as they figure out the meaning of written instructions.
- iii. Stevick (in Allwright 1984:157) argues that in the learning process, the more deeply we involve the learner, the more effective the learning will be. Communicating ideas which learners find important are likely to assist learning by getting them more deeply involved in what they are doing.
- iv. Learning is enhanced by peer discussion. A higher quality of understanding is likely to result if learners discuss their learning and share their understandings. Discussions may be used to practise discussion skills rather than for deepening the understanding of a discussion topic. There can be discussions of the language itself, rather than a specific chosen topic.

These arguments however, do not establish a strong support for live person-to-person interaction as an absolute necessity for successful language pedagogy, except for the fourth argument, learning through discussion, that entails live person-to-person interaction in the classroom.

### **2.2.3 Input in second language acquisition (SLA)**

In this section the three views of input in second language acquisition are presented; Krashen's Monitor Model and the five central hypotheses emanating from the model are discussed; and input features are explained.



### 2.2.3.1 The three views of input in SLA

According to Ellis (1985:127), it is evident that for second language acquisition to take place, the learners must have some second language (L2) data available as input, and there must be a set of internal learner mechanisms to account for how the L2 data are processed. On the one hand the learner is seen as a "language-producing machine" who automatically and without effort learns a second language, provided he gets the right input data. On the other hand, the learner can be seen as a "grand initiator", that is, he is equipped with those abilities that are needed to find out about the second language, no matter how impoverished the L2 data are. The behaviourists', the nativists', and the interactionists' views of input in section language acquisition are discussed below.

i. **Behaviourists** view the learner as a "language-producing machine". The linguistic environment is seen as the essential deciding component. Input includes the language made available to the learner in the form of stimuli as well as feedback. According to Ellis (1985:128), in the case of stimuli, "the learner's interlocutor models specific forms and patterns which are internalized by the learner imitating them". Hence the availability of appropriate stimuli is an important determining component in SLA. Behaviourist theories stress the need to control the stimuli by ranking the input into a number of steps, so that each step comprises the correct level of difficulty for the level the learner has attained. Feedback shows when the learner's second language utterances are correct and thus reinforces them, and it also shows when the utterances are not well formed by correcting them. Regulating the stimuli and providing feedback model the learning that takes place and bring about the formation of habits.

ii. **Nativists** view the learner as a "grand initiator". They claim that exposure to language cannot adequately explain the acquisition of language, and they assert that input activates the internal mechanisms. Chomsky (in Ellis 1985:128) states that the defective nature of the mother's speech in a child's acquisition of his first language, makes it improbable that he could favourably internalise the rule system of a language if he worked on this alone. The nativist view stresses the importance of learner-internal factors.

iii. **Interactionists** view language acquisition as the result of an interaction between the

learner's mental abilities and the linguistic environment. Dreyer (1990:7) states that "the learner's processing mechanisms both determine and are determined by the nature of the input" and similarly "the quality of the input affects and is affected by the nature of the internal mechanisms". The interaction between the internal and external factors is apparent in the actual verbal interactions in which the learner and his interlocutor engage. Thus, language development is seen as the result of both input factors and innate mechanisms.

### 2.2.3.2 Input

Ellis (1985:138) states that second language "data are made available to the learner in the input he receives". The input is established by the learner as well as by the native speaker. Ellis continues by saying that the feedback the learner produces influences the type of input he subsequently receives from the native speaker. Ellis (1990:96) states that "input refers to the target language samples to which the learner is exposed. It contains the raw data which the learner has to work on in the process of interlanguage construction". Input in terms of foreigner talk for example, involves a number of formal and interactional modifications in native speaker speech. Some of these modifications may lead to ungrammatical speech. The main purpose of foreigner talk is to contribute to effective communication, although it may indirectly serve a teaching function. Foreigner talk arises because of the need to transact and may be the result of universal processes of simplification which are also found in SLA and pidgins. As Sharwood-Smith (in Ellis 1985:138) states, the output of the learner serves as input to his own language processing mechanisms, and as the one has a bearing on the other, it is important to look at the discourse the learner and the native speaker construct together.

The most challenging theory of the second language learning process is Krashen's Monitor Model. Krashen (1982:9) has argued that this provides a general or "overall" theory of second language acquisition with substantial significance to language teaching. His theory begins with a number of assumptions, from which five central hypotheses emanate.

#### i. the acquisition-learning hypothesis

Krashen (1982:10) asserts that adult second language learners have at their disposal two clear ways of developing competence in a second language: *acquisition* - a subconscious process which is the same as the process children use in acquiring their first language; and *learning* -

a conscious process that results in "knowing about" language.

ii. **the natural order hypothesis**

This hypothesis states that we learn the rules of language in a predictable sequence whereby certain rules appear early and others later. In addition, Krashen (1982:12) argued that those whose exposure to a second language is almost all outside a language class do not show a dissimilar order of acquisition from those who have had most of their second language experience within the classroom. This "natural" order of acquiring a language is assumed to be the result of the acquired system, functioning free of conscious grammar.

iii. **the monitor hypothesis**

Learning and acquisition are used in very definite ways in second language performance. The monitor hypothesis specifies that learning has only one role, and that is as a monitor or editor and that learning comes into operation only to make amendments in the form of our utterance, after it has been generated by the acquired system. Acquisition sets the speaker's utterances in motion and is responsible for fluency. Thus the monitor is believed to change the output of the acquired system before or after the utterance is actually written or spoken, but the utterance is initiated completely by the acquired system. Krashen (1982:15) has hypothesized that in order to use the monitor, two conditions must be complied with: (i) the performer must be consciously attentive to correctness, and (ii) he must know the rules. However, both conditions are difficult to meet. This hypothesis has important significance and implications for language teaching. Krashen argued that formal instruction in language affords rule isolation and feedback for the development of the monitor, but that production is based on what is acquired through communication, with the monitor changing production to enhance accuracy toward target language norms. Krashen's viewpoint is that conscious knowledge of rules does not help acquisition, but only allows the learner to refine what has been acquired through communication. The focus of language teaching therefore, should be communication and not rule-learning.

iv. **the input hypothesis**

If it is assumed that learners progress through "natural" developmental sequences, some mechanism is needed to elucidate how they go from one point to another. This is one role of

the input hypothesis. This hypothesis postulates that "humans acquire language in only one way - by understanding messages, or by receiving 'comprehensible input'. ....We move from  $i$ , our current level, to  $i + 1$ , the next level along the natural order, by understanding input containing  $i + 1$ " (Krashen 1985:2). He continues by stating that there are two corollaries of the input hypothesis. Firstly, speaking is a consequence of acquisition and not its cause. Speech cannot be taught directly, but it emanates on its own due to an increase in competence through comprehensible input. Secondly, the required grammar is automatically provided if there is enough input and it is understood by the learner. This implies that the educator need not intentionally teach the next structure along the natural order as it will be provided automatically if the learner receives sufficient comprehensible input. Thus for Krashen, comprehensible input is the route to acquisition, and information about grammar in the target language is automatically available when the input is understood.

#### v. **the affective filter hypothesis**

Comprehensive input is an essential, but not a sufficient condition for successful acquisition. Affective factors are also seen to play an important role in acquiring a second language. The affective domain will be discussed in section 2.3.4. According to the affective filter hypothesis, second language learners may not utilize it if there is a mental block that obstructs them from fully profiting from it. The affective filter acts as a barrier to acquisition: if the filter is "down", the input gets through to the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and becomes acquired competence; if the filter is "up" the input is halted and does not get through to the LAD. Krashen maintains that learners need to be open to the input and that when the affective filter is up, the learners may comprehend what they see and read, but the input will not get through to the LAD. This may occur when the learners are unmotivated, lack confidence, or are concerned with failure. When the learners are relaxed and not anxious, the filter is down.

#### **2.2.3.3 Input features**

According to Ellis (1990:74), the input features in the language of educators include the amount of talk, the rate of speech, vocabulary, the syntactic complexity and correctness. In these studies, the language classroom is seen as instruction in terms of presenting input for acquisition rather than as attempts to attain specific linguistic goals. Delamont (in Ellis

1990:74) notes that research conducted all over the world displays a similar pattern, and that is the educator keeps on talking. The control of the educator's language is most noticeable in classrooms which are educator-centred, where instruction progresses with the whole class in lockstep. What has also been researched is the amount of language directed at individual learners. In her study, Schinke-Llano (1983) found that educators interacted twice as much with native speakers as with second language learners. Kleifgen (1985) found that kindergarten teachers altered the amount of speech directed at individual learners according to their needs in performing different tasks. Educators usually decrease their rate of speaking when they are teaching second language learners. From various studies, Chaudron (in Ellis 1990:75) notes that "the absolute values of speech to beginning learners are around 100 words per minute, while intermediate and advanced learners receive speech which is 30 to 40 words per minute faster". Thus beginner learners receive speech which may assist them in processing.

Educators also adjust their vocabulary in accordance with the learners' levels. Henzl (1979) found that with beginners, lexical items with general meanings replaced items with narrow semantic fields. Colloquial terms were also avoided by the educators and more neutral terms were used.

#### **2.2.4 Interaction in second language acquisition**

This section which deals with interaction in second language acquisition focuses on interactional features; the pedagogic importance of interaction; the social nature of interaction; aspects of interaction management; the management of learning; and pedagogic implications.

Ellis (1990:96) defines interaction as the process of interpersonal communication which involves the efforts of both the learner and the educator. He suggests that input is provided by and made comprehensible through interaction. Accordingly, he states that classroom interaction can contribute to learning in two ways, namely via the learner's reception and understanding of the second language, and via the learner's endeavours to produce samples of the second language.

Classroom interaction is important as it is the crucial and indispensable condition of classroom pedagogy. If no person-to-person interaction occurred in a classroom, it would be maintained that no lesson had taken place at all. The effective management of classroom interaction includes the learners just as it does the educators, since the management of interaction cannot be regarded as a unilateral process. Axiomatically, it is a social matter, a co-production of all the participants. It is often incorrectly assumed that the educator should manage the process, that is, play a strong management or leadership role in the classroom, but, as Corder (in Allwright 1984:159) states, one should not let that conceal the social fact that "no teacher teaches except by consent", and that the learners' role is crucial. Allwright (1984:169) states that "the central fact is that interaction is the process whereby everything that happens in the classroom gets to happen the way it does. Let us make the most of it".

#### **2.2.4.1 Interactional features**

In most classrooms the educator controls most of the interactions that take place. This is evidenced in the prevalence of educator acts over learner acts. Educators open and close interactional exchanges, while learners are often restricted to replying; and educators elicit while learners provide answers. Long and Sato (in Ellis 1990:77) examined the language used by English second language (ESL) educators in classes with beginners and false beginners and contrasted it to the language used in native speaker/non-native-speaker conversations. The results showed that questions were more frequent in foreigner-talk. There can also be differences within an individual educator's practice, according to the type of the activity engaged in. In her study, Mitchell (in Ellis 1990:78) found that the second language was used in organisational instructions (i.e. statements telling the learners how to organise themselves in groups or pairs, what materials to use, etc.) and in disciplinary interventions, whereas the mother tongue was preferred in activity instructions (i.e. statements explaining to learners how to carry out a certain educational activity).

One of the interactional features that is characteristic of educator talk is questions. Questions are one of the main means in which the educator keeps control over the classroom discourse. In a specific study, Barnes (in Ellis 1990:78) found a greater number of factual as opposed to reasoning questions. Closed questions were very common, while open questions were very infrequent. Educators used questions as a tool to derive information they wanted to

communicate. Questions are dealt with in section 2.3.

Another interactional feature of educators' classroom speech originates from the endeavour to interpret the comprehension problems experienced by the learners. Mitchell (in Ellis 1990:78) pinpoints some communication strategies which the educators in her study made use of to reinforce the learners' understanding of unknown items. Strategies that upheld the second language medium include repetition, substitution, explanation, contrast, exemplification, and clue-giving. With beginners, educator talk is usually context-bound, and even with adult learners, the "here-and-now" principle is often observed. Gaies (in Ellis 1990:79) proposed that the educators' language is represented by much the same training strategies to those found in motherese (e.g. using repetition, prompts, modelling and expansions), and may thus assist with learning. However, the kind of adjusted language that characterizes educator talk is undoubtedly not ideal for language learning. Chaudron (in Ellis 1990:79) states that "some kinds of modification - in input and interaction - can result in either ambiguous oversimplification or redundant over-elaboration. In such cases the learner finds it more rather than less difficult to understand. Learners may also react negatively to simplified teacher language".

#### **2.2.4.2 The pedagogic importance of interaction**

Allwright (1984:159) states quite bluntly that "classroom interaction is important because interaction is the *sine qua non* of classroom pedagogy". He continues by asserting that there is no point in being "for" or "against" interaction, as it is an inevitable and critical feature of classroom life. He also maintains that this is interaction in terms of pedagogy itself, in the most general sense that all classroom pedagogy advances through a process of interaction, and can only advance in this way. Successful pedagogy embraces the effective management of classroom interaction.

#### **2.2.4.3 The social nature of interaction**

Very often classroom interaction is seen as something entirely in the hands of the educator. Allwright (1984:159) maintains that "the problem is that official responsibility for classroom interaction may be given to the teacher, and the teacher may take that responsibility very seriously, but nothing will alter the fact that interaction, by definition and in practice, is a co-

production”, that is, the outcome of the action of all the parties involved. To interact means *to act on each other*. Classroom lessons are socially constructed issues no matter how tenaciously any one participant may take control, and the mere fact that there is a participant is in itself a contribution to the management of the interaction. Contributing to the management of classroom interaction is not subject to a participant speaking in the class - in fact, an absence of speaking may even have an effect. This concept of interaction is in contrast to the audiolingual's view mentioned in 2.2.2 of "getting them talking to each other." This looks at the social nature of classroom behaviour which, as Allwright (1984:160) states, is in a sense typically “far removed from considerations of teaching techniques themselves”. The learner’s involvement in the management of interaction offers communication practice, that is practice in using the language communicatively.

#### **2.2.4.4 Aspects of interaction management**

Allwright (1984:161) offers five aspects of interaction management which the educator and the learners have to cope with simultaneously when co-producing the lesson in the classroom:

- i. *Turn-management* refers to each individual input
- ii. *Topic-management* refers to the content of each input
- iii. *Task-management* refers to the demands any one participant may make on other participants
- iv. *Tone-management* refers to the important business of creating the apposite socio-emotional atmosphere for the interaction
- v. *Code-management* refers to the management of the basic means of intentional communication - most obviously the language itself.

#### **2.2.4.5 The management of learning**

Allwright (1984:163) asserts that it is expected that educators take the responsibility for successful interaction in the classroom and for advancing learning as well as organising the classroom so that learning can take place. With management of learning, however, where co-production is vital, learners must be contributors to the management of their own learning. In many cases, with each lesson, the language educator brings precise learning management plans to the classroom, whereas learners often come with no specific plans of



their own. Therefore, the learners' contributions to the management of their learning are inclined to be reactive.

The input to classroom language learning that is accessible through the process of classroom interaction is not restricted to occurrences in the target language. There is also input in the form of guidance. Some of the guidance provided is planned, but much of it is due to the interactive process. Allwright (1984:165) distinguishes three major types of guidance:

- i. Explanations or descriptions of target language issues. Many educators prepare to present these as part of the lesson, but often learners may ask for them.
- ii. Clues or hints aimed at drawing attention to criterial characteristics of the target language. An example is underlining words on the board. Again, educators may prepare which clues to present, but learners may ask for explanations.
- iii. Simple feedback through which learners need to know whether or not the "samples" they present are correct. He also claims that feedback given to one learner can be beneficial to other learners as well.

The guidance and the samples occurring in the classroom interaction make up the input, and are the result of the interactive process. These are regulated by classroom interaction and not by the original pre-class decision making.

#### **2.2.4.6 Pedagogic implications**

Allwright (1984:166) believes that by getting involved in the management of their own learning, learners can get better instruction which is more finely tuned and adapted to their own personal learning needs. Many educators do not seem to accept that their learners can make a positive contribution to the instructional process. In fact, many educators avoid asking what their learners' needs are, based on the rationale that their learners don't know what they want anyway. Through the everyday interactive process, learners already express their needs, and if educators become aware of this, their respect for their learners would be elevated. This enhanced respect could contribute to elevated self-respect for the learners themselves, since "any individual's self-esteem is at least partly dependent on his or her perception of the esteem of others" (Allwright 1984:167). If educators have enhanced respect for their learners, this will become apparent in classroom interaction. Even without being aware of or consciously planning it, enhanced respect could transpire through any or

all of the five aspects of interaction management mentioned earlier. If learners gain enhanced self-respect, this could relate to improved learning. Allwright (1984:167) states if a learner has more self-respect, he could for example, be more willing to take risks as his fear of failure is diminished. This would reflect directly in his behaviour in the classroom. Generally, learners with enhanced self-respect are more eager to recognize that their learning is something over which they can exert more control, and for which they are responsible. If an educator gives his learners reason to believe that they are not good enough to accept this responsibility, it cannot be expected that these learners will make an important contribution to the management of their own learning. If the educator however, shows respect, the chances are improved that his learners will respond positively and recognize that only they can do the learning. Since the mechanism of respect and self-esteem function below the level of consciousness, the above implications are not dependent on the calculated action on anyone's part.

If an educator is consciously aware of his learners' contributions to the management of their learning, he could try to ensure that he is not getting in their way. At the same time, he cannot leave them in a vacuum. Allwright (1984:168) suggests a new role for the language educator - that of "learner-trainer". Many learners need assistance on how to be competent and efficient managers of their own learning. Initially, it may appear to the educator that learners are in the classroom to train as language learners. He maintains that educators should be training learners "for a lifetime of out-of-class language learning, and it would be missing a great opportunity if we merely trained them to profit from classroom instruction". This links with the concept of lifelong learning mentioned earlier. However, time spent on learner-training may, at the time, appear to be an unsuitable digression from the language learning itself, and learners may be eager to get on with learning the language and following the set syllabus.

Over the last few decades, there has been a growing interest in studies of language interaction inside the classroom. These studies have varied the extent to which they have related their analytical categories to the linguistic data. Flanders (in Sinclair & Coulthard 1975:15) for example, focused on what educators say inside the classroom and the effects for learner achievement and participation. Some of the categories in his system were closely

linked to linguistic data: asking questions, lecturing, and giving directions, while other categories were of a different type and at a different level of abstraction: accepting, feeling, praising or encouraging. Barnes (in Sinclair & Coulthard 1975:15) made comprehensive observations on the types of questions educators ask and the way in which these restrain learners' thinking and contribution. He does not set out to investigate all the language in the classroom but only those aspects which he has found to be interesting and pertinent.

Bellack *et al.* (in Sinclair & Coulthard 1975:17) suggested four major categories into which the verbal actions of educators and learners can be categorised. They called these actions pedagogical moves and categorised them in terms of the pedagogical functions they carry out in classroom discourse. These moves are soliciting, responding, structuring, and reacting. Moves link together to form cycles. A cycle starts with a structuring or soliciting move and has one or more responding and reacting moves. This continues until the following structuring or soliciting move, which starts a new cycle.

#### **2.2.4.7 Discourse analysis**

Input and interaction have been discussed in the previous sections. In this section, various authors' views on analysing the discourse which takes place between educators and their learners will be explained. Discourse analysis takes into account both the educator's and the learners' contributions. Ellis (1985:146) states that "it aims to describe not just the function of individual utterances, but how these utterances combine to form larger discursual units. Also it seeks to account for all the data avoiding a 'rag bag' category for coding awkward utterances which do not fit any of the other categories". The analysis of classroom discourse concentrates on a specific type - the three-phase discourse which is common in educator-centred classrooms. This three-phase discourse includes exchanges in which the educator *initiates*, the learner *responds*, and the educator provides *feedback*. This is known as the IRF pattern where the educator takes control of the lesson content and management. Barnes (in Ellis 1985:147) points out that the educator aims at both conveying knowledge he has (and presumes his learners do not) and stressing his social role as the authority figure of all classroom behaviour. In an IRF pattern, the opportunity of negotiating meaning is severely restrained. Burton (1981:63) summarizes the discourse that results from this: "Inside the classroom all parties are agreed that time will be spent in the transfer of information from

teacher to pupils, with a ritualised structure of informatives, elicitations and directives, etc. to be employed by the teacher to that end, and a set of appropriate reciprocal acts and moves to be employed by the pupils to assist in the attainment of the teacher's end." McTear (in Ellis 1985:147) has found that an optional learner response takes place after the educator's feedback move, producing an IRF(R) structure. He suggests that the learner may be taking the opportunity to repeat and practise the language. He distinguishes four types of language use: *mechanical* in which there are no exchanges of meaning; *meaningful* in which language usage is contextualised but still no real information is communicated; *pseudo-communicative* where information is exchanged but in such a way that would not be likely to be found outside the classroom; and *real communication* that contains unconstrained natural speech. Pedagogic discourse is generated by *mechanical* and *meaningful* language uses, natural discourse by *real communication*, while *pseudo-communication* falls somewhere in between.

Pedagogic discourse and natural discourse should be considered as two poles of a continuum rather than as alternatives. Kramsch (in Ellis 1990:86) discusses instructional discourse and natural discourse. Instructional discourse takes place when the educator and the learners perform institutional roles, the tasks relate to the sending and receiving of information controlled by the educator and the focus is on accuracy and on knowledge as a product. Natural discourse is represented by much more fluid roles created through interaction, tasks that foster equal contribution in the negotiation of meaning and the focus is on fluency and on the interactional process itself.

Gremmo *et al.* (1978:63) state that because the educator assumes a central position, the type of discourse which typically takes place is distorted, and even in communicative activities where one learner is supposed to talk to another learner, there are severe restraints. They also assert that the classroom only teaches learners how to respond, and that it does not prepare them for interactions outside the classroom, where they should initiate discourse. Analysing classroom discourse involving second language learners shows the combined contributions of educator and learners, rather than concentrating only on the educator's language. It can assist in pointing out how meaning is negotiated in a classroom environment, and how the input is moulded according to the needs of the learner's language-processing mechanisms. Learner-centred teaching can lead to interactions similar to those

found in natural settings.

### **2.2.5 Classroom discourse**

This section on classroom discourse looks at the educator's language; the educator's paradox; the learners' language; and turn-taking in the classroom.

#### **2.2.5.1 The educator's language**

Ellis (1990:70) claims that the educator usually controls classroom interaction where the role relationship between the educator and his learners is asymmetrical. In a formal school, the teacher has a superior status because he is older than his pupils and because it is assumed that he knows more about the subject he is teaching. In ABET, however, educators are often younger than their learners. The educator also has the ultimate accountability and responsibility for managing the interaction in the classroom. Because of these factors, the educator speaks more than his learners - it is estimated at around 70 per cent of the time. He usually directs the turn-taking by assuming a role much the same as that of a chairperson in a formal meeting and he takes charge of the discourse topic by means of asking questions.

#### **2.2.5.2 The educator's paradox**

The discourse that emanates from efforts to teach the target language is not the same as the discourse that takes place naturally outside the classroom. Edmondson (1985:162) refers to "the teacher's paradox", which states that "we seek in the classroom to teach people how to talk when they are not being taught." This paradox culminates in a strain between discourse that is apposite to pedagogic goals and discourse that is apposite to pedagogic settings. The educator, on the one hand, can devise certain activities for discourse to take place where the learner functions and behaves as a learner, while on the other hand he can devise activities for the learner to function and behave in roles other than that of the learner, that is, by giving tasks that stimulate genuine communication. According to Ellis (1990:85), the classroom has "co-existing discourse worlds", depending on whether the learners are undertaking the act of learning or the act of communicating.

### **2.2.5.3 The learners' language**

Learners usually talk far less than educators and carry out a much narrower range of language functions. The critical issue seems to be the extent to which the learner or the educator dominates the discourse. In a study, Barnes (in Ellis 1990:81) found that when the educator stopped controlling the moment by moment advancement of the discussion, the native-speaking learners “produced language that was marked by a rich vocabulary, complexity and a range of grammatical structures and long utterances”. Cathcart (in Ellis 1990:81) arrived at similar conclusions with non-native learners. Their achievement in this type of discourse is different to their achievement in natural discourse. House (in Ellis 1990:81) observed that where the educator performed as a manager of the talk, the learners assumed relatively passive roles. Learners learn how to engage in classroom discourse.

The most frequent communicative act carried out by a learner is responding to the educator's questions. Brock (in Ellis 1990:82) noticed that learners' responses to open questions were longer and syntactically more complex than responses to closed questions. Although responding to questions is the primary communicative act, learners carry out other acts, even when communicating with the educator. In the classroom, for example, where the target language not only acts as a pedagogic norm but also as a means of managing classroom business, learners have the opportunity to carry out a large number of speech acts. When the educator and learner are jointly involved in fulfilling some task, the learner has the opportunity to start a greater number of language acts.

Another aspect to the study of learner language in the classroom is to consider communication strategies. Ellis (1990:82) defines these as “attempts by the learner to overcome communication problems by compensating for a lack of linguistic knowledge”. From their study, Rosing-Schow and Haastrup (in Ellis 1990:83) concluded that “the content and structure of most language classes do not encourage the use of a wide variety of communication strategies and therefore do not equip the learners for participation in ordinary face-to-face interaction”. Other researchers, however, affirm that learners' do in fact use communication strategies. Whether these opportunities emerge may be determined by the educator's commitment to using the target language for communication.

Gaies (in Ellis 1990:83) examines 'learner feedback' which he defines as "information provided by a learner to a teacher about the comprehensibility and usefulness of some prior teaching utterance(s)." He looks at learner language from the educator's point of view, and claims that even in educator-dominated classes "the learners negotiate the input they receive by providing feedback".

The ethnic and cultural backgrounds of learners are likely to give rise to individual differences in learner language. Regardless of ethnicity and culture, learners vary in the extent to which they are willing to risk themselves in front of the whole class. Some learners become anxious when the educator calls on them to answer a question and even try to refrain from speaking if possible.

#### **2.2.5.4 Turn-taking**

Several researchers refer to the timing of learners' interactions. They point out that interaction in the classroom is not casual and accidental. In particular, the matter of who speaks and when is determined and directed by regularities of some kind, whether one calls them regulations, rules, conventions or routines. This non-randomness is most likely typical of all interaction anywhere, but sometimes there appears to be more restraints than at other times. Everyday conversation between friends is less inhibited in terms of who speaks when than a cross-examination in a courtroom. Turn-taking analyses the systematic nature of speaker exchange in different settings. In doing so it looks at a basic problem of discourse analysis, formulated by Labov (in Van Lier 1988:94) as the question of "how one utterance follows another in a rational, rule-governed manner".

Sacks *et al.* (in Ellis 1990:86) pinpointed some rules which have provided a yardstick for the application of turn-taking in the classroom. One of these rules is that only one person speaks at a time. Other rules are concerned with how speaker-change is managed and negotiated. A speaker can choose the next speaker by selecting him, or by producing the first part of an adjacency pair. In general conversation, turn-taking is conducted by self-regulated competition and initiative; speakers look out for opportunities to take the floor and, once they gain it, try to keep to it even though there may be other speakers who want it. This means that whenever participants are eager to talk there is a tendency on the part of the

hearers to diminish the size of a turn, coupled with a tendency on the part of the actual speaker to maximize it. At the same time, there is a restraint against interrupting.

There are also rules controlling the exact moment when a speaker can enter or re-enter the conversation. Ellis (1990:87) states that in classrooms there is a need to keep centralised attention which is usually managed by the educator; the content of the lessons is pre-planned, the actual order of utterances may be decided beforehand and the consideration of retaining the official topic impedes small-talk. Very often, classroom discourse is arranged in such a way that there is a rigid allocation of turns to handle potential transition and distribution problems. In other words, who speaks to whom at what time is strictly managed, and as a result, less turn-by-turn negotiation, competition and individual learner initiatives are thwarted.

In his study of turn-taking, Lörcher (in Ellis 1990:87) emphasizes the contrasts between conversational and pedagogic discourse, where in the case of openings, some differences between classroom and natural discourse were found. The openings had a simpler formation, they were not dealt with co-operatively, the topic was decided by the educator and the learners never tried to delay the topic. The turn-taking regulations he came across were also different. In the classroom, turns were assigned by the educator, the right to speak always reverted to the educator when a learner's turn ended and the educator had the right to stop or intrude on a learner's turn.

Ellis (1990:87) states that the educator's perception of his role as educator influences the type of interactions which take place in the classroom. If the educator sees himself as a 'knower', disseminating knowledge to the learners, turn-taking is regulated very strictly; whereas if the educator sees himself as a 'facilitator' of self-directed second language acquisition, turn-taking is probably negotiated in a way which is similar to ordinary conversations.

### **2.2.6 Summary**

This section on classroom interaction provided an historical perspective on interaction; input in second language acquisition was presented where the three views of input in SLA were



explained, and Krashen's five central hypotheses of his Monitor Model were described, and the input features were presented; interaction in second language acquisition was presented where interactional features, the pedagogic importance of interaction, the social nature of interaction, aspects of interaction management, the management of learning, pedagogic implications, and discourse analysis were elucidated; and the discourse which takes place in the classroom was presented where the educator's language, the educator's paradox, the learners' language, and turn-taking were described. The next section deals with different aspects of questions.

## **2.3 QUESTIONS**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

In this section on questioning, an overview of questions will be provided; the classification systems which determine the cognitive and affective thought processes a question elicits will be explained; and the questioning behaviour of an educator will be addressed. This section also includes issues such as constructing the question, asking the question, timing, attending to the learners' answers, and follow-up questions.

### **2.3.2 Overview**

Despite the fact that questioning has been used in the teaching-learning situation for so many centuries, it is difficult to define exactly what makes up a question. Brown (1975:103) provides a rough description in saying that a question could be "any statement which tests or creates knowledge in the learner". It can be agreed that questions are statements which in many cases require a response. Kisko and Iyortsuun (1982:2) state that "questions require the demonstration and then defence or justification of knowledge and beliefs". Peter Abelard, a twelfth century scholar, gave the following advice regarding questioning: "The first key to wisdom is called questioning, diligent and unceasing. By doubting we are led to enquiry; by enquiry we perceive truth" (Walters 1990:67); while Cunningham (in Kerry 1982:34) states that "questioning is one of the best ways for you to express humanistic attitudes involving respect for (learners') ideas, freedom of choice, self-expression and

honesty ... Most suggested approaches to teaching today encourage the teacher to act as a guide to learning. One does this primarily through questioning".

### **2.3.2.1 Different types of questions**

Questions are the nucleus around which all communication between educators and learners takes place. Questions are an integral and indispensable means of teaching, and they lie at the very heart of promoting and fostering critical thinking abilities in learners. In their glossary, Gruenewald and Pollak (1990) define critical thinking as thinking which "involves evaluation of information and requires accumulations of information to hypothesize solutions to problems". In adult education, it is of the utmost importance for educators to assist learners to solve their problems, because, as Rothwell and Snedi (1992:336) state "unsolved problems create uncomfortable ambiguity for learners".

Different types of questions stimulate different kinds of thinking, and it is therefore crucial for the educator to be aware of the purpose of his questions. In sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4, different types of cognitive and affective questions will be discussed, and a differentiation between higher and lower order questions is provided. By planning the purpose of his questions, it becomes easier for the educator to formulate his questions. It is important for an educator to ask himself the following questions when preparing a lesson: *What type of information do the questions I ask elicit? What type of thought processes are prompted by these questions? From the questions I ask, are my learners required to restate or repeat ideas, or do they have to use their own ideas in forming opinions and solving problems?* Kerry (1982:6) aptly captures the importance of preparing questions by stating that "without adequate preparation and forethought an inexperienced questioner will simply fail to pursue a satisfactory train of thought".

People in different societies view questions differently. In some societies, learners are expected to listen passively to what the educator says and only ask very few questions - the educator is seen as the "fountain of knowledge" whose knowledge cannot be questioned or challenged. In other societies, it is quite proper for learners to challenge the ideas and decisions made by the educator. As there is an implied challenge in questions, it is important for the educator to ascertain the most appropriate role for questions in the classroom.

Chipman and Segal (1985:5) observe that " ... the development of higher cognitive skills that enable students to be independent learners and independent, creative, problem-solving users of their knowledge has always been a very important goal for educators". However, many educators place a great focus on memory learning which requires learners to merely repeat information and facts memorised earlier. In fact, Pate and Bremer (in Kerry 1982:5) have shown that many educators consider questions to be designed to check learners' specific recall of facts. The higher levels of thinking that direct learners "to find relationships between ideas, draw inferences, explain facts, make judgments, form generalisations, interpret, apply skills and understandings to new situations, analyse, and create new ideas; all of which are necessary for the development of critical thinking" (Kissock and Iyortsuun 1982:3) are neglected. Educators often also neglect the affective side of learning which guides learners to consider values, attitudes, feelings, interests, beliefs and emotions which influence their actions.

### **2.3.2.2 Problems associated with questions**

Some educators believe that their learners are not capable of reasoning at higher levels of thinking, and as a result do not lead their learners in this direction. Many educators are reluctant to ask questions which provoke thought and they tend to feel more secure with information activities in which the progress of all learners can be measured against a common background. In asking a question, the educator assumes that a learner or learners will answer. If learners, however, are used to answering in limited monosyllables or are not encouraged to talk, it becomes difficult for the educator to use questions effectively as a teaching tool. It follows that it is of great importance to encourage learners to talk - and ask questions - in the classroom - and this does not mean the social 'chit chat' of classroom life. It is important for the educator to set the tone for classroom talk and provide opportunities for learners to talk back. Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:118) state that "it is through the acts of questioning and using information that knowledge gets its vitality; but many teachers emphasise having students know information instead of making use of it". The result is that learners are not encouraged to ask questions in the classroom. It is typical in a classroom to find the educator providing all the information and asking most of the questions. As was seen in section 2.2.4.7 on discourse analysis, the typical IRF classroom pattern of interaction is one in which the educator talks, the learner answers, and the educator makes another

comment or provides feedback. Jensen (1995a:134) states that most of these question-answer interactions in the typical classroom environment are of minimal, if any, benefit to the learner. This is not sufficient for lifelong learning where learners need the tools to be able to ask questions and discover answers. Learners also need to learn the art of questioning, therefore educators need to pay special attention in assisting their learners in developing this skill. Educators ask questions to stimulate their learners' thinking, while learners ask questions to gather data, solve problems, form conclusions, and develop opinions. When learners ask questions, educators must not see this as their authority or knowledge being challenged. Educators cannot and in fact must not dampen their learners' curiosity and willingness to pursue ideas and thoughts of their own.

Furthermore, it is common to find educators who have not received adequate training in questioning techniques and rely on easily phrased and presented memory questions. These questions do not assist learners to develop problem solving skills, to understand different situations, to consider values, and to determine proper actions. In fact, Gruenewald and Pollak (1990:50) state that the educator's "question-asking ability can extend a student's thinking and increase his or her ability to solve problems". Memory questions therefore do not prepare learners to become more involved citizens in ever-changing communities; and also to be involved in a world where more routine-type tasks are being replaced by machines, and people are expected to operate at higher levels of thinking. Educators who have been well trained in questioning techniques are better able to raise the level of learner achievement as well as create a more effective learning environment in the classroom. Walters (1990:68) quotes Burton who says that "the person who has ideas, thoughts, different viewpoints, notions of real values, and real purposes and aims in mind, will ask questions in keeping with profitable achievement". Walters concludes by saying: "therefore, when we say that a teacher's questions are poor, we mean that his/her knowledge and thinking are poor". The researcher believes that this view is excessive, and that often educators *do* have the knowledge as well as good thinking skills, but they have not been trained sufficiently to convert this knowledge into acceptably formulated questions. It is important for educators to receive training on how to ask *good* questions and know how to utilize them appropriately.

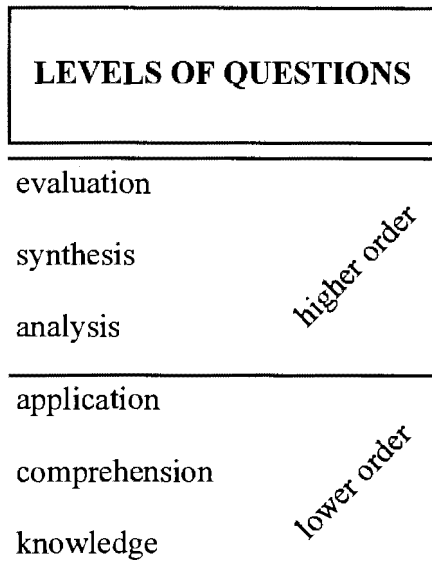
To develop higher levels of thinking the educator needs to give learners the opportunity to

think for themselves by asking and answering questions which go beyond the recall of information presented to them. The educator needs to encourage learners to think critically by giving them the opportunity and freedom to ask questions which interest them. An excess of lower order questions, discussed in section 2.3.3, cannot assist learners in solving problems, yet solving problems is a vital life skill, particularly to the adult learner. Jensen (1995a:144) quotes Denney who says that “problem-solving is to the brain what aerobic exercise is to the body”. Biologically, Jensen states that problem solving “creates a virtual explosion of activity, causing synapses to form, neurotransmitters to activate and blood flow to increase”. In addition, the educator also needs to guide learners in thinking about their learning and the learning process. Asking questions is not, in fact, unique to educators - all humans use questions in all walks of life so that they can learn about their world, find information, and solve problems.

Interactive educators - as opposed to didactic educators who try to control the learning process to the maximum degree - use questions to stimulate learners and to develop certain kinds of thinking. Rather than using questioning to drill or check that learners have mastered a specific learning unit, interactive educators get learners to take part in discussions with highly-defined response questions. The educator listens to what the learners say and then extends that through higher level questions.

### **2.3.3 Questioning in the cognitive domain**

One of the best-known and widely referenced classifications of questions, is Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956). According to McNeil and Wiles (1990:77), "it classifies the uses of knowledge and the development of intellectual skills into six categories arranged from the most simple (knowledge) to the most complex (evaluation) functions". The skills at the upper level cannot be mastered until the lower level skills have been learned. The taxonomy can be graphically represented as follows:



The knowledge, comprehension and application levels are classified as lower order questions, while the analysis, synthesis and evaluation levels are classified as higher order questions. The lower order questions test knowledge, for example *Is it dark at half past four?*, and usually there are simple answers to these types of questions. These questions require the learners to recall information from their existing knowledge. Learners are not expected to develop or use their own ideas. Higher order questions usually create new knowledge in the learner, for example *What do you think will be the best way of doing it?* This requires the learner to consider different points of view and perspectives and arrive at an equitable and rational opinion or conclusion. These questions require the learners to manipulate information for some reason. To effectively answer a higher order question, learners may recall or be given information, but they must also go beyond that and manipulate it in order to produce an answer which is different in form and organisation to the one they previously encountered. In order to answer a higher order question, learners use cognitive processes of the highest order, for example originality and creativity. Perrott (1982:48) states that "higher-order answers may be judged by such standards as logic, rationality and objectivity on scales from good to bad, but are less susceptible to single judgments of right or wrong". This could in fact be one of the reasons why educators tend to focus on lower order questions where in most cases there is either a right or a wrong answer.

It therefore makes sense that educators should ask many higher order questions in order to stimulate their learners' highest levels of thinking. However, Brown (1975:103) points out

that it is very surprising that most educators seldom use higher order questions and they tend to ask questions in the lower order category.

Perrott (1982:55) states that "while both types of questions have their part to play in teaching; a heavy reliance on lower-order questioning encourages rote learning and does little to develop higher-order thinking processes".

Turney *et al.* (1973:34) state that at least eleven studies have examined the relationship between the educator's use of lower and higher order questions and the behaviour of their learners. Most of these studies found that the cognitive levels of the learners' contributions were closely related to the types of cognitive demands made by the educator's questions. They conclude that "the evidence appears strong that teachers can raise the level of classroom discussion through the use of higher-order questions". However, Nuthall and Lawrence (1965) and Tisher (1970) found evidence in their studies that questions which demand more complex types of explaining are frequently followed by incongruent answers from learners at the lower levels. An important issue which educators need to keep in mind is to judge the extent to which learners are able to answer appropriately to certain types of higher order questions. This is substantiated by Turney *et al.* (1973:35) who conclude that educators "might well need to develop the ability to formulate higher-order questions but they will also need to know when it is appropriate to use them".

When an educator uses Bloom's taxonomy, it is not always necessary for him to place each question he asks into only one level of thought. While preparing lessons, it is more important for the educator to bear in mind this hierarchy and be aware of the general thought processes learners are required to use. Kisko and Iyortsuun (1982:22) point out that by "using the hierarchy in this way teachers can determine if students can answer questions on lower levels of thought before expecting them to give good responses to questions at the higher levels, without taking time to precisely classify each question". It is very important for the context or setting to be known before questions can be put into different levels of the domain, and decide what thought processes they stimulate.

The different lower order (knowledge, comprehension, application) and higher order

(analysis, synthesis, evaluation) questions according to Bloom's taxonomy will be discussed.

- **Knowledge**

When the aim of a question is to find out whether the learners remember certain specific facts, then knowledge or memory questions are asked. An answer to a knowledge question does not go beyond the information which had been presented previously, nor does the form of the information change. Learners only need to recite, recall, recognise or repeat information which was previously presented to them. This information could be knowledge of isolated facts, a certain procedure, an order, a classification system, or certain criteria, but a learner is not expected to understand the reasons for, or applications of, them. It is easy for the educator to judge whether the answer is correct or incorrect as it can easily be compared to the original source. What is also included in this category is information which is acquired through life's everyday experiences. There are two types of knowledge questions: binary questions which require a *yes* or *no* answer; and recall questions which require a word, a phrase or a sentence as an answer. Binary questions allow a 50% chance of guessing correctly and there is no real deep thinking involved. Questions at this level are easy for the educator to construct and are therefore the most commonly used question type asked in the classroom. The responsibility for learning is on the educator, and as Gruenewald and Pollak (1990:50) state, "because all content is given within the question, the student's only responsibility is to supply the one correct answer". The focus on knowledge outcomes is therefore the act of recalling or remembering information. It may appear that it is unsuitable to use knowledge type questions, but this is not the case. The knowledge category is very important for other levels of thinking, as educators cannot expect learners to think at higher cognitive levels without having basic and fundamental knowledge. Kisko and Iyortsuun (1982:24) highlight that "only facts and information which are judged to be of value to students when working at higher levels of thought should be emphasized". The main drawback with this category is that educators tend to use too many knowledge questions in the classroom. Another drawback which Perrott (1982:42) points out, is that knowledge questions "assess only a superficial understanding", and "much of what is memorized is rapidly forgotten". Furthermore, in classes where there is a predominant use of knowledge questions, independent thinking is not fostered.



- **Comprehension**

This is the first level of understanding in which learners are not only asked to recall information, but they are required to understand the meaning as well. Comprehension questions are asked to test the learners' understanding of the content, and to help them organise facts in such a way as to make some sense of them. Comprehension questions require learners to choose those facts which are suitable, so that they can describe and compare information. These questions may also require learners to translate ideas from one form of communication to another, for example to interpret a graph or a bus timetable.

What is important here is that before learners can answer a comprehension question, they should already know the facts or have the information necessary to answer.

- **Application**

Application questions are asked when the educator's purpose is to encourage learners to apply and make use of information they have already learned in order to arrive at an answer to a problem. Learners are thus required to apply a rule or a process in order to answer the question. Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:42) state that "in the classroom problems are presented to increase student interest in lessons and help them learn how to use information when new situations are encountered". Particularly in ABET, educators should place great emphasis on encouraging their learners to engage in real-life situations. This implies that educators create opportunities for their learners to solve problems by applying the knowledge or skills they have learned to new situations they encounter. It is clear that answers to application questions require more thinking time on the learners' part as they also need to develop their learning skills as well as apply the skill of self-discovery. Education is not complete if learners only focus on knowledge without applying it to given situations.

- **Analysis**

The underlying idea of the analysis level is the desire to know *why*. Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:50) point out that "when we analyse something we look at the pieces that make it up. We determine what those pieces are, how they are related to each other, and what holds them together". Analysis questions are asked when the educator's purpose is to assist learners to analyse information for underlying reasons such as cause and effect. Perrott (1982:44) provides some other reasons for asking analysis questions:

- i. to identify motives, reasons and causes for a specific incident or event
- ii. to examine and analyse available information so that a conclusion can be reached
- iii. to analyse a conclusion or inference based on evidence.

An analysis question encourages orderly and abstract thinking and learners need to give reasons based on their knowledge of parts, that is, learners need to take information apart and make relations by finding hidden meanings or reading between the lines. Verster and Potgieter (1991:92) state that learners are required "to examine evidence, to make deductions from that evidence, and to organize and express their ideas in a meaningful way". As an analysis question requires critical thinking, a learner cannot answer this type of question by merely repeating information. In most cases there is no single correct answer which can be obtained by merely remembering instructional information. This type of question is possibly the most important as it requires inferences and the use of syllogisms. Knowledge of a single fact does not have much value beyond describing a certain situation, but discovering an underlying principle is very useful in solving problems. Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:52) emphasise that, particularly with adults in ABET, analysis questions "will make them better able to judge what they read and are told by other people", and this ability is vital in forming valid judgments. Learners often give short or incomplete answers to analysis questions, so the educator must use prompting and probing techniques to assist them. These techniques will be discussed in section 2.3.5.5.

- **Synthesis**

An educator asks synthesis questions when he wants his learners to form relationships and put ideas and information together in new and original ways, in other words, learners need to organise elements together and present them as a structural whole. It is the bringing together, or synthesizing, of information. These type of questions help learners develop their creative thinking skills. Brown (1975:113) states that synthesis questions stimulate the learners' creative potential, while Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:59) assert that "though creativity plays a part, the test of synthesis thinking is the nature of the product that is developed". This product must be something which is new to the learner. Learners should be encouraged to be original and unique in their answers, and very often more than one answer is possible. Although application questions also require learners to solve problems,

synthesis questions may not only have one, but a variety of correct answers. An educator should encourage his learners to produce many different answers and he should be open to all these answers which can then be analysed and evaluated. It is important for the educator to provide the correct environment which is conducive to creative and abstract thinking so that the learners feel free to think for themselves, and they know that they are allowed to make mistakes. Even though the educator may know that an idea won't work or doesn't sound too logical, learners must know that they have a chance to express their ideas. McNeil and Wiles (1990:214) make a very appropriate comment when they say that learners "are asked to construct or create something not previously present in the discussion", and the researcher particularly emphasizes *not previously present*. The answers to synthesis questions require time for reflection - they cannot be answered within a couple of seconds. Timing is discussed in section 2.3.5.3.

- **Evaluation**

An evaluation question is asked when the educator wants to assist his learners to choose among alternatives by judging which alternative best fits some stated value; or to establish appropriate standards or values; or to make a choice, and to ascertain how closely their ideas or aims meet these standards. There may be more than one answer to an evaluation question as learners may be asked to give an opinion, give a solution to a problem, or to judge the worth or merit of an idea or concept.

Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:66) point out that there are two levels of evaluation questions. The first one is a lower level evaluation question which requires a simple answer without any standards for the judgment being given. These questions can be answered with a *yes* or a *no* answer, for example, *did you enjoy reading that book?*, and the learner only needs to remember a feeling he had whilst reading the book. Higher level evaluation questions require logical and rational thinking in order to arrive at a more careful and valid answer. As with other higher order cognitive questions, the answer given initially by learners may not be of a high quality, so it is important for the educator to probe deeper in order to get the full answer, so that learners can also see that there are many ways of looking at and solving a problem. This then helps learners to consider different viewpoints and come to more rational opinions. Brown (1975:113) makes a very apt statement which relates directly to learners in

ABET when he states that "any civilization concerned with change and improvement must foster this form of questioning". See footnote 1.

### **2.3.4 Questioning in the affective domain**

*Affect* refers to feelings or emotions, and the affective domain is the emotional side of human behaviour, which can be juxtaposed to the cognitive domain. The affective domain, although not used as often as the cognitive domain, focuses on attitude changes which are stated in the course objectives. Affective questions are concerned with emotions, feelings, impressions, attitudes, interests, beliefs, values and opinions. These questions focus attention on the individual learner and his feeling, opinion or belief about something. Brown (1980:100) states that "if we were to devise theories of second language acquisition or teaching methods which were based only on cognitive considerations, we would be omitting the most fundamental side of human behavior". Biologically, we are designed to use our emotions for better quality thinking.

During an ABET course, an educator learns about his learners' opinions about themselves, ABET in general, the subject, and the ABET centre. These are all affective issues. This is where the educator's role is so important in an ABET situation. In addition, one of the performance outcomes for Level 3 is that at the end of a programme or course, learners should be able *to express and respond to feelings and emotions*. The environment, especially when dealing with affective issues, needs to be one of honesty and openness, and as Knowles (1984:16) states, "when people feel free to be open and natural, to say what they really think and feel, they are more likely to be willing to examine new ideas and risk new behaviours than when they feel the need to be defensive".

Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:79) state that questions in this domain require learners "to express their feelings about things that affect them and to describe how their beliefs affect their actions". Learners are asked to apply their learning to their own lives and establish

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1. Appendix A contains some action words and phrases which are commonly used at the different levels of the cognitive taxonomy, and Appendix B provides some assessment options for the cognitive domain.

what their knowledge means to them. Affective questions also stimulate action and thought about how certain actions fit in with personal beliefs and those of the community. Jensen (1995a:34) states that in traditional teaching, the educator had to keep control of his learners, and emotions were suppressed. The new philosophy, which is based on the way the brain learns and remembers best, is to “engage the emotions; make the learning personally compelling, deeply felt and real”.

The affective taxonomy consists of five levels, starting from an individual being aware of an idea, to that idea being accepted as a natural part of his life. Often it is difficult to exactly differentiate the five levels of this taxonomy, especially when trying to classify a certain question. This is because every affective question has a cognitive component. The distinguishing feature between questions in the affective and the cognitive domains is in the intention of the person asking the question and the thought expressed by the person answering. The importance of the taxonomy for educators is their understanding of the general characteristics and actions that are found at each level.

- **Receiving**

The development of affectivity starts with receiving. Learners must be aware of their environment and the presence of people, events, objects, or concepts. Classroom activities at this level are designed to familiarise learners to new ideas and objects and get them to show their willingness to receive these. It is impossible to value an object or an idea without first being aware of its existence. There are three levels in the receiving category: *awareness*, where the learner is aware that something exists; *willingness to receive*, where the learner is willing to pay some attention to the object or idea being discussed; and *selected attention*, where the learner is sensitive to the new object or idea and takes it beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

- **Responding**

When the educator sees that his learners are becoming interested in the ideas and information he is presenting, or they want to learn more about it, then they are acting at the responding level. They are not only being made aware of something, but they are reacting to it and showing that they want to learn more about it. There are three categories within the

responding level: *acquiescence in responding*, where the learner does something (e.g. obey an instruction) even though he does not fully understand why; *willingness to respond*, where the learner looks for opportunities to learn more and become involved; and *satisfaction in response*, where the learner shows positive emotions in an activity, for example, "that was fun".

- **Valuing**

Brown (1980:101) states that "valuing takes on the characteristics of beliefs or attitudes as values are internalized". Questions at this level try to establish whether the learner believes in the idea or object which was presented. The learner shows that he believes in the idea and defends it when others challenge it. This level is more difficult to achieve in the classroom than the previous levels. A learner at this stage has been made aware of an idea, has reacted to it, and has accepted it as something worth valuing. Examples of things which learners value are: a certain form of government, a certain way of living, or a certain way of raising children.

- **Organising of values**

A learner reaches this level when he tries to resolve any conflicts there may be between values. Conflicts may arise when new values are introduced and accepted into his existing value system. Questions at this level encourage learners to compare values and to form a value system. Two elements which are tested by questioning are conceptualisation of a value (where new values are compared to others being considered), and organisation of a value system (where values are put together with each other to form a value system).

- **Characterising by value complex**

At this level a learner may not be aware that he is practising a certain value. The value has become part of his lifestyle. Problem solving, for example, is approached on the basis of a total, self-consistent system.

The basic notions of receiving, responding and valuing are universal. Brown (1980:102) states that "in second language acquisition the learner needs to be receptive both to those with whom he is communicating and to the language itself, responsive to persons and to the

context of communication, and to place a certain value on the communicative act of interpersonal exchange". Language is such an extensive aspect of humanity that it cannot be divorced from the larger whole, that is from the whole persons who breathe, think and feel. Understanding how humans feel, respond, believe and value is a very important aspect of a theory of second language acquisition. Jensen (1995b:170) strongly emphasizes that "thinking means integrating with emotions".

The cognitive and affective domains can direct the educator's attention to the behaviour changes he would like to see in his learners as a result of instruction. These domains can also assist the educator in evaluating material. By having an understanding of these domains, an educator can select material which is most suitable and which will encourage his learners to develop critical thinking skills. In addition, Kisko and Iyortsuun (1982:9) assert that "their use develops a sensitivity in forming different types of cognitive and affective questions to elicit different types of thought processes by presenting a framework or set of categories on which questions can be prepared".

### **2.3.5 Questioning behaviour of the educator**

As the skill of questioning is being dealt with in this section, it is important to examine the questioning behaviour of the educator as this forms part of the whole, and as Brown (1975:104) states, "questions are only as good as the answers that they evoke". Kisko and Iyortsuun (1982:106) add that "no matter how good the question, if it is presented poorly, at the wrong time, or when interest is not directed towards the topic, it will not have the desired impact".

#### **2.3.5.1 Constructing the question**

A question needs to be expressed clearly and intelligibly in order to perform its function. The vocabulary used is also very important and can be decided based on the ability of the learners. How can learners be expected to respond to a question if for example, there is a word in it which they do not understand? One of the reasons for weak answers from learners to questions from the educator, is poor wording of the questions. Learners may be confused and wonder exactly what the educator considers to be the "right" answer. Jensen

(1995b:168) quotes Berliner who reports that “the better the quality of the questions asked the more the brain is challenged to think”. Most questions should have an answer, and learners should have some previous knowledge or experience which can assist them in formulating the answer. Should this not be possible, it is important for the educator to use teaching media to provide a basis and to lead the learners to the correct answer. If, however, the educator wants his learners to discover the answer on their own, he will not provide any clues. Very often educators ask the question *do you all understand?*, which invariably results in a *yes* or *no* answer. This information by no means assists the educator to evaluate his learners' performance or achievement.

Although it is not easy to always plan all questions in advance, it is very important that the educator plan certain key questions before presenting them. Not only do these questions need to be planned mentally, but it is a good idea that the educator write these questions in his lesson plan so that he can review them and check that they are clear and coherent. As Brown (1975:105) points out, "what may be a clear and coherent question to someone steeped in a subject may be conceptually muddy" to the learners.

### **2.3.5.2 Asking the question**

Most listening groups are passive so it is important for the educator to ask questions in such a way that his learners become active participants and want to be involved. The seating arrangement of the classroom is an important factor to consider when presenting questions. Depending on the objective of the lesson, a set of higher order questions which require intense group discussions will not be very effective if learners all sit in a row and face the front of the classroom. It is also not desirable that the lesson turns out to be like an interrogation session with the educator asking all the questions and learners answering one at a time.

The sequencing of questions is also important. Through questioning, learners should be lead through logical steps to develop their understanding of the ideas being presented. The lesson could start with knowledge questions to ascertain the learners' knowledge of certain facts relating to the topic, then more problem-solving oriented questions could be asked, and finally learners could be asked to give their opinions or make judgments about the topic.



### 2.3.5.3 Timing

Kerry (1982:13) expresses quite powerfully that "some teachers develop a sten-gun mentality spraying questions in all directions, often the same question in many guises". He continues by saying that these teachers may be victims of a basic but detrimental fault, namely impatience. Perrott (1982:56) talks of a similar practice, which she calls "rapid-fire questioning" whereby the educator calls on a learner or learners to answer immediately after a question is asked. If the educator wants to find out what the class knows within a fairly short period of time or he wants short answers, this type of questioning is appropriate. Educators often believe that a rapid series of questions will capture their learners' attention. However, this does not give learners enough time to think or phrase their answers, and in fact only serves to confuse them. If the educator wants to provide a more conducive atmosphere to group discussion, in which learners have more time to think about and organise their answers, then a different questioning technique is needed.

Should an educator ask a question which requires a thoughtful response from the learners, it is evident that they need to be given sufficient thinking time. Moore (1989:23) aptly captures this by saying that "we must allow students to muddle through their answers. We all have a tendency to try to rush the students, if they do not answer quickly".

An educator often expects his learners to answer questions immediately, and then he will repeat or rephrase the question followed by another question or a comment. The pause between asking a question, followed immediately by another in case the learners don't respond straight away, is often around one second. After the educator has asked a question, he should pause and look around the class. Very often there are non-verbal signals which tell the educator that one of the learners is ready to answer. Some of these signals from a learner include leaning forward slightly, opening his mouth a little, raising his head, or raising his hand. If the educator pauses for a second or less, how can he see and interpret all these non-verbal signals? For a cognitively challenging question, for example *what can poor people, who don't have homes, do?*, learners need some time to think about the question, formulate an answer, and then provide the answer. Some educators see silence in a negative light, and cannot tolerate silence in their classrooms, so they feel that by always having someone talking, they're doing well. Perrott (1982:58) states that "success lies in using

questions which require longer and more thoughtful responses, pausing to allow ample time to organize those responses".

#### **2.3.5.4 Attending to learners' answers**

When learners answer a question, their answers could be correct, partly correct, incorrect, or, they may not even answer at all. The educator should give a reaction that is applicable to the learners' answers. Listening is the skill used in attending to learners' answers. If learners answer a question with an *I don't know*, or a weak or incorrect answer, it is important for the educator to first examine whether his question was clear enough or whether it may have been ambiguous. By prompting, the educator can lead his learners to the correct answer. The educator should also try to acknowledge all the positive aspects of answers. This encouragement will get learners communicating more and it will improve and increase their self-confidence in using English as a second or third language. Particularly when dealing with adult learners, all good answers should be praised, 'half-answers' should be built up, while wrong answers should not be rejected as this will reduce their wish to make any further contributions. The educator needs to accept all answers from his learners - the mere fact that learners have attempted to answer a question is surely a step in the right communicative direction. It is also very important for the educator to indicate whether an answer is correct or incorrect. It is unfair on a learner who may have thought extensively in order to answer a question, built up enough confidence to attempt to answer, and only to be left hanging without knowing whether his answer is right or wrong. In addition, if an answer is incorrect it would only be appropriate for the educator to try to explain why the answer is not correct.

#### **2.3.5.5 Follow-up questions**

The educator asks follow-up questions if learners do not answer or if their answers are not adequate. The main aim of asking follow-up questions is to increase the use of higher order questions. There are three types of follow-up questions, namely prompting, probing and redirecting.

##### *i. Prompting*

Prompting is used when a learner gives an *I don't know* answer; a very weak answer; or a partly or completely incorrect answer. Prompting can be seen as a strategy whereby the educator asks additional questions which contain hints to assist the learner to develop his

answer. A series of prompts, followed by encouragement, can assist learners in gaining confidence to answer a question. A precise question very often has prompts to help learners organise their answers. Thinking on a higher level is thus promoted.

*ii. Probing*

Brown (1975) and Kerry (1982) refer to another dimension of questioning. They refer to probing questions which allow learners to think of a better answer beyond their first answer which may not have been adequate. Brown (1975:107) aptly captures the essence of probing questions by saying that these questions direct the learner "to think more deeply about his initial answer and to express himself more clearly". With probing questions, a learner is able to develop his critical awareness and his communication skills as he has to think about his initial answer and elaborate on it. The purpose of probing is not to merely keep the conversation going; and as Kerry (1982:41) states, educators "often feel that they have done well if they keep [learners] talking regardless of the quality and relevance of the ideas being expressed". Probing questions are used in fact, to sustain thinking. Probing serves a number of purposes:

- *To clarify*

At times, a learner may give an answer which is not well organised or lacks detail or is incomplete. The information he has provided in his answer is not wrong, but is not exactly what the educator is looking for. In this case, the educator is asking the learner to provide additional information, or further clarify his answer. Often, however, the educator asks repeated questions to clarify the initial questions to get the expected answer from the learners. In this attempt at clarification the educator may confuse the learners because he initially asked inappropriate questions or used the wrong question form.

- *To support a point of view*

The learner needs to give a rational justification as to why a particular answer was given.

- *To elicit examples*

The learner needs to give an example of his answer.

Should learners be exposed to probing questions over a long period of time, they will become more willing to talk in class, they will formulate their answers more appropriately, and their thinking skills will improve. Kerry (1982:42) also adds that the learners "will eventually probe their own thoughts without stimulus from the teacher, and the whole level

of classroom dialogue will improve in quality".

### *iii. Redirecting*

Redirecting is done when the educator directs the same question to different learners. These questions can be used to get completely new answers, or learners elaborate on previous answers and therefore add to their understanding of the specific matter. Verbal and/or non-verbal cues can be used to redirect questions, so it is not necessary to repeat the question. Some redirecting cues include mentioning the learner's name, pointing at the learner, giving a learner a questioning look, or a combination of these (Brown 1975).

In conclusion, it is evident that educators do not only prepare and present questions. They need to attend to their learners' answers, elaborate, rephrase, encourage, praise, probe, redirect and prompt. Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:114) capture this very aptly in their comment that educators "conduct a discussion like a bandleader conducts a band so all parts work together towards a common goal".

### **2.3.6 Summary**

In this section on questioning, an overview of questions was provided; the classification systems which determine the cognitive and affective thought processes a question elicits was explained; and the questioning behaviour of an educator was addressed. This section also included issues such as constructing the question, asking the question, timing, attending to the learners' answers, and follow-up questions. The next section deals with various aspects of learners' errors.

## **2.4 ERRORS**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

The study of learners' errors is an area which receives much prominence in the field of language learning. For this reason, the following section deals with errors and a discussion of error analysis. The section also provides an historical perspective on errors, and presents a differentiation between errors and mistakes. Thereafter, the significance of learners' errors is

explored, and various sources of errors are looked at. Finally, the different stages of interlanguage development are considered; and fossilization is explained.

#### **2.4.2 Analysing errors**

The word “error” derives from the Latin *errare* and means “to wander, roam or stray”. Hendrickson (1987:366) provides a useful definition of an error within a language education context: “an utterance, form, or structure that a particular language teacher deems unacceptable because of its inappropriate use or its absence in a real-life discourse”, while Norrish (1983:127) defines an error as “a systematic deviation from the accepted code”.

Based on these definitions, one can recognise that doing an analysis of errors is a necessary part of and a useful diagnostic tool in language learning and teaching. Both the form and the function of a language are important in order to communicate effectively. Roos (1991:22) points out that very often learners do not realise the negative social effects of their non-standard language usage, and if an educator is not aware of the errors learners make, it becomes difficult to assist them to overcome or avoid these errors.

Fanselow (1977:591) states that “errors are part of learning - mistaken hypotheses and wrong connections are normal”. Hendrickson (1987:357) asserts that “because errors are signals that actual learning is taking place, they can indicate students’ progress and success in language learning”. On the virtual inevitability of errors, Norrish (1983:113) points out that “not only is it almost inevitable, but there are strong reasons for believing it to be an essential part of learning, in that it aids the learner and provides him with feedback in the process of concept formation”. These suggest that errors are a central and necessary part of learning. This contradicts the perception that many ABET learners have in that they believe that there should be no errors in their speech and writing, and this is possibly due to their previous educational experiences.

#### **2.4.3 Historical perspective**

Linguistic theories follow various trends which can be located historically. Pretorius

(1994:72) explains that when the behaviourist paradigm dominated the linguistic theories and language teaching methods in the 1960s, “language learning was regarded as a process of acquiring correct verbal behavioural patterns and eliminating incorrect responses”. This is in contrast with the modern trend which emphasizes the importance of errors in learning. According to the behaviourists’ point of view, language errors stemmed from incorrect learning habits and from interference from the first language. The inadequacies of the behaviourist theory surfaced in the late 1960s, and new theories of learning incorporating psychological, social and cognitive factors, came into being. As Brown (1994:203) maintains, “learners were looked at not as producers of malformed, imperfect language replete with mistakes, but as intelligent and creative beings proceeding through logical, systematic stages of acquisition, creatively acting upon their linguistic environment as they encounter its forms and functions in meaningful contexts”. At this point, errors were recognised as a natural part of the learning process and could in fact, provide information on how new knowledge is processed.

Brown (1987:168) points to more recent trends and indicates that “researchers and teachers have come more and more to understand that second language learning is a creative process of constructing a system in which learners are consciously testing hypotheses about the target language from a number of possible sources of knowledge: limited knowledge of the target language itself, knowledge about the native language, knowledge about the communicative function of language, knowledge about language in general, and knowledge about life, human beings, and the universe”. Acting upon their environment, learners formulate what to them is a legitimate system, that is, a structured set of rules which at that moment provides harmony to the linguistic confusion which they encounter. By a slow process of trial and error, learners successfully establish closer and closer approximations to the system used by the native speakers of the language. A term which is used to stress the legitimacy of the learners’ second language systems is *interlanguage*. According to Brown (1987:169), interlanguage refers to “the separateness of a second language learner’s system, a system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native and target languages”. An approach to analysing interlanguage is to study the writing and speech of learners. Production data are observable and they would seem most likely to reflect the learner’s underlying competence, that is, production competence. It follows that this study of the

learners' speech and writing is largely the study of their errors. The focus of this subsection is therefore on the significance of errors in learners' interlanguage systems, also known as error analysis. All human learning is a process involving the making of mistakes. These mistakes form a salient component of learning almost any skill. Brown (1987:170) states that all these skills "involve a process in which success comes by profiting from mistakes, by using mistakes to obtain feedback from the environment and with that feedback to make new attempts which successively more closely approximate desired goals". Learners of both first and second languages make mistakes in the process of acquisition, and will even hinder that process if they do not make mistakes, and in turn profit from various forms of feedback on those mistakes. Corder (1967:167) notes that learners' errors are significant in that they provide researchers with information on how language is learned and what strategies learners use in discovering the language.

#### **2.4.4 Errors and mistakes**

At this point it is important to differentiate between errors and mistakes, which are technically very different phenomena. Brown (1987:170) states that "a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a 'slip', in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly". All people make mistakes - hesitations, slips of the tongue, random ungrammaticalities, memory lapses, physical states such as tiredness, and psychological conditions such as strong emotions - in both first and second language situations. First language speakers are usually able to recognise such mistakes which are not the result of a shortcoming of competence, but rather the result of some sort of mishap in the process of producing speech. Corder (1981:10) asserts that "it would be quite unreasonable to expect the learner of a second language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue (or pen), since he is subject to similar external and internal conditions when performing in his first or second language". Errors on the other hand, are idiosyncrasies in the interlanguage of a learner which are direct and overt indications of a system within which that learner is functioning at that specific time. Brown (1987:170) puts it another way by saying that "an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native language, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner". Norrish (1983:7) points out that when a learner of a second language makes an error systematically, it is often because he has not learned the

correct form.

It is important that educators do not focus all their attention on their learners' errors and lose sight of the learners' correct utterances, and the value of positive reinforcement of clear, free communication. Brown (1987:171) states that "while the diminishing of errors is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency, the ultimate goal of second language learning is the attainment of communicative fluency in a language". It is therefore important to engage in a performance or interlanguage analysis which places a beneficial exploration of errors within the larger perspective of the learner's total interlanguage performance. According to Corder (1981:35), "it is on the basis of the information the teacher gets from errors that he varies his teaching procedures and materials, the pace of the progress, and the amount of practice which he plans at any moment".

#### **2.4.5 Significance of learners' errors**

A learner's errors provide evidence of the system of the language that he is using, that is, he has learnt at a particular point in the course. Corder (1981:10) points out that errors are significant in three different ways:

- to the educator: if he carries out an analysis, he will be able to ascertain how the learners have progressed and what they still need to learn;
- to the researcher: he will have data which will show how language is learned and what strategies learners use in discovering language; and
- to the learners: they can see that errors are devices which assist them in learning.

The making of errors is a strategy used both by children learning their mother tongue and by learners learning a second language. Corder (1981:12) also states that "the utterance of a correct form cannot be taken as proof that the learner has learnt the system which would generate that form in a native speaker, since he may be merely repeating a heard utterance". In addition, an utterance which is superficially non-deviant is not evidence of a mastery of the language systems. Hence, according to Corder (1981:12), through studying learners' errors we should get a better understanding of how a learner learns, and "we may be able to allow the learner's innate strategies to dictate our practice and determine our syllabus; we



may learn to adapt ourselves to *his* needs rather than impose upon him *our* preconceptions of *how* he ought to learn, *what* he ought to learn and *when* he ought to learn it”.

#### **2.4.6 Sources of errors**

In order to benefit from the value of interlanguage analysis, it is important to know why certain errors are made. Brown (1987:177) states that “by trying to identify sources we can begin to arrive at an understanding of how the learner’s cognitive and affective self relates to the linguistic system and to formulate an integrated understanding of the process of second language acquisition”. It is generally recognised that there are four main factors which can account for errors made by second language learners: interlingual transfer; intralingual transfer; context of learning; and communication strategies.

##### **2.4.6.1 Interlingual transfer**

At the early stages of learning a second language, there is a great deal of interference or interlingual transfer from the first language. Hocking (1973:87) defines interference as “the adverse effect of features of a known language on the acquisition or use of another language”. The educator is usually concerned with the interference features of the mother tongue with the acquisition of the second or target language. Some of the most apparent examples of fossilizable items in second language communication are found in instances of language transfer or interference. Before the system of the second language becomes familiar to the learner, the only linguistic system which he can draw from is his first language. Many learners in an ABET classroom are learning English as a third or even fourth language. This adds another dimension, in that there are varying degrees of interlingual interference from the first and second (or third) languages to the target language.

##### **2.4.6.2 Intralingual transfer**

Intralingual transfer within the target language itself plays an important part in second language learning. Brown (1987:178) asserts that “once learners have begun to acquire parts of the new system, more and more intralingual transfer - generalization within the target language - is manifested”. As learners make progress in the second language their previous knowledge and experience starts to include structures within the target language. Richards

(1973a:98) states that intralingual errors “are those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply”. Jakobovits (1969:32) defines an overgeneralization as “the use of previously available strategies in new situations”. Overgeneralization comprises cases where the learner creates a deviant structure based on his experience of other structures in the target language, and some example include *they can sings, he come from*. Dušková (1969) discusses omission of the third person *-s* and notes that “since all grammatical persons take the same zero verbal ending except the 3rd person singular in the present tense ..... omissions of the *-s* in the 3rd person singular may be accounted for by the heavy pressure of all other endingless forms”. Richards (1973a:100) points out that certain teaching techniques increase the frequency of overgeneralized structures. Some consist of utterances that can interfere with each other to produce a “hybrid structure”:

|                          |                           |                             |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>educator:</u>         | <u>instruction:</u>       | <u>learner:</u>             |
| <i>she speaks slowly</i> | change to continuous form | <i>she is speaks slowly</i> |

This is known as overlearning of a structure. At other times, *she speaks* may be contrasted with *she is speaking, he walks* with *he can walk*, and a few lessons later, without any teaching of the forms, the learner produces *she can speaks* and *he is walks*.

#### 2.4.6.3 Context of learning

Brown (1994:215) states that context refers “to the classroom with its teacher and its materials in the case of school learning or the social situation in the case of untutored second language learning”. Learners can make errors due to an ambiguous or misleading explanation by the educator, an unclear, faulty or weak presentation of a specific structure or word in the textbook, or even because of a grammatical pattern which was rote learned in a drill session but not properly assimilated and internalized. Brown (1994:215) continues by saying that “another manifestation of language learned in classroom contexts is the occasional tendency on the part of learners to give uncontracted and inappropriately formal forms of language”. Very often classroom language learning gives rise to a “bookish” language.

#### **2.4.6.4 Communication strategies**

When learners use the target language, they “use production strategies in order to enhance getting their messages across, but at times these techniques can themselves become a source of error” (Brown 1994:217). The communication strategies language learners adopt when using the second language can give rise to errors such as word coinage, circumlocution, false cognates, and prefabricated patterns.

#### **2.4.7 Stages of interlanguage development**

Brown (1994:211) states that “learners are so variable in their acquisition of a second language that styles of development defy description”. However, he does provide four stages of development based on observations of what the learner does in terms of errors.

##### *i. Random*

The learner is only slightly aware that there is some systematic order to a particular class of items, and often makes rather wild guesses while he goes through a stage of experimentation and inaccurate guessing.

##### *ii. Emergent*

The learner is growing in consistency in linguistic production where he begins to discover a system and internalizes certain rules. These rules may not be correct in terms of the standards in the target language, but are genuine in the learner’s mind. If an educator or a native speaker points out errors to the learner, he is still unable to correct them.

##### *iii. Systematic*

The learner is now able to show more consistency in producing the second language. The language rules in the learner’s mind are still not all ‘well-formed’, but they are internally self-consistent and are more closely approximating the system of the target language. Learners are now able to correct their own errors when they are pointed out to them.

##### *iv. Stabilization*

Here the learner makes relatively few errors and has mastered the system where fluency and intended meanings are not a problem. The learner is able to self-correct and his system is complete enough that he can pay attention to those few errors that occur and he can make the corrections without waiting for feedback from others. Brown (1994:212) states that “it is at this point that learners can stabilize too fast, allowing minor errors to slip undetected, and

thus manifest fossilization of their language”.

These four stages do not describe the learner’s total second language system. A learner could be at stage two with respect to the past tense system, and in the fourth stage when it comes to the present tense.

#### **2.4.8 Fossilization**

There are learners who have a fluent command of the language, yet there are certain erroneous features which persist. The rather permanent inclusion of incorrect linguistic forms into a learner’s language competence is referred to as fossilization. The internalization of incorrect forms takes place in the same way as the correct forms are internalized. Amusingly, Brown (1987:186) states that “fossilization should not be viewed as some sort of terminal illness, in spite of the forbidding metaphor that depicts an unchangeable situation, etched in the stone of time”.

#### **2.4.9 Summary**

In this section an overview of errors and analysing errors was provided, and located within an historical perspective. It was pertinent that this section provided a differentiation between errors and mistakes, and that the significance of learners’ errors was explored. This section also undertook to look at various sources of errors, and the different stages of interlanguage development. The next section deals with how educators treat their learners’ errors.

### **2.5 TREATMENT OF ERRORS**

#### **2.5.1 Introduction**

Having given an overview of the nature of learners’ errors in section 2.4, this section deals with the treatment of errors. It starts with an historical perspective on the treatment of errors using Vigil and Oller’s (1976) model of how feedback affects the message-sending process; and then examines issues such as why errors should be treated, how to treat errors, which

errors to treat, and who should treat them.

### 2.5.2 Historical perspective

With regards to learners' errors, there have been two schools of thought in the field of methodology:

- Firstly, the school which claims that if we were to attain a perfect teaching method, the errors would never be performed, and therefore the presence of errors is a sign of the deficiency of our teaching methods.
- The second school is of the opinion that we live in an imperfect world and therefore errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts. The educator's ingenuity and creativity should concentrate on techniques for dealing with errors after they have taken place.

Both these perspectives are in keeping with the same theoretical standpoint about language and language learning - psychologically behaviourist and linguistically taxonomic - and their application to language teaching is known as the audiolingual method.

When the **audiolingual** method of teaching a second or foreign language was in vogue in the 1950s and 1960s, many researchers and educators viewed errors from a puritanical perspective. Brooks (1960:58) states that "like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected". He advocated an instructional plan of action that would help learners produce error-free utterances, by asserting that "the principal method of avoiding error in language learning is to observe and practice the right model a sufficient number of times; the principal way of overcoming it is to shorten the time lapse between the incorrect response and the presentation once more of the correct model" (1960:58). In 1961 the Modern Language Materials Development Center prepared *The Teacher's Manual for German, Level One*, (1961) which states that all errors should be immediately corrected by the educator (pp 3, 17, 21, 26), and that learners should not be allowed to discover or correct their own errors (pp 28, 32). In the 1970s for example, a first-year Spanish textbook offers a list of suggestions for educators on how to use the textbook, and one of the suggestions is that "whenever a mistake is made, the teacher should correct it at once and then repeat the correct pattern or question for the benefit of the entire

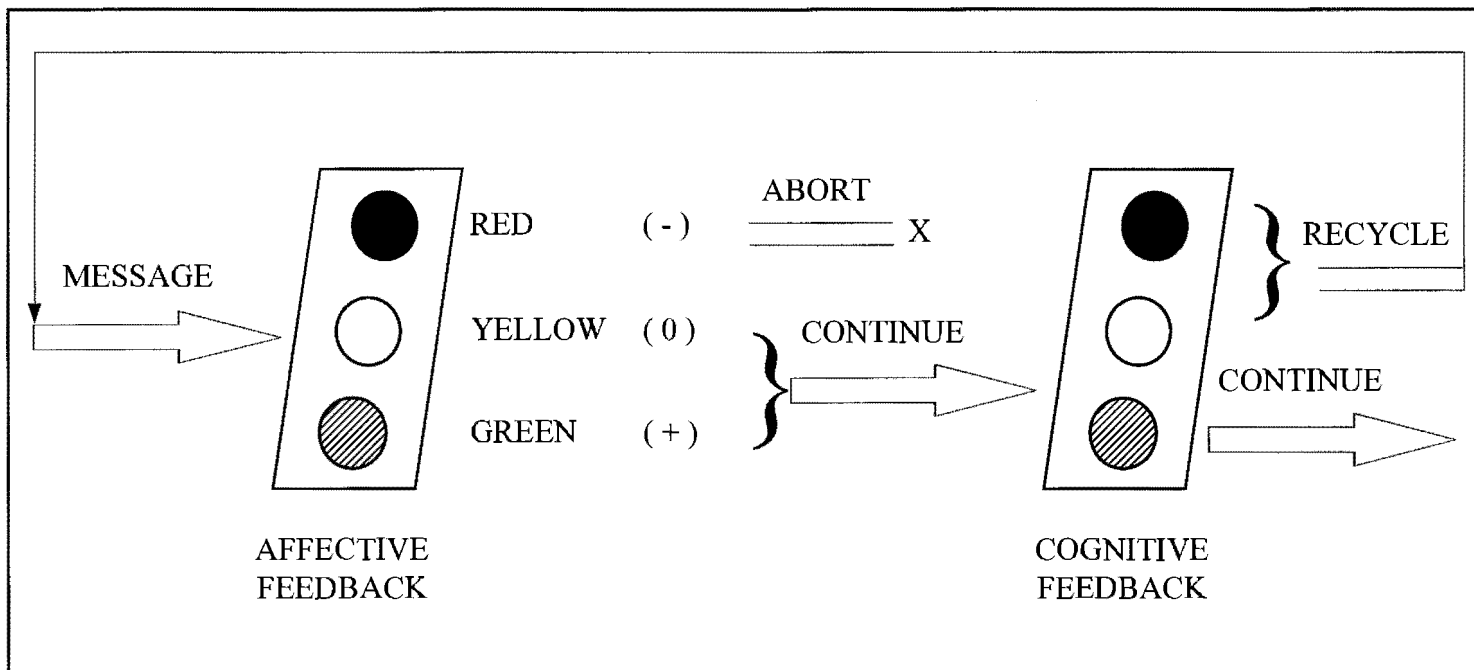
class” (Hansen and Wilkins, 1974:xvii).

The **post-audiolingualism** trends have started focusing on less mechanistic and more humanistic language teaching practices where the use of language for communication is stressed. Learners are encouraged to communicate in the target language rather than producing error-free utterances. As Chastain (1971:249) points out, “more important than error-free speech is the creation of an atmosphere in which the students want to talk”. Richards (1973b:131) poses the question that if listeners understand the spoken intention of a learner’s grammatically deviant speech, why should educators spend time focusing on it. Language educators are now accepting that learners’ errors are a natural phenomenon which is integral to the process of learning a language. Hendrickson (1987:357) calls attention to the fact that “when teachers tolerate *some* student errors, students often feel more confident about using the target language than if *all* their errors are corrected”. Freiermuth (1997:3) states that the purpose of error correction is to increase the learners’ accuracy in acquiring the language.

### **2.5.3 Feedback**

Section 2.4.8 dealt with fossilization which is seen as being consistent with the laws of all human learning. Vigil and Oller (1976) give an account of fossilization as a component of positive and negative affective and cognitive feedback. They state that there are two kinds of information which is conveyed between the learners and their audience: information about the *affective* relationships between the learners and their audience; and *cognitive* information, that is facts, notions, and opinions. Affective information is mainly encoded through kinesic mechanisms - facial expressions, tone of voice, and gestures. Cognitive information is normally communicated via linguistic devices - sounds, phrases, structures, and discourse. Brown (1987:192) states that “one of the keys, but not the only key, to successful second language learning lies in the *feedback* that a learner receives from others”. The feedback that learners receive from their audience can be positive, negative, or neutral. A number of combinations of these types of feedback are possible. An audience could provide positive affective feedback, but give negative cognitive feedback to show that the message was unclear or ambiguous. Regardless of the degree of cognitive feedback, negative affective

feedback can lead a learner to abort all future attempts at communicating. This is in line with the prevailing affective nature of human interaction: if an individual's communication is not valued, there is little reason for him to continue. It is thus evident that a primary requisite for meaningful communication is an affective affirmation of the other individual. In order for learners to want to continue attempts at communicating, educators need to provide positive affective responses, for example *I like what you're saying ....* With this positive affective feedback, even if learners receive neutral or negative feedback in the cognitive area, they will feel encouraged to try again and continue communicating. It must be noted however, that this feedback which learners receive is extrinsic in nature, that is, there are other internal motivating factors which also need to be taken into account, for example a learner's persistent determination to speak the language no matter what the obstacles are. Figure 1 depicts Vigil and Oller's (1976) model of how affective and cognitive feedback affect the message-sending process.



**Figure 1** Vigil and Oller's affective and cognitive feedback model

For Vigil and Oller, the diagram shows that the red light of the affective feedback mode's traffic light causes the sender to end any attempts at getting the message across, while the green light allows the sender to carry on attempting to get the message across. It's at the cognitive feedback's traffic light that error correction commences. A red light denotes corrective feedback where the learner makes some kind of modification in production. A

green light denotes noncorrective feedback which basically indicates that *I understand what you're saying*. A yellow light falls between the red and green lights and could denote to the learner that he must change, modify or recycle his message. Fossilization in fact, may be the result of a surplus of green lights where there should have been red or yellow lights. Although from this diagram it may seem that affective feedback precedes cognitive feedback, this is not the case as both modes can take place at the same time.

What is important to note in this model is that cognitive feedback needs to be optimal so that it can be effective. Too many red lights - negative cognitive feedback - like bombardments of corrections, interruptions, and too much attention to irregularities, can cause learners to discontinue their attempts at communicating. They may feel that there is little hope of getting anything right as there is so much that is wrong with their attempts. Freiermuth (1997:1) states that "if language learners constantly receive corrective feedback, they may become discouraged, frustrated and even lose enthusiasm for speaking in the target language". On the other hand, too many green lights - positive cognitive feedback - where the educator is willing to let all errors go uncorrected and shows understanding when in fact little or no understanding has occurred, only reinforces the learners' errors. The result of too many green lights may be the continuation, and possible fossilization, of such errors. Rinvoluceri (1998b:45) asserts that "to focus a student only on what he has got wrong is pretty perverse. In a given oral intervention or piece of writing, there are plenty of things he has got right and sometimes there are things he has got surprisingly right. It seems only fair to dwell on these features as well as the mistakes".

There is also a certain element of risk from the learners when they receive feedback. Beebe (1983:61) writes that if learners disclose personal views in a communicative exercise, they look for a genuine reaction from the educator, and not a correction of their words. With a communicative exercise for example, the learners' risk is on the act of communicating the meaning, and not on the possibility of a syntactical error or an error of pronunciation. In such an activity learners want the educator to react on the meaning, and not on the form of the communication. Beebe (1983:61) continues by saying that "there is always a risk of both failure to communicate and failure to be accurate in speaking a second language, but usually one or the other is the primary focus of attention, not both". This is a very important



observation for educators who need to bear in mind the task they have set for their learners and what the objective of such a task or activity is.

It must also be borne in mind that learning another language can be a very stressful event. Norrish (1983:99) states that some adult learners are hesitant in attempting to use the target language as they fear making mistakes. Very often the educator focuses on the grammar and vocabulary rather than the ideas being expressed by the learners. Stevick (1976) coined a phrase to describe the results of this anxiety on some learners: *lathophobic aphasia* which is the unwillingness to speak another language for fear of making mistakes. Norrish (1983:2) points out that “the learner is not so much concerned with attempting to express what he would like to say, either orally or in writing, as rather with saying what he thinks he can without making mistakes”. The essence of the message is shifted to a secondary position as the learner focuses on the correct form of what he is saying. Freiermuth (1997:2) calls attention to the fact that “ ..... within the confines of the classroom, and under the pressure of having to produce accurately in the L2, students may be nervous, anxious, upset, or excited, causing them to stumble, even with familiar structures”. Norrish (1983:101) continues by pointing out that educators should not be too idealistic about language teaching and if they were to pay no attention to the learners’ errors, this would affect their learners’ chances of success in examinations and in communicating with others.

Chaudron (1977:428) points out that corrective feedback could give learners an incentive for increased effort, it could promote the maintenance of the learners’ correct language production, and even assist in changing erroneous utterances. Norrish (1983:3) cautions however, that “by drawing the learner’s attention to every mistake he makes, encouraging him to be aware of these mistakes, and making him think at length before speaking or writing, may not help him to use the language in the most natural or useful way”.

#### **2.5.4 Why treat errors?**

Hendrickson (1987:358) asserts that “when students are not able to recognize their own errors, they need the assistance of someone more proficient in the language than they are”. Most educators do provide some sort of correction of errors which assists learners to

discover the functions and limitations of the language as well as the exact environment in which to apply linguistic rules. Freiermuth (1997:1) states that “just as interrupting L2 dialogue in the classroom to repair an error is influential feedback, so is allowing errors to go uncorrected because students may assume that the spoken L2 is accurate”. There is ample empirical evidence that correcting learners’ errors is an effective means of improving grammatical accuracy of second language speech (Tomasello & Herron 1988, 1989; White 1991; White *et al.* 1991; Carroll *et al.* 1992; Carroll & Swain 1993; Trahey & White 1993).

### **2.5.5 When to treat errors**

As Rinvoluceri (1998a:57) states, “the debate on when and how to correct mistakes is one that arouses deep feelings in language learners and teachers”. A difficult challenge facing language educators is deciding when to treat a learner’s error, when to ignore it, whether to treat it immediately or whether to delay the treatment. It is important for educators to know when to treat errors without affecting the learners’ affect, and without providing too many positive reinforcers when they are not necessary. Long (1977:288) observes that the question of when to treat errors is no simple matter, and states that “having noticed an error, the first decision the teacher makes is whether or not to treat it at all. In order to make the decision the teacher may have to recourse to factors with immediate temporary bearing, such as the importance of the error to the current pedagogical focus on the lesson, the teacher’s perception of the chance of eliciting correct performance from the student if negative feedback is given, and so on. Consideration of these ephemeral factors may be preempted, however, by the teacher’s beliefs (conscious or unconscious) as to what a language is and how a new one is learned”. Norrish (1983:2) states that the educator’s attitude to errors is affected by his view of what he is trying to achieve in the lesson. Freiermuth (1997:1) asserts that some learners want their errors treated immediately, but there is no guarantee that they have learned or understood the significance of the error. In addition, the flow of communication in the target language has been interrupted, and can be further delayed if the educator explains the error, the learner attempts to correct it, and then continues with his communication. When too much attention is paid to structural errors, and learners are constantly interrupted for correction while speaking, they may decide to stop talking altogether. By tolerating some written and oral errors, educators assist their learners to

communicate more confidently.

Learners take many risks when attempting to communicate, especially when producing incorrect utterances or utterances which they are not certain are correct. Beebe (1983:40) states that “learning to speak a second or foreign language involves taking the risk of being wrong, with all its ramifications”. It is good for educators to bear in mind that when their learners are willing to take risks in the classroom, the following statement by Smith (1971:24) “the more often you want to be right, the more often you must tolerate being wrong”, may be going through their learners’ minds. Educators therefore need to think whether their corrective methods will bring about a feeling of success or failure in their learners. Rinvoluceri (1998a:58) poses the following to educators to ponder on: “the major point is for you to allow yourself to question your role as an inevitable and permanent correction machine. Are there situations when it is far better to step out of the critic role and allow your students to speak and write without the constraint imposed by your linguistic observation of them”. Norrish (1983:1) states that in many traditional language classes learners have been reprimanded for making too many errors which bring discredit to the educator and the learners, and that these errors could be avoided.

Walker (1973:103) conducted a survey with university students to determine their reactions to having their errors treated, and found that they preferred not to be corrected for each mistake they made as this broke down their confidence and forced them to spend more time and effort focusing on details rather than focusing on using the language to communicate.

A lot of effort also goes into producing written language, and it is demotivating for learners to receive their work back from the educator where every single error has been corrected, and the page looks like a battle field with many casualties. An article written by the University Writing Program at Virginia Tech, points out that “students are often simply overwhelmed and paralyzed when they receive essays on which their instructor’s comments trail into every margin and leave a depressing map of error and negative response”. There is no guarantee that these corrections ensure that learners will not make the same errors again.

### 2.5.6 How to treat errors

The issue of how to treat errors is very complicated, but it is clear that learners usually want and expect their errors to be corrected. In a non-classroom situation, native speakers only correct a small percentage of a non-native speaker's errors, and these errors tend to be global errors, and the correction usually does not take the form of an interruption but at a transition point in the conversation. Holley and King (in Hendrickson 1987:362) state that in the classroom, however, educators need to be aware of how they treat their learners' errors and should avoid using strategies which could embarrass or discourage their learners. Many training programmes do not prepare educators to handle the variety of errors made by learners. Lopez (1998:37) asks "what is the best way to correct students' errors?", and responds that "the answers are as varied as teaching styles and teachers' personalities. Each of us must find, experiment with, and then choose the methods that work best for our students". The question which arises is whether the treatment of errors by the educator is in fact effective. Corder (1967), Gorbet (1974) and Valdman (1975) believe that by providing learners with the correct form or structure of their written errors, proves to be ineffective. They suggest that by using a discovery approach to error correction, learners can make inferences and develop concepts about the target language. This would also help the learners to fix the information in their long-term memories. Hendrickson (1976 & 1977) conducted a survey to establish what effect direct educator correction would have on students, and concluded that by having the correct lexical forms and grammatical structures corrected, there was no statistically significant effect on writing proficiency.

Wingfield (1975:311) stresses that it is important for the educator to select corrective techniques which are most effective and appropriate for individual learners. He provides five techniques for correcting written errors:

- i. The educator gives sufficient clues to enable self-correction to be made
- ii. The educator corrects the script
- iii. The educator deals with errors through marginal comments and footnotes
- iv. The educator explains orally to individual learners
- v. The educator uses the error as an illustration for a class explanation.

It is important for educators to realise that their learners are operating creatively in the second or third language in order to produce meaningful utterances. The learners' system should not be seen as an imperfect system insofar as native speakers compare their knowledge of the language to the learners. The learners' language system should be viewed as a lively and flexible system, as they are in fact processing language on the basis of their knowledge of their interlanguage. This view, of course, draws on the interlanguage paradigm and contrasts the more behaviourist trends of the sixties.

Brown (1994:221) states that one "can safely conclude that a sensitive and perceptive language teacher should make the language classroom a happy optimum between some of the overpoliteness of the real world and the expectations that learners bring with them to the classroom". Freiermuth (1997:3) points out that what is of paramount importance when treating errors is consistency. If an educator is not consistent, corrections are offered sporadically and very often depend on the educator's mood and motivation. If errors are not attended to in a consistent and persistent manner, a learner may possibly believe that he repaired the error correctly, although it may not have been repaired at all. Freiermuth (1997:3) continues by saying that "consistency requires that the teacher bring the student to a point where the erroneous structure is, at the very least, recognized. Then, if possible, the student may be able to repair the error". Consistency also moderates the affect of an educator's disposition. By relying on a consistent approach to correcting errors, educators avoid reacting emotionally to their learners' errors.

Freiermuth (1997:3) concludes that the correction of errors can help learners acquire structures in the target language if the educator applies the following criteria consistently:

- the learner's amount of exposure to the language structure
- the seriousness of the error
- whether or not the error hindered communication significantly
- the frequency of the error, and
- the needs of the learner.

### 2.5.7 Which errors to treat

Hendrickson (1987:359) states that an increasing number of language educators suggest that “errors that impede the intelligibility of a message should receive top priority for correction”, in other words, errors that interfere with the meaning of the message should be corrected promptly. Second language errors can be classified into two distinct categories: firstly, those errors that cause the hearer to misunderstand the message (global errors); and secondly those errors that do not significantly obstruct the message from getting across (local errors). Hendrickson (1987:360) defines a global error as a communicative error that causes a competent speaker of that language to either misinterpret the message, or to regard it as unintelligible. He defines a local error as a linguistic error in which a structure within a sentence appears awkward but its meaning is nevertheless understood by a competent speaker of that language. Global errors prevent communication, while local errors usually only affect an element of a sentence and the context usually provides clues as to what the learner is trying to say. Norrish (1983:108) points out that “it is the global error which would attract most attention and presumably lose most marks or lead more easily to failure to understand the speaker’s intended meaning”. Global errors are usually corrected as the message may remain unintelligible to the hearer, while correcting a local error may interrupt the learner’s flow of productive communication. Correcting one global error elucidates the intended message more than correcting a number of local errors in the same sentence. This is reinforced by Freiermuth (1997:2) who states that global errors should almost always be corrected whereas local errors should be corrected on a case-by-case basis.

Burt (1975:58) asserts that by restricting the correction of errors to communicative errors only, learners can increase their self-confidence and motivation to continue with their attempts at communicating. She suggests that once learners can engage in relatively error-free communication, educators can then start concentrating on correcting local errors. In Charles Curran’s Community Language Learning approach, errors made by language beginner learners are not corrected, and the reason for discouraging correction “is to lower the beginner learner’s level of anxiety, to reduce the towering parenthood of the teacher and to allow the learner to build up their own self-confidence” (Rinvolutri 1998a:57). In addition, it is important to evaluate the seriousness of the error. Freiermuth (1997:2)

suggests that the aims of the lesson should be taken into consideration before ascertaining the seriousness of an error. If for example the aim of a lesson is to have a constant flow of communication, the error must hinder communication before it should be regarded an error which requires correction. Brown (1987:194) adds that educators must not suffocate their learners' attempts at producing the language by smothering them with corrective feedback. In addition, Freiermuth (1997:2) states that "learners who make errors while creating language may not even be aware of what a correct form looks like or be cognitively ready to comply with the morphological, syntactic, or lexical rules associated with the error". Elements which are beyond their language capabilities cannot be acquired until the learner is linguistically capable. Therefore correcting these types of errors which are still unfamiliar to the learners, may be ineffective. Correcting errors in learners' speech and writing does not necessarily lead to the correct usage of that structure. Language learners tend to acquire structures in a certain order, and regardless of the number of times a certain structures is corrected, until the learner is ready, and the structure has been internalised, it will not be used correctly on a regular basis.

There may also be errors which stigmatize learners from the perspective of native speakers. Richards (1973b:131) points out, for example, that "deviancy from grammatical or phonological norms of a speech community elicits evaluational reactions that may classify a person unfavourably". Learners may be unaware that certain errors have become permanent in their communication system, in other words these errors have become fossilized. Hendrickson (1987:361) points out that these errors should be corrected based on how incomprehensible and unacceptable they are as determined by the native speakers of that language.

Educators should also note learners' high-frequency errors which occur in written and oral communication, and possibly use these as a starting point for treatment. Freiermuth (1997:2) states that "it is imperative for the teacher to identify what constitutes a serious error. It may be useful to view errors in a hierarchy, ranked according to their seriousness with errors that significantly impair communication at the top of the list, followed by errors that occur frequently, errors that reflect misunderstanding or incomplete acquisition of the correct classroom forms, and errors that have a highly stigmatizing effect on the listeners". A

suggested matrix designed by the researcher is presented in Chapter 3 where the most frequent errors made by ABET learners are placed on a hierarchy.

It appears evident that the correction of three types of errors can be useful to learners:

- errors that significantly hinder communication
- errors that can have stigmatizing consequences on the hearer, and
- errors that occur frequently.

In addition, Freiermuth (1997:2) points out that the learners' needs should also be considered when treating errors, and that learners who are struggling with the language should only receive correction when they make serious errors, while more competent learners may benefit from correction of minor errors.

### **2.5.8 Who should treat errors?**

The literature portrays a debate regarding who should treat learners' errors. Rinvoluceri (1998a:57) states that "most learners and teachers seem to agree that it is the teacher's job to correct mistakes made in the language classroom and that if she fails to do this, she is not behaving professionally. When you think about it, this is an odd consensus since correction is not a feature of natural, mother tongue learning, the most amazingly successful sort of language acquisition we know of". If a toddler says *Daddy car*, her mother may expand this to *Daddy's going out in the car*, but the purpose of this expansion is not to correct the telegraphic utterance but rather to check the parent's own understanding of it. The purpose is therefore not didactic. Corder (1981:8) concurs and states that we would not usually call this an ill-formed or incorrect utterance, but rather a typical childlike communication which shows the child's linguistic development at that specific moment. A child learning his mother tongue is not expected to produce correct or non-deviant utterances from the earliest stages of language learning. These 'incorrect' utterances are evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language. Why should the adult language learner not be afforded the opportunity of making mistakes, as he is also in the process of acquiring a new language?

Most educators accept the responsibility for correcting their learners' errors, and as Roos



(1991:25) points out, they “inundate learners’ written work with red in”. Corder (1973:336) however, points out that the educator’s function in error treatment is to give examples and provide explanations and descriptions and verify the learners’ hypotheses. It cannot be denied that an educator plays an active role in correcting his learners’ errors, but he should not necessarily dominate the correction procedure.

Rinvoluceri (1998b:46) states that “if the atmosphere in the learning group allows and facilitates it, there is little that is more powerful than students helping one another to be linguistically accurate”. If however, there are bad feelings in the classroom, then peer correction could be a disaster. When it comes to the correction of written work, Witbeck (1976:325) states that peer correction results in a “greater concern for achieving accuracy in written expression in individual students and creates a better classroom atmosphere for teaching the correctional aspects of composition”. Some researchers suggest that once learners have been made aware of their errors, they may learn more from correcting their own errors than corrections made by their educator. Rinvoluceri (1998a:58) then continues by asking “do we do much good as teachers, by responding to their moralistic masochism with congruent sadism? If a person cries ‘beat me’, should you?”

### **2.5.9 Summary**

This section dealt with the treatment of errors. It started with an historical perspective on the treatment of errors. Thereafter, it discussed how Vigil and Oller’s (1976) model of feedback affects the message-sending process; and then focused on why errors should be treated, how to treat errors, which errors to treat, and on who should treat them were discussed. The next section deals with evaluating the effectiveness of learning.

## **2.6 EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING**

### **2.6.1 Introduction**

In this section, the opinions of various authors on evaluating the effectiveness of learning will be reviewed, and the following issues will be discussed. Firstly, the term evaluation will

be defined and an explanation will be provided as to what evaluation is; then the reasons for evaluating will be provided; the role of evaluation will be discussed; the individuals who should take part in an evaluation will be considered; the question of when an evaluation should take place is studied; and certain key levels of evaluation are examined; and finally a look at what can be done with the information collected in an evaluation.

### **2.6.2 What is evaluation?**

This is a question that often causes confusion and evokes negative memories and emotions as thoughts of tests and examinations come to mind. Geis and Smith (1992) point out that "when you see the word *evaluation*, you probably think of a one-time event, such as an end-of-course examination, a job performance rating, or the satisfaction questionnaire at the close of a workshop. You probably also think of some testlike quantitative instrument, the results of which will influence a summary decision like hire/fire or pass/fail". However, evaluation should not be confused with assessment. McKay and Northedge (1995:208) define assessment as the process of obtaining information regarding a learner's performance or progress and subsequently judging his achievement. The question remains - what is evaluation? Bhola (1989:29) states that "the word 'value' is built right into the word 'evaluation'. Indeed, evaluation means assigning values to judge the amount, degree, condition, worth, quality or effectiveness of something". Geis and Smith (1992:132) state that "this is usually done to provide information and influence a decision that must be made". Breen (1991:10) aptly captures the focus of evaluation by saying that it means taking stock, uncovering information and learning in a group. She continues by stating that "it means finding out what is needed to be effective as individuals, programs, networks and as a movement for social change". Humans engage in the process of common sense evaluation all the time, for example, choosing a restaurant involves a certain evaluation of the type of food served there, the quality of the service, etc.; but professional evaluation is slightly different in that it is systematic, and as Bhola (1989:29) points out, "it is precise and its results are publically defensible". Evaluation adopts a systematic approach which means that evaluation takes place during all phases, which includes needs assessment and analysis; course development; during and end of course; and post-training. This is Geis and Smith's (1992:133) description of a professional evaluation: it "relies on a whole array of special

skills and knowledge for *planning*, which includes determining decision options and deciding what kinds of information would be useful; *conducting* the evaluation, which includes collecting such information; and *communicating outcomes*, which includes the information in some convenient form and feeding it into the decision process". Soifer *et. al.* (1990:150) state that "evaluation is a way to celebrate successes as well as a means to foster continued growth and improvement". Geis and Smith (1992:132) point out that "evaluation is not the decision itself, but rather the preparation for the decision".

### 2.6.3 Why evaluate?

Even though stakeholders may have experienced the effectiveness of evaluation, they want to know the reasons why it is important to undertake an evaluation. Some answers to these questions are provided by the following authors [Breen (1991); Geis and Smith (1992); Lott (1967); Sticht and Mikulecky (1984)]:

- select, collect and analyse information in order to make informed decisions
- ensure that quality is maintained by identifying effective and ineffective practices and methods; by identifying areas for improvement; by identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses; and by identifying areas of concern
- solicit information for planning, developing and implementation of programmes
- determine the value of a programme.

A more detailed discussion of these issues follows.

Geis and Smith (1992:133) state that "the purpose of evaluation is to affect decision making". This is echoed by Chang (1991:469) who states that "the evaluation process is undertaken to assist in making decisions". Geis and Smith (1992:133) continue by pointing out that currently the "emphasis is on evaluation as a means of finding out what is working well, why it is working well, and what can be done to improve things". Lott (1967:244) asserts that "some improvement in course 'quality' can almost always be achieved through evaluation, if the appraisal is followed by earnest efforts to correct the weaknesses brought to light". The aim of doing a professional evaluation is to generate information which can be used in the planning and implementation of programmes. Sticht and Mikulecky (1984:36) emphasise that "if there is one point at which most program developers fall short, it is in

determining the value of the program". In addition, Geis and Smith (1992:133) provide a number of subpurposes for evaluation:

- evaluation could be a means of auditing the present state of affairs
- an evaluation could be carried out to ascertain whether the cost of an exercise is justified
- an evaluation could be conducted to verify that a certain treatment is being carried out as prescribed
- an evaluation could provide feedback to the system
- an evaluation could provide diagnostic information that can influence decisions about where remedial actions should be carried out.

Furthermore, the ASTD Info-line booklet (1986:2) provides additional reasons why an evaluation should take place:

- to determine whether the training achieved its objectives
- to assess the value of the programme
- to identify programme areas than need improvement
- to help identify the proper audience for future programmes.

Geis and Smith (1992:134) point out that "the purpose of an evaluation ... is determined by the matrix of decisions to be made. The need to inform those decisions drives the evaluation effort". What is important to note here is that decisions need to be clear beforehand, and the information obtained from doing an evaluation must be used to influence decisions. These decisions often involve change, therefore evaluation is often the motivating force for change. Breen (1991:15) remarks that "discoveries made **as the result of an evaluation process** are the basis for further processes which lead to change. These include: building a common sense of direction, developing goals, setting priorities, and work planning ... and lay the groundwork for effective action". Mikulecky (1991:4) states that by doing an assessment, "potentially serious flaws in program design can be addressed early", and thus some form of action can take place. According to Alden (1987:24), "if a program evaluation effort is to be considered successful, some substantive decision about the program must be based on the evaluation data. The training program should be cut, lengthened, changed, resequenced,

rescheduled, eliminated, or even retained as is *because* of the evaluation findings”.

Chang (1991:465) points out that "business leaders and employers have long used evaluation as a critical factor in production and management. If workplace literacy programs are to survive, educators working in the employment environment must adapt to the management practices of business and industry in addition to evaluating for purely educational reasons".

#### **2.6.4 The role of evaluation**

The Business Council for Effective Literacy (1987), Rose (1968), and Merwin (1992) offer different explanations for the role of the evaluation process. Some of the most important ones are presented below:

- evaluation facilitates the identification of instructional and operational problems
- evaluation provides an informed knowledge basis for corrective action
- evaluation provides evidence to justify continued company expenditure
- evaluation’s key role is to identify the effectiveness of a programme
- evaluation determines whether the objectives of a programme match and support the mission and the current needs of the organisation and employees
- evaluation determines whether the objectives of a programme are being reached in the most effective and economical way
- evaluation indicates what changes need to be made in order to be more effective
- evaluation enables stakeholders to determine the quality of education
- evaluation determines why a programme failed to achieve its objectives or why it failed to effect change within an organisation and its employees.

The above points will be elucidated below.

An evaluation will help “identify instructional and operational problems and provide an informed basis for taking corrective action. Equally important, it will provide evidence to later justify continued company expenditures for the program” (BCEL, 1987:19). Evaluation thus serves as the main test for programme effectiveness. Rose (1968:253) states that “the purpose of evaluation is to determine whether or not the objectives and content of training

courses are consistent with the mission and current needs of the organization, if the objectives are being reached in the most effective and economical way, and, if not, what changes should be made". Merwin (1992:iii) states that evaluation is the part of the training process that allows evaluators to see that the results have been achieved, in other words, that the training has made a difference to the learners and to the organisation.

An evaluation is not done for the sake of merely collecting data; nor is it done to reward those who have achieved and to punish those who have not; nor should it be seen as an imposition to reduce the cost of what is being provided. ALBSU states that "evaluation should not be seen as a tiresome, bureaucratic and administrative exercise undertaken to try us all". It should be seen as a positive constructive endeavour to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of what is provided and can lead to an analysis of ways in which this provision might be improved. According to ALBSU, evaluation should be concerned with the quality of education that is received by learners.

Bennet and Clasper (1993:29.2) state that "evaluation is a vital part of any training program or course that takes place in one form or another during analysis, development, and implementation of a course. Continuous evaluation is a critical element in the process of designing training programs using a systematic approach".

According to ALBSU, "any framework for evaluating effectiveness of basic skills provision must reflect the principles and practices of the services. Basic skills is an *essential* area of education and training provision rather than merely desirable". It continues by pointing out that "inappropriate staff/student ratios, too great an emphasis on qualifications achieved and concentration on overly simplistic outcomes will seriously undermine even the best and most resilient basic skills service and lead to a lowering of morale and a fear about the future". Thus, if employees are better able to carry out their particular jobs as a result of the training received, then both learners and company objectives are being met (BCEL, 1987:19).

ALBSU believes that "whilst a demonstrable improvement in basic skills, such as reading, writing and basic maths, is the most important measure of student progress in an adult literacy and basic skills programme, other examples of student progress also need to be taken

into account in evaluating the effectiveness of a programme". According to ALBSU, some adults view basic skills as a 'gateway' to education and training and eventually move from basic skills to other learning opportunities. ALBSU also states that seeing basic skills programmes as merely "the 'bottom rung of an education and training ladder' is to artificially narrow the range and objectives of programmes".

According to Bakken and Bernstein (1987:31), "a final purpose of evaluation is the determination of 'what went wrong' when a particular training program fails to achieve its objectives or produce desired changes in the organization". Some reasons why a programme could "fail" include: the objectives are not clearly stated; the content of the programme is not directly relevant to the objectives; the content of the training programme is not based on appropriate adult learning models (the educator teaching rather than facilitating); the actual delivery of the programme (the educator's and learners' behaviour, the environment); and organisational factors which can facilitate or hinder the transfer of knowledge and skills to the workplace.

#### **2.6.5 Who should be involved in the evaluation process?**

In the previous sub-section the reasons why an evaluation needs to take place were highlighted, while the question as to who is responsible for doing this evaluation will be the focus of this sub-section. The following main trends emerge from various authors' viewpoints [Mikulecky and d'Adamo-Weinstein (1991); Geis and Smith (1992); Bolar, (1970)]:

- all stakeholders should be involved (not necessarily in the whole evaluation process, but in the section that affects or impacts on them)
- all decision makers involved in the process of evaluation.

Mikulecky and d'Adamo-Weinstein (1991:496) state that the evaluation of workplace literacy programmes involves a commitment of all the parties involved to ascertain the degree to which programmes are effective. As Geis and Smith (1992:144) point out, "different groups will be interested in different segments of the evaluation". They continue by stating that "it is important for the evaluator ..... to find ways to involve all stakeholders,

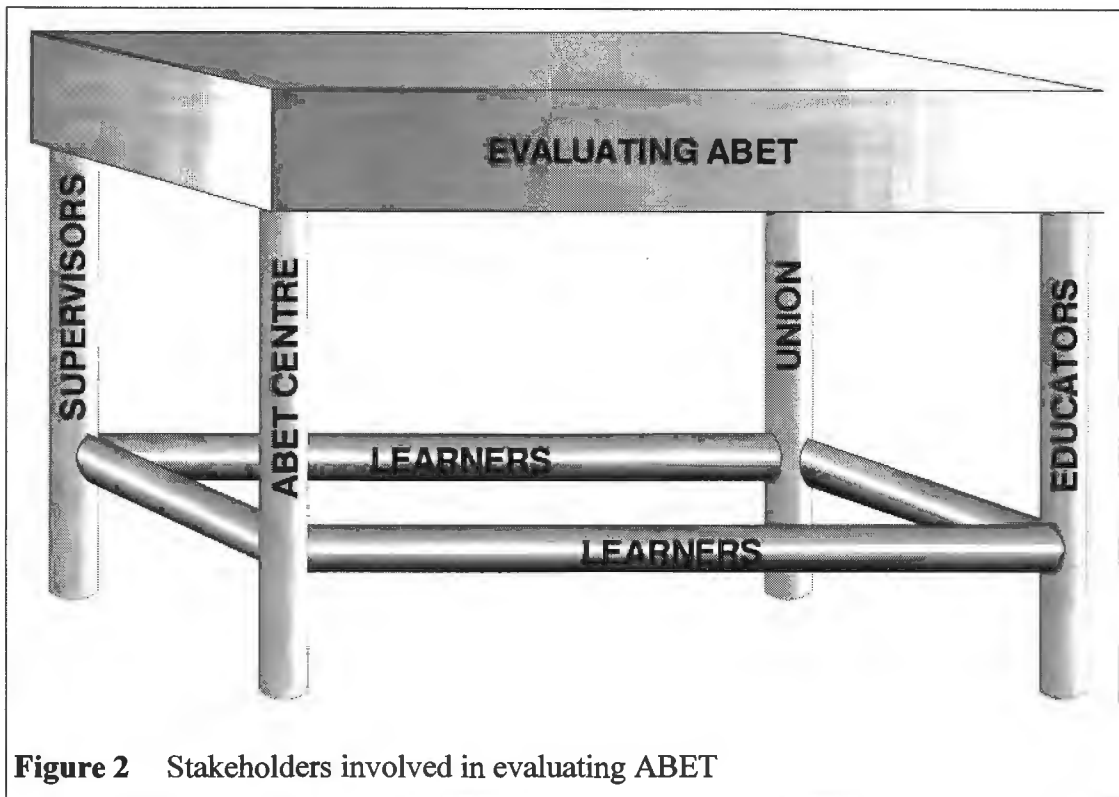
and to make the evaluation rewarding to them". Stakeholders include those individuals or entities that will be affected by the evaluation.

Geis and Smith (1992:145) continue by stating that "the current thinking in evaluation is that the inclusion of all stakeholders (or at least representatives of all stakeholder groups) will have positive effects on the evaluation. Positive effects include the cooperation of sources, the development of appropriate contexts for the evaluation report, and assistance in interpreting results of an evaluation realistically and in a balanced way". Mikulecky and d'Adamo-Weinstein (1991:496) point out that at times business leaders look at literacy programmes as either a charity expense or as something one sub-contracts to a vendor. Programme quality is upgraded when funders see workplace literacy programmes the same way they see any other cost of business which must be routinely evaluated and monitored.

As was pointed out earlier, an evaluation is done in the service of decision making, and it should provide useful information for the decision makers. These decision makers include the learners on the programme; the educators; the programme administrator or the head of the ABET centre who has the responsibility of managing human resources and planning; the supervisors or managers of the learners who work with their employees and may be most aware of the educational needs; and the union which endorses the programme and can help convince their members to become learners. In conclusion, by including all the stakeholders in the evaluation process, the evaluation system "can most meaningfully reflect the usefulness of training to the company and to the individual in the company" (Bolar, 1970:265). An in-depth discussion of the stakeholders involved in this study follows in the next sub-section.

The researcher represented the key stakeholders in the ABET domain as depicted in Figure 2, on the next page:





**Figure 2** Stakeholders involved in evaluating ABET

It must be pointed out that the "supports" of this model may be changed according to the stakeholders involved in any given ABET centre set-up. An ABET centre in a rural community for example, would not have union involvement, but may have funders as one of its stakeholders. Critical to the process, however, are the learners and these "supports" cannot be replaced as they are the pivotal focus of the learning process. This type of evaluation where all the stakeholders are involved, is known as a 360° evaluation as the evaluation encompasses a full "circle" and all the relevant parties are involved in the process.

### **2.6.6 The role of the stakeholders in the evaluation process**

This section examines in detail the roles of the various stakeholder.

#### **2.6.6.1 ABET learners**

Connolly (1987:232) states that learner "evaluation is assessing the effectiveness of training programs by asking participants *what* they learned and *how* they have been able to use it". Reeves and Jensen (1972:42) observe that for many years adult education centres have made use of some sort of participant evaluation in an attempt to ascertain the effectiveness of their

programmes. The motivation for participant evaluation usually arises from the expectation that the learners are in the best position to determine the potential worth of a programme within the context of their own work environment. Many learner evaluations focus extensively on results obtained in final examinations. Randall (1960:189) points out that very often “pre-tests and post-tests are given to the training group and any differences between the two results are attributed to the training program”. This may be the case, but the danger of such assumptions is that there is no way to determine whether the changes in scores occurred as a result of the training or other unrelated influences. Although it is very important for learners to undergo an initial placement assessment, and ultimately write a final examination, the question which emerges is whether the learners are able to take the knowledge and skills learnt on the course and apply them to the workplace or in their personal lives. What about the learners’ improved effectiveness and efficiency; their increased confidence; and their ability to communicate better ... these issues cannot be captured convincingly in a post-course examination. If a learner fails an examination for example, has no learning taken place? If there are no changes in pre-test and post-test scores, does that mean that no learning took place? Too much emphasis is placed on the final results of a course, and many education centres pride themselves of saying that 85% of their learners passed the final examination, but how effective was the learning in terms of transferring it to outside the classroom? Bolar (1970:267) points out that it is important for the learner to see education “not as an end in itself, but as an input to his growth”, both in the workplace and in his personal life, in other words, learning is not limited to a certain number of years attending classes, but it should be seen as part of lifelong learning.

As Breen (1991:15) points out, learners "come with a wide range of skills, experiences and perceptions" and these should be taken into account when evaluating the effectiveness of a programme. Breen (1991:19) continues by saying that learners play a critical role in the evaluation process as so often the learners' voices "are sometimes not heard, despite the fact that they are probably most affected by problems". Connolly (1987:232) states that the learners’ evaluations of the effectiveness of a programme are as valid as those of their supervisors and managers.

### **2.6.6.2 Educators**

Educators are directly involved in their learners' learning process and play a critical role in ensuring that their learners are provided with the most opportune conditions for optimal learning. It is therefore important for educators to reflect on their learners' learning, as well as the progress made in the classroom.

### **2.6.6.3 Supervisors/managers**

Burt and Saccomano (1995:1) state that evaluations in the workplace "seek to determine if the attention given to improving basic skills and English language proficiency has made a change in the participant and in the workplace". Scott (1971:283) states that "before the amount of benefit to the trainee's organization can be determined, the degree of change must be measured in the trainee's work environment. It is there and only there that the time, money and effort invested in a training program can be evaluated and justified". By involving supervisors and managers in the evaluation process, strengthens their own sensitivity to their employees' functioning and needs (BCEL 1987:9). Supervisors and managers play a very important role in their employees' learning process, and, as Bolar (1970:269) points out, education "gets reinforced if the immediate superiors indicate a positive attitude". Bennett and Clasper (1993:29.15) point out that post-training - and 'during-training' - evaluation examines whether the instruction provided was appropriate for the learners to transfer their skills to the work place. Owing to the fact that this form of evaluation requires a lot of time and effort, it is often overlooked. Bennett and Clasper (1993:29.15) state that "it evaluates the training with respect to actual job requirements, which is the whole purpose for the training". They continue by stating that this gauges the impact on the bottom line of the organisation and assists in authenticating the validity of the training and substantiate the training investment.

Unfortunately, as French (1990:10) points out, "management judgments of literacy projects have at times proved to be deeply flawed; either management fails to see real development because they expect literacy courses to be like production lines, or is taken in by superficial and sentimental considerations. Regrettably, decisions to extend or suspend expensive investments in literacy frequently appear to be made in passing over business lunches".

#### **2.6.6.4 ABET Centre**

An evaluation cannot be done properly if the centre or organisation is unclear as to where it is going, and what results it wants to achieve. Breen (1991:11) states that it is important for organisations to move away from being reactive and merely responding to external or unexpected forces, and become more proactive. By doing an evaluation, organisations can become more proactive, insofar as they can plan better and develop optimally.

#### **2.6.6.5 Union**

Hofmeyer (1993:33) states that unions have very definite and specific views on issues such as literacy, numeracy and adult basic education courses, and the recognition of informally acquired skills. According to *COSATU's shop stewards' guide* (1991:9), "unions have the goal of changing society and a vision of what people want and need. So unions must be involved in determining the content of the courses ..... also, unions are closer to workers and so are best able to ensure that courses meet the needs of workers and really empower workers to participate in training programmes and decision-making structures". Apart from being involved in the content of the course, unions also need to be involved in the evaluation process to ascertain whether the programme's objectives are being met; whether the learners receive nationally accredited qualifications; whether the education their members are receiving allows them to participate more fully in career paths; whether the course links up to other educational and training opportunities; and whether the skills acquired on the course can be transferred to other jobs.

The above discussion highlights the vital role that all the stakeholders and decision makers play in the evaluation process.

#### **2.6.7 When should an evaluation take place?**

The purpose, the role and the stakeholders involved in the evaluation have been discussed, and the focus of this sub-section is on when an evaluation needs to take place. The following three options are offered by Breen (1991:20) in terms of scheduling an evaluation:

- *Regular, overall programme evaluation*

This may be appropriate for fairly well established centres, where the evaluation would be

conducted quite intensely at a single session which requires a certain block of time.

- *Specific or periodic evaluation*

This takes place when specific aspects of a centre's work is evaluated.

- *Ongoing evaluation*

This entails looking at all aspects of the centre's work, but one aspect at a time, in which case the flow from evaluation to planning and action would need to be consistent.

Geis and Smith (1992:138) emphasise that "the important point is that evaluation may occur at any time and with any frequency. It depends on the purpose of the evaluation". They also caution however, that "the concept of evaluation as a one-shot, occasional effort is nonproductive". Chang (1991:471) discusses formative and summative evaluation. Typically, formative evaluation is conducted continuously during the ongoing cycles of a programme thus indicating areas of strength and weakness of the programme. Summative evaluation is conducted at the end of a programme with the purpose of determining the continuation of the programme and to determine successful achievement of goals. Formative and summative evaluations are discussed in section 2.6.8.3.

Breen (1991:18) stipulates that "evaluation and planning should ultimately be integrated into the ongoing work of literacy organizations. Ideally, it should happen not in response to a crisis, but in anticipation of constantly changing needs and priorities". He continues by saying that by putting things on hold to take an analytical and critical look at what is being done may seem impossible, but an evaluation can be worked into the regular activities of an organisation.

### **2.6.8 Different methods on how to evaluate**

In this sub-section, different methods to use when doing an evaluation will be looked at, and includes the following:

- levels of evaluation
- action research
- formative and summative evaluations

### 2.6.8.1 Levels of evaluation

There are several components to an effective evaluation process. One of the most comprehensive and widely referenced models is that of Donald Kirkpatrick. According to Kirkpatrick (1979), there are four levels to consider when evaluating, namely:

- *reaction*
- *learning*
- *behaviour*, and
- *results*.

Kirkpatrick (1979:79) defines *reaction* as how well the learners like or liked a particular programme. In effect, it measures how satisfied the learners are with the programme, and it is important to ascertain how people feel about the programmes they attend. Kirkpatrick (1987:17) continues by stating that “this feedback from participants is a first indication of the effectiveness of the program. And decisions are often made on the basis of reactions”. Some educators and trainers refer to the questionnaires relating to reactions of learners as ‘happiness sheets’. Fisher and Weinberg (1988:73) state that the typical instrument to gather information regarding reactions was a brief, hastily constructed, open-ended questionnaire. Birnbrauer (1987:191) points out, however, that “while gauging trainees’ reactions can be valuable to course presenters and designers, this level of evaluation may lack the precision necessary for meaningful revision. There is little correlation between how trainees feel about a program and what they have learned - or more importantly, what they will do on the job because of it”. Kirkpatrick (1979:82) states, however, that evaluation has only begun when looking at reactions of learners. He continues by stating that although the educator or the evaluator has done a good job of measuring the learners’ reactions to a programme, there is still no guarantee that any learning has taken place. There is also no indication that the learners’ behaviour will change as a result of the programme. Carnevale and Schulz (1990:15) echo this by claiming that “participant reactions are easy to collect but provide little substantive information about training’s worth”. However, they continue to say that most educators believe that learners’ favourable reactions are crucial to a programme’s success and that learners whose reactions are favourable tend to be more receptive to the material and consequently more likely to use it on the job. Boverie *et. al.* (1994) state that if educators continue using learner reactions as the only means of evaluation - and

management allows such use - the outcome can be deceptive and very costly.

In the second level, *learning*, “we want to determine what knowledge and skills were learned and what attitudes were changed. These are the three ingredients that can cause changes in on-the-job behavior” (Kirkpatrick, 1987:18). This element does not look at the on-the-job use or application of the knowledge, skills and attitudes learnt on the course, in other words it does not look at the transfer of knowledge and skills outside the classroom. The questions one could ask here are *what knowledge and skills were learned?* and *what attitudes were changed?* According to Birnbrauer (1987:191), *knowledge* refers to what learners know as a result of attending a course; *skills* refers to particular skills which were acquired on the course; and *attitude* refers to attributes such as co-operativeness, innovation, etc. In a questionnaire or interview, learners could state what they have learnt, and also the educators - by means of ongoing assessments during the programme - can provide information as to what knowledge and skills the learners acquired on the course. Antheil and Casper (1986) point out that the demonstration of a skill in a learning situation, however, merely indicates whether a learner can use that skill, and not whether he will be able to use it outside the classroom.

Kirkpatrick (1987:17) states that for the third level, *behaviour*, “we must go out of the classroom”, and in itself, this becomes a difficult and time-consuming activity. Boverie *et al.* (1994) state that “this level of evaluation not only assesses the performance of the person who receives the training, but also provides valuable feedback to those involved in redesigning the existing training programs or in designing programs to meet future goals”. This information is also useful for those who evaluate the effectiveness of the overall programme. Birnbrauer (1987:192) states that this is “what trainees actually do as a result of the training program”, in other words, do they use their newly acquired knowledge and skills? By applying these newly-acquired skills, there should be certain changes in an individual’s behaviour. Bolar (1970:265) points out that one could classify such changes as “changes in individual characteristics, attitudes; changes in work behaviour ...; changes in work performance/output and other end results”. Scott (1971:283) states that the fundamental question - did change occur? - must be clearly answered before any realistic endeavour can be made to evaluate the benefit of training. Katz (1956) states that if an

individual is going to change his behaviour at work, there must be five basic requirements:

- he must want to improve
- he must recognise his own weaknesses
- he must work in a permissive environment
- he must have some help from someone who is interested and skilled
- he must have an opportunity to try out his newly acquired knowledge and skills.

Friedlander (in Bolar, 1970:256) says that emphasis “is not only upon behavioral change in the individual but also upon change of the individual within his organizational context, and changes in the organizational context or organic system of which the individual is one interacting part”. Endres and Kleiner (1990:6) suggest a multi-dimensional on-the-job evaluation in which feedback is obtained from a number of people who directly or indirectly are involved in the learning process, for example the learners and their supervisors. By using these forms of feedback, “the built-in bias of the evaluator can be reduced as the number of evaluators having different perspectives is increased”.

Birnbrauer (1987:192) states that the fourth level, *results*, assists in identifying how the training can change organisational functions. It looks at issues such as reduction in costs, turnover, absenteeism, and grievances. According to Kirkpatrick (1987:19), the most difficult stage of evaluation is to ascertain what final results were achieved as a result of the training programme. In fact, he (1979:89) points out that “there are ... so many complicating factors that it is extremely difficult if not impossible to evaluate certain kinds of programs in terms of results”. The objectives of education programmes can be stated in terms of results desired. In the ABET domain, some results could include empowering staff members to communicate more effectively in the workplace; to become more confident in the workplace; and to improve their interaction with other staff members. This is, however, very difficult to measure objectively.

#### **2.6.8.2 Action research**

Traditional research often focuses on merely recording events, formulating explanations and hypothesizing about the outcomes, and is often completed when a final report has been written. The primary purpose of action research, however, is its use as a practical tool for solving problems experienced by people in their lives. Action research can be defined as “a



systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical and undertaken by participants in the inquiry” (McCutcheon and Jung 1990:148), and “a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out” (Kemmis and McTaggart 1990:5). Within these definitions there are four basic key issues: empowering of participants; collaboration through participation; acquisition of knowledge; and social change. Zuber-Skerrit (1992:2) states that the course of action which the researcher takes in order to achieve these key issues is a spiral of action research cycles which comprise four major phases: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. A project proceeds through these phases with each of these being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated.

Action research can

- revise goals and procedures (*what things are being done, and how are they being done?*)
- evaluate effectiveness (*to what extent are objectives being met, and how effective is the work being done?*)
- plan activities and strategies (*what needs to be done, and how can it be done?*)
- resolve specific problems and crises by defining the problem; exploring its context; analysing its component parts; and developing strategies for its resolution.

Stringer (1996) provides a basic routine for action research:

- look
  - relevant information is gathered
  - a picture describing the situation is formed
- think
  - the situation is explored and analysed by asking what is happening
  - the situation is interpreted and explained by stating how and why things are the way they are
- act
  - plan
  - implement
  - evaluate

This is a cycle which operates on a continuous basis, and is not as clear cut as presented above. While the researcher is involved at the thinking stage of a problem, another problem may emerge requiring the researcher to return to the previous stage.

In ABET, groups of participants taking part in an action research project would include the learners, their educators, the management of the ABET centre, other community members, or if the research takes place in an industry, the learners' managers, and the unions. This study undertakes an action research "type" programme which is intended to encourage all participants to move through the stages mentioned above. The research design is referred to in chapter 3.

### **2.6.8.3 Formative and summative evaluations**

Much focus is given in the literature to programme evaluation. Rogers (1986:173) states that formative evaluation is the "ongoing evaluation that is inherent in the learning process itself", that is, it takes place during the planning or delivery of an instructional programme, and is part of a continuing system of self-renewal where the issues being evaluated are looked at on an ongoing basis. Some reasons for conducting a formative evaluation are to provide programme directors with information needed to improve a programme; to identify any problem areas; to provide information on any instructional modifications which may need to take place; or to inform stakeholders regarding the progress towards the programme's objectives. One of the benefits of formative evaluation is that whatever is being evaluated can be modified immediately.

Rogers (1986:173) asserts that summative evaluation, on the other hand, takes place "at the end of the programme of learning", that is, it takes place after an instructional programme has been completed. It provides a rationale for the future selection of programmes of study, or it could be used to make judgments about a programme's worth or merit. Its primary purpose in education is to determine what individuals have learnt over a period of time and to report on any progress which has been made.

### **2.6.9 What can be done with the information collected?**

Once the evaluation has taken place and the information has been collected, it could be used in the following ways:

- as a springboard for further decisions
- as a data base or
- as a resource.

What the ABET centre needs to ask is what will be done with the information gathered from an evaluation. Breen (1991:14) provides an answer to this by stating that "the point is to take past experiences and learn from them, so that there is a solid base for problem-solving, trouble-shooting and planning". In addition, information obtained from an evaluation process can be stored in a data base and used for staff orientation and further educator training; it can also provide the material for an annual report (Breen 1991:17); it can provide all the stakeholders involved with valuable input regarding the effectiveness of the ABET Centre; it can be disseminated to other ABET centres, so that the ABET field can be enriched and unnecessary mistakes could be avoided. According to Burt and Saccomano (1995:3), "a rigorous and complete evaluation can identify replicable best practices, enabling a program to serve as a model for other workplace ... programs".

### **2.6.10 Summary**

This sub-section undertook the following: Firstly, to highlight that evaluation is not a one time event but rather a systematic approach during the entire process which includes selecting, collecting and analysing information in order to feed through to decision making. Fundamental to the entire process is the value which is assigned to judge the amount, degree, condition, worth, and quality or effectiveness of something. Evaluation can either celebrate success or be instrumental in imposing or correcting a problem area. Secondly, it emerged that the reason for evaluation was to inform decision making and planning, in order to determine the value of progress. Next, the role of evaluation was discussed and many viewpoints came to light but the prominent one was that it checks whether all the stakeholders' goals are being met effectively and whether it affected change in the

organisation and its employees. Fourthly, the vital role of the stakeholders and decision makers in the evaluation process was discussed; followed by a detailed description of the role of the stakeholders in the evaluation process. This was followed by a discussion on when an evaluation should take place. Finally, how to evaluate was describe. This sub-section concluded with a discussion on what can be done with the information which was gathered.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter dealt with different authors' views on classroom interaction; questions; learners' errors; treatment of errors by the educator; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning.

In the section on classroom interaction, input and interaction were discussed. Various views of input in second language acquisition were presented, and Krashen's Monitor Model of second language learning was explained. Interaction in second language acquisition was elucidated with particular reference to interactional features; the pedagogic importance of interaction; the social nature of interaction; aspects of interaction management and the management of learning; pedagogic implications; and discourse analysis. The discourse which takes place in the classroom was presented by focusing on the educator's as well as the learners' language.

A pivotal interactional feature which occurs frequently in the classroom is the use of questions, both by the educator and by the learners. Therefore, questions were dealt with in the second section of this chapter as questions are fundamental tools to learning a language and to communicate. This section explained the different types of questions used in the classroom. Bloom's taxonomy which classifies questions with reference to the development of intellectual or cognitive skills into six categories from the most simple to the most complex was elucidated. Questions relating to the affective domain were also presented and explained. As the way in which the educator asks questions in the classroom plays a critical role in the learners' acquisition of the language, the educator's questioning behaviour was explicated.

A subsequent section dealt with the errors which learners make in the classroom and how this impacts on the acquisition of language, as well as the interaction which takes place in the classroom. In order to do this, an historical perspective regarding how educators view errors in the classroom was provided; a differentiation was made between errors and mistakes; and the significance of learners' errors was explained. Various sources of learners' errors were presented; the four stages of interlanguage development were explained; and the concept of fossilization was introduced.

Linked to the section on errors, is the issue of how educators treat their learners' errors when they occur in the classroom. The section on treatment of errors explained Vigil and Oller's affective and cognitive feedback model and its application to the teaching and learning situation; various issues such as why errors should be treated, when errors should be treated, how errors should be treated, which errors should be treated, and who should treat them were highlighted.

This chapter highlighted the importance of evaluating language learning to ascertain or evaluate whether the language learning that takes place in the classroom is effective, both in the classroom situation and in the outside world. In order to do this, the purpose and role of evaluation were elucidated; the key stakeholders and their roles in the evaluation process were examined. The section also discussed different ways of doing an evaluation, and a brief account was given as to what can be done with the information once the evaluation has taken place.

The next chapter deals with the research instruments used to analyse classroom interaction; questions; the learners' errors; the educators' treatment of their learners' errors; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning.



## research design

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, different authors' views on classroom interaction; questions; errors; treatment of errors; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning were presented. This chapter focuses on the instruments used to analyse these aspects within an Adult Basic Education and Training programme. The context of this investigation will be expounded; as will be the framework used to undertake the classroom interaction analysis. This chapter also undertakes to explore the type of questions educators ask in the classroom, how an error analysis is used to identify typical errors, and the methodology used to uncover how educators treat their learners' errors will be described. Finally, the various questionnaires which were used to ascertain the effectiveness of learning at the ABET Centre will be presented and discussed.

### 3.2 CONTEXT

It is pertinent to note that this investigation was a longitudinal study which took place over a period of six months at First National Bank's Adult Education Centre in Johannesburg. Four ABET classes were involved in this study, namely a pre-level 1 class (which is a class with learning differences), a level 1 class, a level 2 class, and a level 3 class. Fifty five learners, four educators, thirty eight learners' supervisors, and the management of the ABET Centre concerned, took part in this study. In order to analyse the interactions that occur in the

various classrooms, raw data was collected by means of video and tape recordings. These recordings were then transcribed onto paper and categorised for analysis. Each class was video and tape recorded twice during the period of the study, once at the beginning and once towards the end of the period. Written texts from the learners were collected once a month during this six month period. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning which took place at the Centre, learners and their educators were requested to complete a questionnaire every month for six months. The learners' supervisors were requested to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the six month period. As the learners write the Independent Examinations Board examinations, a random sample of these examinations were analysed in order to establish the level of questions asked, and whether learners were being prepared in the classes to respond to such questions.

### **3.3 CLASSROOM INTERACTION**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

In this section, the framework which was used to undertake the classroom interaction analysis will be explained. Lessons from ABET pre-level 1, level 1, level 2, and level 3 were video and tape recorded at the beginning and towards the end of the course.

#### **3.3.2 Framework to be used**

For the purposes of this study the framework similar to the one used by Dreyer (1990) will be used. She combined the frameworks of Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), and Ellis (1984). Sinclair and Coulthard's framework enables a researcher to code the various interactions taking place in the second language classroom, because of its ability to cope with most educator-learner interactions in the classroom. Ellis' framework enables a researcher to discuss the various identified discourse patterns. In his framework, the researcher included the type of affective and cognitive questions educators asked in the lesson; how the educator treated any errors made by the learners, and whether these were untreated or treated, and if treated, whether it was done immediately or delayed, and how these were treated, either by repetition or by rephrasing. The learners' errors as well as their questions are included in the

matrix. See Appendix C for the matrix used to analyse the classroom language interactions.

Only *classes of moves* and *classes of acts* are taken from Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975:40-44) framework, and used as they are:

### 3.3.2.1 Classes of acts

| <i>symbol</i> | <i>label marker</i> | <i>realisation and definition</i>  |
|---------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>m</b>      | marker              | Realised by a closed class of items: <i>well, okay, now, good, right, alright</i> . Its function is to mark boundaries in the discourse.   |
| <b>s</b>      | starter             | Realised by a statement, question or command. Its function is to provide information about or direct attention to or thought towards an area in order to make a correct response to the initiation more likely.  |
| <b>el</b>     | elicitation         | Realised by a question. Its function is to request a linguistic response.  |
| <b>ch</b>     | check               | Realised by a closed class of polar questions concerned with being "finished" or "ready", having "problems" or "difficulties", being able to "see" or "hear". They are "real" questions, in that for once the educator doesn't know the answer. If she does know the answer, it is a directive not a check. The function of checks is to enable the educator to ascertain whether there are any problems preventing the successful progress of the lesson. |



|           |             |   |
|-----------|-------------|---|
| <b>d</b>  | directive   | Realised by an imperative. Its function is to request a non-linguistic response.  |
| <b>i</b>  | informative | Realised by a statement. It differs from other uses of statement in that its sole function is to provide information. The only response is an acknowledgment of attention and understanding.  |
| <b>p</b>  | prompt      | Realised by a closed class of items: <i>go on, come on, hurry up, quickly, have a guess</i> . Its function is to reinforce a directive or elicitation by suggesting that the educator is no longer requesting a response but expecting or even demanding one. |
| <b>cl</b> | clue        | Realised by a statement, question, command, or moodless item. It is subordinate to the head of the initiation and functions by providing additional information which helps the learner to answer the elicitation or comply with the directive.               |
| <b>cu</b> | cue         | Realised by a closed class of which we have only three exponents: <i>hands up, don't call out, is John the only one</i> . Its sole function is to evoke an (appropriate) bid.   |
| <b>b</b>  | bid         | Realised by a closed class of verbal and non-verbal items: <i>Sir, Ma'm</i> , educator's name, raised hand, heavy breathing, finger clicking. Its function is to signal a desire to contribute to the discourse.  |
| <b>n</b>  | nomination  | Realised by a closed class consisting of the names of all the learners, <i>you</i> with contrastive stress,   |

*anybody, yes*, and one or two idiosyncratic items such as *who hasn't said anything yet*. The function of nomination is to call on or give permission to a learner to contribute to the discourse.

|            |             |   |
|------------|-------------|---|
| <b>ack</b> | acknowledge | Realised by <i>yes, OK, mm, wow</i> , and certain non-verbal gestures and expressions. Its function is simply to show that the initiation has been understood and, if the head was a directive, that the learner intends to react.                                  |
| <b>rep</b> | reply       | Realised by statement, question, moodless and non-verbal surrogates such as nods. Its function is to provide a linguistic response which is appropriate to the elicitation.   |
| <b>rea</b> | react       | Realised by a non-linguistic action. Its function is to provide the appropriate non-linguistic response defined by the preceding directive.   |
| <b>com</b> | comment     | Realised by a statement and tag question. It is subordinate to the head of the move and its function is to exemplify, expand, justify, provide additional information.  |
| <b>acc</b> | accept      | Realised by a closed class of items: <i>yes, no, good, fine</i> , and repetition of learner's reply all with neutral low fall intonation. Its function is to indicate that the educator has heard or seen and that the informative, reply or react was appropriate. |
| <b>e</b>   | evaluate    | Realised by statements and tag questions including  |

words and phrases such as *good, interesting, team point*, commenting on the quality of the reply, react or initiation, also *yes, no, good, fine*, with a high fall of intonation, and repetition of the learner's reply with either high fall (positive), or a rise of any kind (negative evaluation).

|     |                |  |
|-----|----------------|--|
| ^   | silent stress  | Realised by a pause, of the duration of one or more beats, following a marker. It functions to highlight the marker when it is serving as the head of a boundary exchange indicating a transaction boundary.   |
| ms  | meta-statement | Realised by a statement which refers to some future time when what is described will occur. Its function is to help the learners to see the structure of the lesson, to help them understand the purpose of the subsequent exchange, and see where they are going.                               |
| con | conclusion     | Realised by an anaphoric statement, sometimes marked by slowing of speech rate and usually the lexical item <i>so</i> or <i>then</i> . Its function is to help the learners understand the structure of the lesson but this time by summarising what the preceding chunk of discourse was about. |
| l   | loop           | Realised by a closed class of items: <i>pardon, you what, eh, again</i> , with rising intonation and a few questions like <i>did you say, do you mean</i> . Its function is to return the discourse to the stage it was at before the learner spoke, from where it can                           |

proceed normally.

|          |       |   |
|----------|-------|---|
| <b>z</b> | aside | Realised by a statement, question, command, moodless, usually marked by lowering the tone of the voice, and not really addressed to the class. This category covers items which we have difficulty in dealing with. It is instances of the educator talking to herself: <i>it's freezing in here, where did I put my chalk?</i> |
|----------|-------|---|

### 3.3.2.2 Classes of moves

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Framing</b>   | Words such as <i>right, well, good, okay, now</i> recur frequently in the speech of all educator. These words function to indicate boundaries in the lesson, the end of one stage and the beginning of the next. A frame occurs invariably at the beginning of a lesson. |
| <b>Focusing</b>  | Frames, especially those at the beginning of a lesson, are often followed by a special kind of statement, the function of which is to tell the class what is going to happen.  |
| <b>Opening</b>   | The function of an opening move is to cause others to participate in an exchange.  |
| <b>Answering</b> | Its function is to be an appropriate response in the terms laid down by the opening move.  |
| <b>Follow-up</b> | Its function is to let the learner know how well she has performed.  |

### 3.3.2.3 Types of address

The term address is used to refer to the interactive roles that are used in the classroom. Ellis (in Dreyer 1990:45) states that the participants in a classroom can have one of four identities:

- E educator
- L learners
- C class (when all the learners are addressed as a single entity)
- G group (when any number of learners less than the whole class is addressed).

The next section deals with the type of questions which the educators and their learners ask in the classroom.

### 3.4 QUESTIONS

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

According to the matrix in Appendix C, all cognitive questions asked in the classroom are coded according to Bloom's taxonomy (discussed in section 2.3.3) as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. There is also a section for affective questions. A score is given for all the questions asked in each class and in each observation. The totals are added and a ratio between lower or higher order questions is calculated. The tallies were then transferred onto a table as shown below:

| LEVEL : _____  |               | 1st observation |   | 2nd observation |   |
|--|---------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|---|
|  |               | <i>f</i>        | % | <i>f</i>        | % |
| <b>Analysis of questions</b>                                 |               |                 |   |                 |   |
| <b>cognitive</b>   | knowledge     |                 |   |                 |   |
|  | comprehension |                 |   |                 |   |
|  | application   |                 |   |                 |   |
|  | analysis      |                 |   |                 |   |
|  | synthesis     |                 |   |                 |   |
|  | evaluation    |                 |   |                 |   |
| <b>affective</b>   |               |                 |   |                 |   |
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by educator</b> |               |                 |   |                 |   |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            |               |                 |   |                 |   |
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by learners</b> |               |                 |   |                 |   |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            |               |                 |   |                 |   |

In terms of the Independent Examinations Board examinations, eight Level 1 examination papers, eight Level 2 examination papers and eight level 3 examination papers, were randomly selected for this study. The questions were analysed and the results were input onto a table as shown below:

| exam          | knowledge |   | comprehension |   | application |   | analysis |   | synthesis |   | evaluation |   |
|---------------|-----------|---|---------------|---|-------------|---|----------|---|-----------|---|------------|---|
|               | f         | % | f             | % | f           | % | f        | % | f         | % | f          | % |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
|               |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |
| <b>TOTALS</b> |           |   |               |   |             |   |          |   |           |   |            |   |

where  $f$  = frequency

The next section deals with the instrument used to establish the learners' errors.

## **3.5 ERRORS**

### **3.5.1 Introduction**

An error analysis is a research approach to analysing the errors learners make in the classroom, and can provide a useful picture of the type of difficulty learners are experiencing. Norrish (1983:80) suggests that "..... the teacher can begin to build up a profile of each individual's problems and see to what extent his grasp of the target language is improving. By using error analysis as a monitoring device, the teacher can assess more objectively how his teaching is helping his students".

There are two approaches to error analysis. The first is to set up categories of errors based on a set of preconceptions about the learners' most common problems. The disadvantage of this approach is that the issue is prejudged and errors will be found to fill the different categories. However, the advantage is that it is easier and quicker to carry out as ticks are simply placed on the list of categories. The second approach, used in this research, is to group the errors as they are collected into particular areas of grammatical and semantic problems. The advantage of this approach is that the errors determine the categories chosen.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Norrish (1983:83) points out that "even a fairly simple collection of errors can indicate where either the teacher's work is not proving effective, or the syllabus itself is defective either as to the ordering of, or failure to include, certain language items". This implies that all language educators should do a small-scale error analysis to ascertain whether they need to focus on certain language items which their learner are struggling with.

### **3.5.2 Written errors**

In order to analyse learners' written errors, ninety pieces of written text were randomly selected from pre-level 1 and level 1; level 2; and level 3 ABET learners. These written texts reflected the learners' work over a period of six months. It was also important that these

written texts formed part of creative and free writing exercises and not gap-fill or drill exercises. Pre-level 1 and level 1 writings were grouped together as many pre-level 1 learners have learning differences and are involved in some form of remedial education. Some learners were still learning how to write and only managed to copy words but were unable to produce full sentences. See Appendix E for some of the pre-level 1 learners' work. Once the errors were identified, they were grouped together into various categories, for example, verbs, pronouns, word order, punctuation, articles, etc. The format used is as follows:

| ERROR | EXAMPLE | <i>f</i> |
|-------|---------|----------|
|       |         |          |

where the error is presented, an example of this type of error is provided and, the frequency with which this error occurs is indicated.

### 3.5.3 Oral errors

From the classroom interaction analysis carried out and discussed in 3.3, the oral errors were gleaned from the matrix (see Appendix C). These are then reported in the same format as the learners' written errors.

The next section deals with how the learners' errors are treated by their educators.

## 3.6 TREATMENT OF ERRORS

### 3.6.1 Introduction

It is important to establish how educators treat their learners' errors; when they treat these errors; and which ones they treat. In this section the instruments used to analyse the educators' treatment of errors will be discussed.



### **3.6.2 Educators' treatment of errors**

Using the classroom interaction matrix (see Appendix C) all the errors made by the learners were checked against the educator's response to these, and marked as either untreated or treated. Treated errors could either be treated immediately or later in the lesson. The educator could respond to these errors by repeating the corrected version of the incorrect utterance, or rephrase the utterance.

### **3.6.3 Error treatment forum**

A forum was held with all the educators at the ABET centre where they were asked why, how, and when they treat their learners' errors. The forum was video taped and the responses were transcribed.

### **3.6.4 Learners' responses to error treatment**

A mini survey was conducted where learners were asked whether they thought it was important for their educators to correct their errors, and to provide a reason for their responses.

The next section deals with the instruments used to evaluate the effectiveness of learning.

## **3.7 EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING**

### **3.7.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, various stakeholders who should participate in the evaluation process were identified. In this section, the instruments used to gather their opinions will be considered and the research process elucidated. A questionnaire was designed for each stakeholder involved in the learning process as depicted in Figure 2 on page 77; namely learners, educators, supervisors, the ABET Centre, and the union. Each stakeholders' questionnaire will be briefly examined in this section. Kirkpatrick's (1979) four levels of

evaluation referred to in section 2.6.8.1, were considered when compiling these questionnaires.

### **3.7.2 Learner questionnaire**

The questionnaire used to elicit the learners' opinions appears in Appendix F. In order to ensure that the learners understood the questions, the questionnaire was translated into Zulu, and the learners had to option of answering in either language. The Zulu version of the questionnaire appears in Appendix G. Learners completed this questionnaire once a month over a period of five months. The questionnaire will be discussed and the reasons for including certain items will be explained.

Lott (1967:244) points out that many “course evaluations are limited to having the students, and sometimes their supervisors, complete questionnaires at the end of the course ..... the questionnaires typically ask the students how they liked the course, what they did not like about it, and how they feel it might be improved”. This is valid information, but it does not tell us whether learning took place, and whether any learning was transferred to outside the classroom environment. One of the dangers of these evaluations is that if the course was presented by an educator with a friendly personality who has the ability to make the subject matter interesting, inevitably the learners will develop a liking for her and provide her with a positive rating, in other words their liking for her interferes with their objectivity and frankness. In this study, the researcher did not ask any questions where the learners had to say whether they liked the course or not, and whether they liked their educator or not. Most learners, particularly in the ABET class, would not say that they did not like the course or the educator. The reason for this is that for many adult learners, the fact that they are given a second opportunity (and at times the first and only opportunity) to attend classes and receive or improve their education, is a strong motivating factor and they would not risk saying that they do not like a course as they fear they may be asked to leave the course. This is particularly the case in industry where very often the employees pay for the education and learners are given time during working hours to attend classes.

In this study, the researcher undertook to ask questions which relate to what the learners

actually did in the classroom. It was suggested to the learners' educators that after each lesson they write on flipchart paper what was covered in the lesson. This information was placed on a wall, so when learners completed the evaluation form, they could refer to what was covered in the lessons over the period under observation. The first few questions of the questionnaire reflect this:

1. *What activities did you enjoy this month?*
2. *What activities did you find easy to do?*
3. *What activities did you find difficult to do?*
4. *What activities didn't you enjoy this month?*
5. *What activities taught you a lot?*
6. *What things do you want your tutor to explain again?*
7. *The lessons this month taught me .....*

These questions allow the learners to reflect on what activities they performed during the month; and whether they enjoyed them; whether they found them easy or difficult to do; which activities they did not enjoy and which ones taught them a lot; whether there are certain things that they want their educator to explain to them again; and what the lessons taught them. Question 6 was incorporated because very often an explanation on a certain issue may make sense while the educator is explaining it, but later on, the issue may become confusing or learners may realise that in fact they didn't understand it that well. This is important for the learners to reflect on, as it is very meaningful for them to "evaluate" what learning actually took place during the month, and to see in written format whether they are in fact progressing and whether learning is taking place. The answers to these questions are very useful for the educators as well, as it gives them insight into what types of activities their learners enjoy, for example. If learners enjoy a particular type of activity, then educators could base future lessons on such activities knowing that the learners enjoy them. Similarly, educators would also know what activities the learners did not enjoy in the class. Question 6 also provides educators with feedback regarding any issues which need further explanation. If the educator finds that most learners in the class need a certain concept explained again, part of a lesson could be dedicated to explaining that concept in a different way to ensure that all learners understand. If only one learner has difficulty with the concept, the educator could provide the learner with supplementary material or spend some time explaining the concept.

The next question was:

8. *How useful and interesting did you find the lessons this month?*

This question is also important for the educators as it gives them some insight into the usefulness of the lessons and whether learners found them interesting.

How does an educator know how effective her teaching is, and whether she is achieving her objectives? As Wohlking (1967:247) states, “without knowledge about the degree to which the students are understanding the teacher’s ‘communication signals’, the teacher may teach: (1) above the level of the students; (2) below the level of the students; (3) in areas of little or no interest to the students”. The educator must know how well she is hitting her educational target. Wohlking (1967:247) continues by saying that “when the teacher has a continuous flow of information about how he is communicating with his students, he can better focus his teaching efforts”. It is important for educators to know how their learners feel about the class environment, whether they feel free to ask questions, to share information or even to make mistakes. These are issues which should be considered in any adult education situation. Questions 9 to 14 assist educators in this regard.

Once the learning that has taken place in the class has been established, it is important for the learners to state whether they feel that what they learnt in the classroom was of value to them outside the classroom. In other words, were they able to use or transfer any of that learning to situations outside the classroom. The next two questions reflect this:

15. *What did you learn in the class this month that you were able to use at work?*

16. *What did you learn in the class this month that you were able to use at home?*

These questions allow learners to reflect on what activities they learnt in class and were able to use at work and/or at home.

### **3.7.3 Educator questionnaire**

This questionnaire used to elicit the educator’s opinions appears in Appendix H. Educators completed this questionnaire once a month over a period of five months. This was designed for the educators to reflect on their learners’ learning. In the first four questions of this questionnaire, the educator is required to say whether the learner participated in the class

activities; whether she spoke in the class and asked questions; and whether she responded to the educator's questions. In terms of classroom dynamics, it is important for the educator to know whether the learner contributed to the success of the lesson, and this is captured in question 5. Some learners want to learn, but do not feel comfortable in the learning environment and with the learning process. If this is the case, it is important for educators to ascertain why the learner is not comfortable, and what can be done about it - this is the essence of question 6. Questions 7 to 11 deal with the classroom activities, and the educator is required to reflect on some of the activities the learner enjoyed, which ones she could do, which were beneficial for her, and which ones she struggled with.

Questions 12 and 13 deal with how well and to what extent the learner understood the educator's instructions. Question 14 deals with the outcomes of the lesson, and whether the learner was able to achieve these outcomes; and if not, to detail what the problem might be and what the educator can do to assist the learner in achieving them. Questions 15 to 19 deal with adult education principles, that is, the learner comparing his findings with other learners; his co-operation with other learners; agreeing or disagreeing with a point of view; making suggestions; and raising questions about issues discussed in the class. Question 21 asks educators to think about any shifts they may have seen in their learners, namely, changes in vocabulary; use of language; expressive language; confidence; and participation in the classroom. Question 22, asking about the learner's enthusiasm, was included to detect whether there may be any problems - either within or outside the classroom - which could cause the learner to be less enthusiastic or maybe slightly withdrawn. Should the educator see that the learner is not enthusiastic, she may enquire as to what is happening. The last question on the questionnaire is to find out how many lessons the learner attended in that month, and also to see whether there is a trend in attendance or lack of attendance, particularly if a learner does not attend regularly.

#### **3.7.4 Supervisor/Manager questionnaires**

In order to ascertain whether the learning which took place in the classroom was transferred to the workplace, two questionnaires were designed for the learners' supervisors or managers. The first questionnaire (see Appendix I) was sent to the supervisors at the

beginning of the course. Supervisors were asked to rate their staff members' ability to express themselves in English; their confidence level; their participation in the workplace; and their interaction with other staff members in the workplace. Then, on a scale of 1 to 6, supervisors were asked to state the extent to which they felt they should be involved in their staff members' learning, with *1* being not involved at all and *6* being totally involved. The last question asked supervisors what areas they felt their staff members needed assistance from the education centre. This is an important question as there may be certain educational issues (for example, taking telephone messages) which supervisors want the education centre to address. Educators can then take this information and incorporate it into their lessons.

The second questionnaire for the supervisors (see Appendix J) was sent to them towards the end of their staff members' course at the ABET Centre. The first four questions were a follow-on from the first questionnaire, where supervisors were asked whether they had noticed any changes in their staff members' ability to express themselves in English; their confidence level; their participation in the workplace; and their interaction with other staff members in the workplace. Supervisors were then requested to rate the changes. Supervisors were also asked whether they had noticed an improvement in their staff members' use of English at work, and then a list of areas were provided for the supervisors to rate. In the next question, supervisors were provided with a scale of 1 to 4 - with *1* being great change and *4* being no change - and they needed to state whether they had noticed any changes in their staff members' general knowledge; communication skills; job skills in terms of reading, writing, speaking, listening; and life skills (e.g. filling in forms, budgeting, managing conflict, etc.). In question 7, supervisors were asked to state whether they felt that their staff members had benefitted from attending adult education classes, and then provide a reason for their answer. Question 8 looked at whether the supervisors had noticed any changes in their staff members' attitude, behaviour and social interaction, and then provide a reason for their answer. Many supervisors are very keen at first to allow their staff members to attend classes, but after a few months they ask their staff members to stop attending classes. Therefore, question 9 asks supervisors whether they would allow their staff members to continue with their studies. Question 10 asks supervisors whether they would recommend other staff members in the department to attend classes. In question 11, supervisors need to state their overall impression of their staff members' learning that took

place at the education centre. Supervisors also rated the service received from the education centre, and list any problems they may have experienced in dealing with the centre.

### 3.7.5 ABET Centre questionnaire

For the duration of this study, the ABET Centre questionnaire was to be completed once a year by the management of the ABET Centre (see Appendix K). It is divided into nine sections:

- **planning** - this looks at issues such as development plans, statement of scope, target number of learners, procedures for monitoring and evaluating, and aims and objectives
- **resources** - this looks at budget
- **provision** - this deals with issues such as marketing, availability of tuition, provision for adults with disabilities, and learning and reading materials
- **practice** - this looks at assessments, learning plans, lesson plans, and learners' progress
- **staffing** - this focuses on the educators employed at the ABET Centre
- **environment** - this looks at the learning environment at the ABET Centre
- **learner qualifications** - this focuses on the transferability and transportability of the learners' qualifications and whether the programmes are aligned with the National Qualifications Framework
- **transfer outside the classroom** - this looks at whether the knowledge and skills learned at the centre are transferred to the workplace and to the community, and
- **other** - which looks at miscellaneous issues.

### 3.7.6 Union questionnaire

This questionnaire, which is completed once a year by the organisations' union (see Appendix L), is very similar to the questionnaire completed by the management of the ABET Centre, except that the focus is from the union's perspective.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on the instruments used to analyse classroom interaction; questions; learners' errors; treatment of errors by the educators; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning. The next chapter deals with the research findings based on the data gleaned from the abovementioned instruments.





## research findings

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on the various instruments used to analyse classroom interaction; questions; errors; treatment of errors; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning. In this chapter the findings from the research will be presented.

### **4.2 CLASSROOM INTERACTION**

#### **4.2.1 Introduction**

The research findings presented in this section were gleaned from the classroom interaction matrix (Appendix C).

#### **4.2.2 Classroom interaction**

The total interactions which took place within the ABET classrooms, that is the educators' as well as the learners' interactions are presented on the next page. The findings are presented in a tabular form where the level and the classroom observation are found in the first column, the educator's interactions are in the second column and the learners' interactions are in the third column.

| <b>observation</b> | <b>educator's interactions</b> | <b>learners' interactions</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |                                |                               |
| observation 1      | 58%                            | 42%                           |
| observation 2      | 63%                            | 37%                           |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |                                |                               |
| observation 1      | 68%                            | 32%                           |
| observation 2      | 68%                            | 32%                           |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |                                |                               |
| observation 1      | 62%                            | 38%                           |
| observation 2      | 56%                            | 44%                           |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |                                |                               |
| observation 1      | 75%                            | 25%                           |
| observation 2      | 71%                            | 29%                           |

### 4.2.3 Breakdown of classroom interactions

#### 4.2.3.1 Initiations

The following table illustrates the interactions which were initiated by the educator and those that were initiated by the learners. Initiations include elicitations, checks, directives, informatives, prompts, clues, cues and nominations.

| observation        | educator's initiations | learners' initiations |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |                        |                       |
| observation 1      | 53.4%                  | 6.0%                  |
| observation 2      | 52.3%                  | 6.4%                  |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |                        |                       |
| observation 1      | 52.2%                  | 8.7%                  |
| observation 2      | 46.6%                  | 9.9%                  |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |                        |                       |
| observation 1      | 53.8%                  | 14.8%                 |
| observation 2      | 68.9%                  | 4.7%                  |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |                        |                       |
| observation 1      | 47.4%                  | 3.8%                  |
| observation 2      | 48.3%                  | 2.8%                  |

#### 4.2.3.2 Responses

The following table illustrates the interactions which required responses, and are tabulated according to the educator's responses and the learners' responses. Responses include replies, acknowledgments, and reactions.

| <b>observation</b> | <b>educator's responses</b> | <b>learners' responses</b> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |                             |                            |
| observation 1      | 2.1%                        | 89.9%                      |
| observation 2      | 1.9%                        | 89.7%                      |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |                             |                            |
| observation 1      | 3.7%                        | 89.8%                      |
| observation 2      | 6.8%                        | 78.3%                      |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |                             |                            |
| observation 1      | 6.3%                        | 65.5%                      |
| observation 2      | 1.6%                        | 67.6%                      |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |                             |                            |
| observation 1      | 1.7%                        | 82.8%                      |
| observation 2      | 2.3%                        | 90.6%                      |

### 4.2.3.3 Feedback

The following table illustrates the interactions which required feedback and are tabulated according to the educator's feedback and the learners' feedback. Feedback includes evaluations, comments and acceptances.

| <b>observation</b> | <b>educator's feedback</b> | <b>learners' feedback</b> |
|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |                            |                           |
| observation 1      | 32.1%                      | 3.8%                      |
| observation 2      | 38.6%                      | 3.9%                      |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |                            |                           |
| observation 1      | 24.9%                      | 1.5%                      |
| observation 2      | 25.7%                      | 11.8%                     |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |                            |                           |
| observation 1      | 37.1%                      | 19.2%                     |
| observation 2      | 25.7%                      | 27.7%                     |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |                            |                           |
| observation 1      | 43.0%                      | 12.9%                     |
| observation 2      | 33.1%                      | 6.7%                      |

#### 4.2.3.4 Other

The following table illustrates the interactions which do not fall into the initiation, response, or feedback framework and include items such as markers - a closed class of items such as *okay*, *alright* - starters which provide information about the start of a new section in the lesson, etc. The findings are tabulated according to the educator's and the learners' 'other' interactions.

| <b>observation</b> | <b>educator - other</b> | <b>learners - other</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |                         |                         |
| observation 1      | 12.4%                   | 0.3%                    |
| observation 2      | 7.2%                    | ---                     |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |                         |                         |
| observation 1      | 19.2%                   | ---                     |
| observation 2      | 20.9%                   | ---                     |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |                         |                         |
| observation 1      | 2.8%                    | 0.5%                    |
| observation 2      | 3.8%                    | ---                     |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |                         |                         |
| observation 1      | 7.9%                    | 0.5%                    |
| observation 2      | 16.3%                   | ---                     |

#### 4.2.4 IRF pattern

The frequency of the IRF (initiate - respond - feedback) pattern is presented below and an example is provided.

Educator “*What happened first?*” (initiate)  
 Learner “*First is getting up*” (respond)  
 Educator “*Good*” (feedback)

| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| observation 1      | 28.1% |
| observation 2      | 21.5% |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |       |
| observation 1      | 21.4% |
| observation 2      | 14.4% |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |       |
| observation 1      | 19.3% |
| observation 2      | 14.3% |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |       |
| observation 1      | 27.4% |
| observation 2      | 23.3% |

#### 4.2.5 IRF(F) pattern

The frequency of the IRF(F) (initiate - respond - feedback - feedback) pattern is presented below and an example is provided.

Educator “*So what do I write there?*” (initiate)  
 Learner “*4 pm*” (respond)  
 Educator “*4 pm*” (feedback)  
 Educator “*Good*” (feedback)

| Pre-level 1   |       |
|---------------|-------|
| observation 1 | 4.2%  |
| observation 2 | 7.6%  |
| Level 1       |       |
| observation 1 | 16.4% |
| observation 2 | 16.4% |
| Level 2       |       |
| observation 1 | 5.5%  |
| observation 2 | 0.7%  |
| Level 3       |       |
| observation 1 | 46.2% |
| observation 2 | 15.0% |



#### 4.2.6 IRI pattern

The frequency of the IRI (initiate - respond - initiate) pattern is presented below and an example is provided.

Educator “And *what’s this?*” (initiate)  
 Learner “*Egg*” (respond)  
 Educator “*Where do you get eggs from?*” (initiate)

|                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |       |
| observation 1      | 20.3% |
| observation 2      | 16.5% |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |       |
| observation 1      | 14.1% |
| observation 2      | 13.3% |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |       |
| observation 1      | 21.9% |
| observation 2      | 44.9% |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |       |
| observation 1      | 16.7% |
| observation 2      | 22.1% |

#### 4.2.7 IR (learner initiated) pattern

The frequency of the IR (initiate - respond) pattern is presented below and an example is provided.

Learner    *"I must write it down?"*    (initiate)  
Educator   *"Yes"*    (respond)

| <b>Pre-level 1</b> |      |
|--------------------|------|
| observation 1      | 1.4% |
| observation 2      | 2.4% |
| <b>Level 1</b>     |      |
| observation 1      | 1.2% |
| observation 2      | 3.7% |
| <b>Level 2</b>     |      |
| observation 1      | 6.8% |
| observation 2      | 0.7% |
| <b>Level 3</b>     |      |
| observation 1      | 1.8% |
| observation 2      | 0.5% |

The next section deals with the findings relating to questions.

### 4.3 QUESTIONS

#### 4.3.1 Analysis of classroom questions at pre-level 1, levels 1, 2 and 3

The table, as presented in section 3.4 was used to glean the data required for analysing the different types of questions asked by the educator as well as the learners. On the next four pages the tables with the data are presented.

| Pre-level 1  |               | 1st observation |      | 2nd observation |      |
|--|---------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|
|  |               | <i>f</i>        | %    | <i>f</i>        | %    |
| <b>cognitive</b>   | knowledge     | 238             | 88.9 | 45              | 45.9 |
|  | comprehension | 22              | 8.2  | 36              | 36.7 |
|  | application   | 3               | 1.1  | 3               | 3.1  |
|  | analysis      | 2               | 0.7  | 11              | 11.3 |
|  | synthesis     | 2               | 0.7  | 1               | 1.0  |
|  | evaluation    | 0               | 0    | 1               | 1.0  |
| <b>affective</b>   |               | 1               | 0.4  | 1               | 1.0  |
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by educator</b> |               | 267             |      | 97              |      |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            |               | 98 : 2          |      | 87 : 13         |      |
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by learners</b> |               | 31              |      | 7               |      |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            |               | 100 : 0         |      | 100 : 0         |      |

**Level 1**

|                  |               | 1st observation |      | 2nd observation |      |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|
|                  |               | <i>f</i>        | %    | <i>f</i>        | %    |
| <b>cognitive</b> | knowledge     | 210             | 68.2 | 119             | 55.9 |
|                  | comprehension | 31              | 10.1 | 40              | 18.8 |
|                  | application   | 26              | 8.4  | 11              | 5.2  |
|                  | analysis      | 32              | 10.4 | 26              | 12.2 |
|                  | synthesis     | 8               | 2.6  | 2               | 0.9  |
|                  | evaluation    | 0               | 0    | 0               | 0    |
| <b>affective</b> |               | 1               | 0.3  | 15              | 7.0  |

|  |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by educator</b> | 307     | 198     |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            | 87 : 13 | 86 : 14 |

|  |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by learners</b> | 18      | 26      |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            | 100 : 0 | 100 : 0 |

Level 2

|                  |               | 1st observation |      | 2nd observation |      |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|
|                  |               | <i>f</i>        | %    | <i>f</i>        | %    |
| <b>cognitive</b> | knowledge     | 154             | 79.0 | 31              | 38.3 |
|                  | comprehension | 11              | 5.6  | 15              | 18.6 |
|                  | application   | 16              | 8.2  | 7               | 8.6  |
|                  | analysis      | 12              | 6.2  | 20              | 24.7 |
|                  | synthesis     | 0               | 0    | 1               | 1.2  |
|                  | evaluation    | 0               | 0    | 3               | 3.7  |
| <b>affective</b> |               | 2               | 1.0  | 4               | 4.9  |

|  |        |         |
|--|--------|---------|
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by educator</b> | 193    | 77      |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            | 94 : 6 | 69 : 31 |

|  |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|
| <b>Total number of cognitive questions asked by learners</b> | 44      | 7       |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                            | 100 : 0 | 71 : 29 |

**Level 3**

|                  |               | 1st observation |      | 2nd observation |      |
|------------------|---------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|
|                  |               | <i>f</i>        | %    | <i>f</i>        | %    |
| <b>cognitive</b> | knowledge     | 155             | 53.8 | 65              | 35.1 |
|                  | comprehension | 71              | 24.7 | 69              | 37.3 |
|                  | application   | 35              | 12.2 | 12              | 6.5  |
|                  | analysis      | 23              | 8.0  | 38              | 20.5 |
|                  | synthesis     | 1               | 0.3  | 0               | 0    |
|                  | evaluation    | 2               | 0.7  | 0               | 0    |
| <b>affective</b> |               | 1               | 0.3  | 1               | 0.6  |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| <b>Total number of questions asked by educator</b> | 287    |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                  | 91 : 9 |

|            |
|------------|
| <b>184</b> |
| 79 : 21    |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| <b>Total number of questions asked by learners</b> | 18     |
| <b>lower : higher order ratio</b>                  | 94 : 6 |

|          |
|----------|
| <b>4</b> |
| 100 : 0  |

### 4.3.2 Analysis of questions of the Independent Examinations Board examinations

Using the table provided in section 3.4, the data from the various Independent Examinations Board examinations were analysed and the results appear below:

#### Level 1 Independent Examinations Board examinations

|               | knowledge |      | comprehension |      | application |      | analysis |      | synthesis |      | evaluation |     |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------------|------|-------------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|------------|-----|
|               | <i>f</i>  | %    | <i>f</i>      | %    | <i>f</i>    | %    | <i>f</i> | %    | <i>f</i>  | %    | <i>f</i>   | %   |
| nov 95        | 6         | 28.5 | 10            | 47.6 | 0           | 0    | 3        | 14.3 | 1         | 4.8  | 1          | 4.8 |
| apr 96        | 14        | 73.6 | 3             | 15.8 | 1           | 5.3  | 0        | 0    | 1         | 5.3  | 0          | 0   |
| jul 96        | 5         | 26.3 | 9             | 47.4 | 2           | 10.5 | 0        | 0    | 3         | 15.8 | 0          | 0   |
| oct 96        | 11        | 57.9 | 3             | 15.8 | 2           | 10.5 | 2        | 10.5 | 1         | 5.3  | 0          | 0   |
| mar 97        | 8         | 47.0 | 6             | 35.3 | 0           | 0    | 1        | 5.9  | 2         | 11.8 | 0          | 0   |
| jun 97        | 11        | 61.1 | 2             | 11.1 | 1           | 5.6  | 0        | 0    | 4         | 22.2 | 0          | 0   |
| nov 97        | 9         | 52.9 | 2             | 11.8 | 2           | 11.8 | 3        | 17.6 | 1         | 5.9  | 0          | 0   |
| nov 97-r      | 10        | 47.6 | 3             | 14.2 | 5           | 23.8 | 1        | 4.8  | 1         | 4.8  | 1          | 4.8 |
| <b>TOTALS</b> |           | 49.4 |               | 24.9 |             | 8.4  |          | 6.6  |           | 9.5  |            | 1.2 |

**Level 2 Independent Examinations Board examinations**

|          | knowledge |      | comprehension |      | application |      | analysis |      | synthesis |      | evaluation |      |
|----------|-----------|------|---------------|------|-------------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|------------|------|
|          | <i>f</i>  | %    | <i>f</i>      | %    | <i>f</i>    | %    | <i>f</i> | %    | <i>f</i>  | %    | <i>f</i>   | %    |
| may 95   | 4         | 14.3 | 16            | 57.1 | 3           | 10.7 | 1        | 3.7  | 2         | 7.1  | 2          | 7.1  |
| nov 95   | 7         | 29.1 | 11            | 45.8 | 1           | 4.2  | 1        | 4.2  | 3         | 12.5 | 1          | 4.2  |
| apr 96   | 2         | 7.1  | 19            | 67.9 | 2           | 7.1  | 1        | 3.6  | 3         | 10.7 | 1          | 3.6  |
| jul 96   | 14        | 51.9 | 6             | 22.2 | 2           | 7.4  | 2        | 7.4  | 1         | 3.7  | 2          | 7.4  |
| oct 96   | 6         | 21.4 | 8             | 28.6 | 7           | 25.0 | 4        | 14.3 | 3         | 10.7 | 0          | 0    |
| jun 97   | 3         | 15.0 | 9             | 45.0 | 4           | 20.0 | 0        | 0    | 2         | 10.0 | 2          | 10.0 |
| nov 97   | 2         | 8.8  | 15            | 65.2 | 3           | 13.0 | 0        | 0    | 3         | 13.0 | 0          | 0    |
| nov 97-r | 1         | 4.5  | 8             | 36.4 | 3           | 13.6 | 4        | 18.2 | 4         | 18.2 | 2          | 9.1  |

|        |      |      |      |     |      |     |
|--------|------|------|------|-----|------|-----|
| TOTALS | 19.0 | 46.0 | 12.6 | 6.4 | 10.8 | 5.2 |
|--------|------|------|------|-----|------|-----|



**Level 3 Independent Examinations Board examinations**

|        | knowledge |      | comprehension |      | application |      | analysis |      | synthesis |      | evaluation |     |
|--------|-----------|------|---------------|------|-------------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|------------|-----|
|        | <i>f</i>  | %    | <i>f</i>      | %    | <i>f</i>    | %    | <i>f</i> | %    | <i>f</i>  | %    | <i>f</i>   | %   |
| aug 94 | 3         | 16.7 | 4             | 22.2 | 7           | 38.9 | 0        | 0    | 3         | 16.7 | 1          | 5.5 |
| jul 95 | 0         | 0    | 8             | 36.4 | 7           | 31.8 | 4        | 18.2 | 3         | 13.6 | 0          | 0   |
| nov 95 | 5         | 17.9 | 11            | 39.2 | 2           | 7.1  | 4        | 14.3 | 5         | 17.9 | 1          | 3.6 |
| apr 96 | 2         | 6.0  | 13            | 38.2 | 12          | 35.3 | 3        | 8.8  | 3         | 8.8  | 1          | 2.9 |
| jul 96 | 7         | 20.6 | 14            | 41.2 | 4           | 11.8 | 6        | 17.6 | 1         | 2.9  | 2          | 5.9 |
| apr 97 | 6         | 21.4 | 9             | 32.1 | 3           | 10.7 | 5        | 17.9 | 5         | 17.9 | 0          | 0   |
| jun 97 | 5         | 13.1 | 21            | 55.3 | 0           | 0    | 3        | 7.9  | 9         | 23.7 | 0          | 0   |
| nov 97 | 5         | 18.5 | 9             | 33.3 | 4           | 14.8 | 7        | 26.0 | 2         | 7.4  | 0          | 0   |

TOTALS

14.3

37.3

18.8

13.8

13.6

2.2

The totals of the three levels of examinations are presented below:

|         | knowledge | comprehension | application | analysis | synthesis | evaluation |
|---------|-----------|---------------|-------------|----------|-----------|------------|
| level 1 | 49.4%     | 24.9%         | 8.4%        | 6.6%     | 9.5%      | 1.2%       |
| level 2 | 19.0%     | 46.0%         | 12.6%       | 6.4%     | 10.8%     | 5.2%       |
| level 3 | 14.3%     | 37.3%         | 18.8%       | 13.8%    | 13.6%     | 2.2%       |

The distribution between lower order and higher order questions as discussed in section 2.3.3, is presented below:

|         | lower | higher |
|---------|-------|--------|
| level 1 | 82.7% | 17.3%  |
| level 2 | 77.6% | 22.4%  |
| level 3 | 70.4% | 29.6%  |

The findings of the learners' errors are dealt with in the next section.

## 4.4 ERRORS

### 4.4.1 Introduction

The written errors obtained from the learners' writings are presented in tabular form. The errors are recorded in descending order from the most frequently occurring ones. The most common spelling errors found at each level are presented in Appendix M. The learners' oral errors obtained from the classroom interaction matrix (see Appendix C) are also presented in this section.

### 4.4.2 Written errors : pre-level 1 and level 1

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Legend:  |  |
| —        | omission   |
| [ ]      | reconstructed version                                |
| ...      | before, or after indicating continuation of sentence |
| <i>f</i> | frequency of error                                   |

| ERROR | EXAMPLE | <i>f</i> |
|-------|---------|----------|
|-------|---------|----------|

| PRONOUNS                             |   |    |
|--------------------------------------|---|----|
| proper noun/noun followed by pronoun | <i>Patric he is ... [Patrick is]</i><br><i>My sistay she ... [my sister]</i>          | 20 |
| omission                             | ___ <i>says ... [she says]</i><br><i>Shi is aske ___ moter [she asked her mother]</i> | 15 |
| his/her switched                     | <i>... i gav mee tea ... [she gave me tea]</i>  | 3  |

|  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| double pronoun   | <i>I me the Swazi man</i> [I am a Swazi man]  | 1  |
| <b>VERBS</b>   |   |    |
| present tense instead of past tense  | <i>She post the letter ...</i> [she posted the letter]  | 17 |
| <i>be</i> omitted before <i>verb + ing</i>                                     | <i>... boy sithing ...</i> [boy is sitting]<br><i>... how you filing</i> [how are you feeling?] | 9  |
| omission of <i>verb</i>  | <i>i happy</i> [I am happy]   | 6  |
| <i>verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + s</i>                                      | <i>He teach ...</i> [he teaches]<br><i>She get up early</i> [she gets up early]                 | 5  |
| <i>be + verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem</i>                                     | <i>Shi is aske ...</i> [she asks]<br><i>He is say ...</i> [he says]                             | 5  |
| <i>be + verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + ing</i>                               | <i>I am run to ...</i> [I am running to]<br><i>I am buy ...</i> [I am buying]                   | 4  |
| omission of <i>be</i>  | <i>Shis name anne</i> [her name is Anne]  | 3  |
| <i>be</i> omitted before <i>verb + stem + ed</i> (participle)                  | <i>... he scared ...</i> [he was scared]<br><i>I marred ...</i> [I am married]                  | 3  |
| <i>-ing</i> added instead of infinitive  | <i>... to reading the books</i> [to read the books]   | 1  |
| <i>be + verb stem + ed</i> (participle) for <i>verb stem + ed</i> (participle) | <i>He is saw snakes ...</i> [he saw snakes]   | 1  |
| <i>be + verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + ed</i>                                | <i>... he was see ...</i> [he saw]  | 1  |
| <i>ed</i> omitted after <i>be + participle verb stem</i>                       | <i>... taxi was stop ...</i> [taxi was stopped]   | 1  |
| incorrect usage  | <i>... i got my whife ...</i> [I have a wife]   | 1  |

| <b>PUNCTUATION</b>                      |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| no capital for first person singular    | <i>i see this snake ...</i>   | 15 |
| no capital letter to start new sentence | <i>... at house. and my family ...</i>  | 13 |
| fullstop at the end of each line        | <i>is mee is say iwant.<br/>slipheng tank you.</i>  | 12 |
| fullstop in mid sentence                | <i>I am at the. school ...</i>  | 12 |
| no fullstop                             | <i>I go back to my home my home i got<br/>...</i>   | 6  |
| capital letter in mid sentence          | <i>... my Farmily is happy ...</i>  | 3  |
| no question mark                        | <i>... how you filing [how are you<br/>feeling?]</i>  | 2  |
| no capital for proper names             | <i>... anne ...</i>   | 2  |
| <b>ARTICLES</b>                         |   |    |
| <i>Definite articles</i>                |   |    |
| omission                                | <i>___ Next day i ... [The next day I]<br/>She put ___ leter in ___ box at ___<br/>office [She put the letter in the box at<br/>the office]</i> | 13 |
| addition                                | <i>I go to the work ... [I go to work]</i>  | 8  |
| instead of indefinite article           | <i>I am the Swazi man [I am a Swazi<br/>man]</i>  | 1  |
| preposition instead of article          | <i>... post to leter ... [post the letter]</i>  | 1  |
| <i>Indefinite articles</i>              |   |    |
| omission                                | <i>I see ___ gell [I see a girl]<br/>I am ___ man [I am a man]</i>  | 11 |

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| a instead of Ø                                    | ... <i>a men</i> ... [men]<br>... <i>a snakes</i> ... [snakes]  | 3  |
| addition  | ... <i>to play a cricket</i> [to play cricket]  | 1  |
| <b>WORD ORDER</b>                                 |   |    |
| inversions, omission of words, unusual structures | <i>A frog i see</i> ... [I see a frog]<br>... <i>forose ckoole</i> [for the school]                                   | 13 |
| <b>SUBJECT VERB CONCORD</b>                       |   |    |
| no concord  | <i>My cheardran is</i> ... [my children are]<br><i>This snakes</i> ... [these snakes or this snake]                   | 8  |
| <b>SINGULAR/PLURAL</b>                            |   |    |
| omission of plural marker                         | <i>This shop i saleng bed_</i> ... [this shop sells beds]<br>... <i>8 grandchild__</i> [8 grandchildren]              | 7  |
| plural instead of singular                        | <i>mice</i> instead of mouse  | 2  |
| overgeneralization                                | <i>sheeps</i> for sheep   | 2  |
| <b>PREPOSITIONS</b>                               |   |    |
| omission  | <i>I gat up arly __ four</i> ... [I get up early at four]<br>... <i>is play ng __ bole</i> [is playing with the ball] | 4  |
| Ø instead of <i>at</i>                            | ... <i>weting __ taxi rank</i> [waiting at the taxi rank]   | 4  |
| <i>on</i> instead of <i>at</i>                    | ... <i>stop on the stop street</i> [stop at the stop street]  | 3  |
| <i>at</i> instead of <i>on</i>                    | ... <i>bird at the tree</i> ... [bird on the tree]  | 3  |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Ø instead of <i>in</i>  | ... <i>bottles ___ rubbish bin</i> ... [bottles in the rubbish bin]                      | 2 |
| Ø instead of <i>to</i>  | ... <i>she goes ___ playschool</i> [she goes to playschool]                              | 2 |
| <i>at</i> instead of <i>in</i>                                  | ... <i>working at Johannesburg</i> [working in Johannesburg]                             | 2 |
| <i>on</i> instead of <i>of</i>                                  | <i>on the top on the tree</i> ... [on top of the tree]                                   | 2 |
| Ø instead of <i>with</i>  | ... <i>he was play ___ the ball</i> [he was playing with the ball]                       | 1 |
| <i>from</i> instead of <i>to</i>                                | <i>post to letter from moter</i> ... [post the letter to the mother]                     | 1 |
| <i>from</i> instead of <i>by</i>                                | <i>I go to work from bicycle</i> ... [I go to work by bicycle]                           | 1 |
| <i>to</i> instead of <i>by</i>                                  | ... <i>i go to the bicycle</i> [I go by bicycle]   | 1 |
| <i>in</i> instead of <i>on</i>                                  | ... <i>man is werking in the rod</i> [man is working on the road]                        | 1 |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>  |  |   |
| confusion of <i>to</i> , <i>too</i> , <i>two</i>                | <i>I want some money two buy sheeps</i> [I want money to buy sheep]                      | 6 |
| present continuous <i>verb + ing</i> seen as two separate words | <i>play ng</i><br><i>look ng</i>   | 6 |
| confusion of <i>no</i> , <i>know</i> , <i>now</i>               | <i>I no to make a tea</i> [I know how to make tea]                                       | 4 |
| inconsistent spelling within same text                          | <i>houngre - hongre - houngr</i>   | 3 |
| inconsistency within same text in using definite articles       | <i>She put the letter in box at office</i> [she put the letter in the box at the office] | 3 |

|                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| omission of conjunction | ... 2 boy ___ 4 gall ... [2 boys and 4 girls] | 3 |
|-------------------------|---|---|

#### 4.4.3 Written errors : level 2

| ERROR | EXAMPLE | f |
|-------|---------|---|
|-------|---------|---|

| VERBS  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| present tense instead of past tense                    | ... <i>that is the way he die.</i> [that is the way he died]<br>... <i>we then exchange letters</i> [we then exchanged letters] | 20 |
| omission of verb                                       | ... <i>my son ___ ill</i> ... [my son was ill]  | 7  |
| <i>be</i> omitted before <i>verb stem + ing</i>        | <i>I therefor apliying</i> ... [I am therefore applying]  | 6  |
| <i>be + verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + ed</i>        | <i>I am start school</i> [I started school]<br><i>She was receive an old age pension</i> [she received an old age pension]      | 5  |
| <i>be + verb stem + ed</i> for <i>verb stem + ed</i>   | <i>That year I am finished</i> ... [that year I finished]   | 5  |
| <i>verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + s</i>              | <i>My wife greet me</i> ... [my wife greets me]   | 5  |
| <i>auxiliary + verb stem + ed</i> for <i>auxiliary</i> | ... <i>my house have got</i> ... [my house has]   | 5  |
| <i>verb stem + ed + ed</i> for <i>verb stem + ed</i>   | <i>I camed to</i> ... [I came]  | 4  |
| omission of auxiliary verb                             | <i>we got toilets</i> ... [we have or we have got toilets]  | 3  |



|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <i>verb stem + ed + to + verb stem + ing for verb stem + ed + infinitive or verb stem + ing</i> | <i>... we was started to crying [we started to cry or we started crying]</i>                                     | 2 |
| <i>be + verb stem + ing for verb stem + ed</i>  | <i>I was coming to Johannesburg about twenty seven years ago ... [I came to Johannesburg about 27 years ago]</i> | 2 |
| <i>noun for verb stem + ed</i>  | <i>... my wife complaint about ... [my wife complained about]</i>  | 2 |
| <i>verb stem + ed for be + verb stem + ed (participle)</i>                                      | <i>I boned 1940 ... [I was born in 1940]</i>   | 2 |
| <i>to be for to have</i>  | <i>... my father was already past away [my father had already passed away]</i>                                   | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + ed for verb + verb stem + ed</i>   | <i>and ___ dressed [and get dressed]</i>   | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + ed for be + adjective</i>  | <i>I slept at eleven o'clock [I was asleep by eleven o'clock]</i>  | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + ing for verb stem + ed</i>   | <i>... telling me to go ... [told me to go]</i>  | 1 |
| <i>incorrect auxiliary + verb</i>   | <i>the road have tared and ... [the road is tarred]</i>  | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + ed + verb stem + ed for verb stem + ed + infinitive</i>                          | <i>this project helped me saw ... [this project helped me see]</i>   | 1 |
| <i>be + verb stem + ing for verb stem + ed</i>  | <i>I'm working from office to office ... [I walked from office to office]</i>                                    | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + ed + to + verb stem + ed for verb stem + infinitive</i>                          | <i>I started to worked ... [I started to work]</i>   | 1 |
| <i>be + verb stem + ed for verb stem + ed</i>   | <i>I been wolked at ... [I worked at]</i>  | 1 |

|  |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| incorrect modal  | <i>I would never forget ...</i> [I can never forget]                | 1  |
| <i>be + verb stem for verb stem</i>  | <i>we are trust ...</i> [we trust]                                  | 1  |
| <i>verb stem + ing for infinitive</i>                                      | <i>... blankets to warming up ...</i> [blankets to warm up]         | 1  |
| incorrect verb forms after modal verb                                      | <i>... they mast came and liveing ...</i> [they must come and live] | 1  |
| <i>auxiliary + verb stem + ed + negative for do + negative + auxiliary</i> | <i>I have got not ...</i> [I don't have]                            | 1  |
| <i>be + negative + verb stem for verb stem + negative + verb stem</i>      | <i>... if she is not do ...</i> [if she does not do]                | 1  |
| <i>verb stem + verb stem for verb stem + infinitive</i>                    | <i>I want go to the Captown</i> [I want to go to Cape Town]         | 1  |
| <i>verb stem + to + verb stem + ed for verb stem + infinitive</i>          | <i>I like to saided thanks ...</i> [I like to say thanks]           | 1  |
| <i>verb stem + s for verb stem</i>   | <i>I buys a TV that ...</i> [I buy a TV that]                       | 1  |
| <b>ARTICLES</b>  |   |    |
| <i>Definite articles</i>   |   |    |
| omission   | <i>... about 1km to ___ taxi rank</i> [about 1km to the taxi rank]  | 20 |
| addition   | <i>I want go to the Captown</i> [I want to go to Cape Town]         | 9  |
| <i>Indefinite articles</i>   |   |    |
| omission   | <i>... we must write ___ letter</i> [we must write a letter]        | 19 |

|                                      |  |    |
|--------------------------------------|--|----|
| addition                             | <i>I cant buy a shoes for my family ... [I can't buy shoes for my family]</i>                          | 4  |
| instead of definite article          | <i>... size of a site where ... [size of the site where]</i>   | 1  |
| <b>PRONOUNS</b>                      |  |    |
| omission                             | <i>... before ___ is too late [before it is too late]</i>  | 18 |
| proper noun/noun followed by pronoun | <i>Her sisters they ... [her sisters]<br/>Pietersburg it is small ... [Pietersburg is small]</i>       | 17 |
| double pronoun                       | <i>... me I have got ... [I have]</i>  | 2  |
| his/her switched                     | <i>... all his family ... [all her family]</i>   | 1  |
| <b>SUBJECT VERB CONCORD</b>          |  |    |
| no concord                           | <i>... my house have ... [my house has]<br/>... this problems ... [these problems or this problem]</i> | 15 |
| <b>PUNCTUATION</b>                   |  |    |
| capital in mid sentence              | <i>What happened At home?</i>  | 10 |
| no capital at beginning of sentence  | <i>... no tar. it is a ...</i>   | 5  |
| no fullstop                          | <i>... by nine I should be in bed all ...</i>  | 3  |
| fullstop in mid sentence             | <i>... for one os us. beside asking ...</i>  | 1  |
| <b>SINGULAR/PLURAL</b>               |  |    |
| omission of plural marker            | <i>... nine childrens [nine children]</i>  | 11 |
| plural instead of singular           | <i>... as men and wife ... [as man and wife]</i>   | 2  |

**PREPOSITIONS**

|                                    |   |    |
|------------------------------------|---|----|
| Ø instead of <i>at</i>             | ... <i>tea ___ five o'clock</i> ... [tea at five o'clock]                       | 11 |
| <i>at</i> instead of <i>in</i>     | ... <i>I was born at Natal</i> [I was born in Natal]                            | 7  |
| <i>on</i> instead of <i>in</i>     | <i>On 1960 I came</i> ... [in 1960 I came]                                      | 5  |
| Ø instead of <i>in</i>             | <i>I live ___ a small house</i> [I live in a small house]                       | 4  |
| <i>to</i> instead of <i>for</i>    | ... <i>I leave to work</i> ... [I leave for work]                               | 2  |
| <i>at</i> instead of <i>for</i>    | <i>I mustn't be late at work</i> [I mustn't be late for work]                   | 1  |
| <i>in</i> instead of <i>on</i>     | ... <i>arrive in time</i> ... [arrived on time]                                 | 1  |
| <i>for</i> instead of <i>with</i>  | ... <i>Zozo hut for two rooms</i> [Zozo hut with two rooms]                     | 1  |
| <i>by</i> instead of <i>of</i>     | ... <i>it is made by boards</i> [it is made of boards]                          | 1  |
| Ø instead of <i>at</i>             | ... <i>we were home ___ nine o'clock</i> [we were at home at nine o'clock]      | 1  |
| <i>at</i> instead of <i>by</i>     | <i>I slept by eleven o'clock</i> ... [I was asleep by eleven o'clock]           | 1  |
| <i>during</i> instead of <i>in</i> | ... <i>during November 1995</i> ... [in November 1995]                          | 1  |
| <i>from</i> instead of <i>in</i>   | ... <i>pains from back and</i> ... [pains in her back and]                      | 1  |
| Ø instead of <i>to</i>             | ... <i>went to attend ___ family matters</i> [went to attend to family matters] | 1  |

|                                   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>for</i> instead of <i>from</i> | ... <i>I was released for home</i> ... [I was released from home]                      | 1 |
| <i>for</i> instead of <i>of</i>   | ... <i>story for my life</i> ... [story of my life]                                    | 1 |
| <i>at</i> instead of <i>to</i>    | ... <i>my father call me at Johannesburg</i> ... [my father called me to Johannesburg] | 1 |
| ∅ instead of <i>after</i>         | <i>I go to look the cows</i> ... [I went to look after the cows]                       | 1 |
| <i>in</i> instead of <i>at</i>    | ... <i>work in First National Bank</i> [work at First National Bank]                   | 1 |
| <i>for</i> instead of <i>to</i>   | ... <i>enough for building everything</i> ... [enough to build everything]             | 1 |
| <i>to</i> instead of <i>from</i>  | <i>when I come to work</i> ... [when I come from work]                                 | 1 |
| <i>by</i> instead of <i>into</i>  | ... <i>it is divided by three blocks</i> ... [it is divided into three blocks]         | 1 |
| <i>to</i> instead of ∅            | ... <i>catch taxi back to home</i> ... [catch the taxi back home]                      | 1 |
| <i>to</i> instead of <i>in</i>    | <i>I birth to pietersburg</i> [I was born in Pietersburg]                              | 1 |
| ∅ instead of <i>on</i>            | ... <i>pietersburg ___ 16/4/1953</i> [Pietersburg on 16/4/1953]                        | 1 |
| <i>with</i> instead of <i>of</i>  | <i>Im so proud with you</i> [I'm so proud of you]                                      | 1 |
| <i>to</i> instead of ∅            | <i>I will never forget to you</i> [I will never forget you]                            | 1 |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| preposition instead of definite article           | <i>... told about great news that ...</i> [told the great news that]   | 1 |
| <b>WORD ORDER</b>                                 |  |   |
| inversions, omission of words, unusual structures | <i>Transport is okay, busses taxis are there</i> [Transport is okay, there are busses and taxis]<br><i>Home I went ...</i> [I went home] | 9 |
| <b>QUESTIONS</b>                                  |  |   |
| omission of inversion                             | <i>you can borrow me car ...</i> [can you ...]   | 1 |
| inversion omitted in embedded sentence            | <i>I asked them where is my father</i> [I asked them where my father was]  | 1 |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>                              |  |   |
| confusion of to, too, two                         | <i>My family is to big</i>   | 4 |
| confusion of no, know, now                        | <i>... it was know money at home</i> [there was no money at home]  | 1 |
| confusion of sale, sell                           |  | 2 |
| confusion of there, their                         |  | 1 |
| confusion of so, sew, sow                         |  | 2 |
| salutation at end of letter                       | <i>Good love and happy</i>   | 1 |
| inversion of form, from                           |  | 3 |
| adjective instead of adverb                       | <i>... very quick I was ...</i>  | 2 |
| wording   | <i>... half pass five o'clock</i> [half past five]<br><i>each another</i> [each other]   | 2 |

#### 4.4.4 Written errors : level 3

| ERROR | EXAMPLE | f |
|-------|---------|---|
|-------|---------|---|

| SINGULAR/PLURAL                  |  |    |
|----------------------------------|--|----|
| omission of plural marker        | ... <i>to my family friend ___ and relatives</i><br>... [to my family, friends and relatives]<br><i>Official ___ are</i> ... [officials are] | 24 |
| incorrect plural                 | <i>womans</i> [women]  | 1  |
| no concord                       | ... <i>your classes it helped</i> ... [your classes helped]  | 1  |
| ARTICLES                         |  |    |
| <i>Indefinite articles</i>       |  |    |
| addition                         | <i>I have read a books</i> ... [I have read books]<br>... <i>to be a good a message</i> ... [to be a good messenger]                         | 21 |
| omission                         | ... <i>sometimes use flash light</i><br>[sometimes use a flash light]  | 7  |
| <i>Definite articles</i>         |  |    |
| omission                         | <i>___ name is</i> ... [the name is]<br><i>Most of ___ times</i> ... [most of the time]  | 16 |
| addition                         | ... <i>teaching us the spelling</i> [teaching us spelling]   | 3  |
| instead of an indefinite article | ... <i>has risen to the unbelievable rate</i><br>... [has risen to an unbelievable rate]   | 2  |

| SUBJECT VERB CONCORD                       |   |    |
|--|---|----|
| no concord                                 | <i>Those machines that was conected ...</i><br>[those machines that were connected]<br><i>... have brains that is helping ...</i> [have<br>brains that are helping] | 19 |
| PRONOUNS                                   |   |    |
| proper noun/noun followed by pronoun       | <i>... your classes it helped ...</i> [your<br>classes helped]<br><i>... people from big companies they<br/>visit ...</i> [people from big companies<br>visit]      | 13 |
| omission                                   | <i>... his body were helping ___ to live</i><br>[his body was helping him to live]  | 9  |
| double pronoun                             | <i>... if we us finish earlier ...</i> [if we<br>finish early]  | 1  |
| his/her switched                           | <i>His husband stopped ...</i> [her husband<br>stopped]   | 1  |
| VERBS                                      |   |    |
| <i>verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + s</i>  | <i>... how it work ...</i> [how it works]<br><i>... he like gardening ...</i> [he likes<br>gardening]   | 12 |
| present tense instead of past tense        | <i>... our managers decide to have ...</i><br>[our managers decided to have]  | 12 |
| <i>verb stem + ed</i> for <i>verb stem</i> | <i>... only to found that ...</i> [only to find<br>that]  | 7  |
| <i>be</i> omitted before <i>verb + ing</i> | <i>I playing basket ball</i> [I am playing<br>basket ball]  | 6  |



|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| omission of auxiliary verb   | <i>They got all ...</i> [they have got all or they have all]                 | 5 |
| <i>verb stem + to + verb stem + ed</i> for <i>verb stem + s + infinitive</i> | <i>... he like to wore a tie</i> [he likes to wear a tie]                    | 3 |
| omission of verb   | <i>... and it ___ also important to ...</i><br>[and it is also important to] | 3 |
| <i>verb stem + verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + infinitive</i>               | <i>... all want depend on ...</i> [all want to depend on]                    | 2 |
| <i>be + verb stem + ing</i> for <i>verb stem</i>                             | <i>It is dealing with ...</i> [it deals with]                                | 2 |
| <i>verb stem + s</i> for <i>verb stem</i>                                    | <i>... when we loves the game</i> [when we love the game]                    | 2 |
| <i>participle</i> for <i>verb stem</i>                                       | <i>... clothes and to given a price</i> [clothes and to give a prize]        | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + to + infinitive</i> for <i>verb stem + verb stem</i>          | <i>... that makes us to live as ...</i> [that makes us live as]              | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + ed</i> for <i>be + verb stem + ed</i>                         | <i>... how a living stock kept ...</i> [how a living stock is kept]          | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + be</i> for <i>auxiliary + verb stem + ed</i>                  | <i>They get been numbers</i> [they have got numbers]                         | 1 |
| <i>be + verb stem + ed</i> for <i>have + verb stem + ed</i>                  | <i>Im always traid to be the best</i> [I have always tried to be the best]   | 1 |
| <i>to be</i> for <i>to have</i>  | <i>He is a dark complection ...</i> [he has a dark complexion]               | 1 |
| <i>auxiliary + be + verb stem + ed</i> for <i>be + verb stem + ed</i>        | <i>... what they have being told</i> [what they were told]                   | 1 |
| noun for <i>verb stem + ed</i>   | <i>She past her final matric ...</i> [she passed her matric]                 | 1 |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <i>verb stem + s for auxiliary + be + ed + verb stem + ing</i> | <i>He works for the MBD company for ten years [he has been working for the MBD company for ten years]</i>                                   | 1 |
| <i>do + ed + negative + be for be + negative</i>               | <i>... the country did not be aware of [the country was not aware of]</i>   | 1 |
| <i>verb stem + ed for be + ed</i>                              | <i>Students went angry and furious [students were angry and furious]</i>  | 1 |
| <i>modal + verb stem + ed for modal + verb stem</i>            | <i>... cann't plays it [cannot play it]</i>   | 1 |
| <b>PUNCTUATION</b>   |   |   |
| no fullstop  | <i>... how the classes have helped me to learn improve my studies I have learned a lot ...</i>  | 6 |
| capital letter in mid sentence                                 | <i>I have got Mine for ...</i>  | 5 |
| no capital letter to start new sentence                        | <i>... education. and when I am ...</i>   | 1 |
| fullstop in mid sentence                                       | <i>If I am not well. I have ...</i>   | 1 |
| <b>WORD ORDER</b>  |   |   |
| inversions, omission of words, unusual structures              | <i>Dear my teach ... [my dear teacher]<br/>The game I like it [I like the game]<br/>Never being at home intime [was never home on time]</i> | 5 |
| <b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>   |   |   |
| confusion of its, it's   | <i>... its one of those jobs [it's one of those jobs]</i>   | 5 |
| confusion of no, know, now                                     | <i>... and all so tono what ... [and also to know what]</i>   | 2 |

|                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| omission of conjunction        | ... <i>printed bank cards ___ cheque books</i> [printed bank cards and cheque books]  | 2 |
| omission of word/s             | <i>I suppose to keep myself a group of people</i>                                     | 2 |
| noun for adjective             | ... <i>keep my body safety</i> [keep my body safe]                                    | 1 |
| <b>PREPOSITIONS</b>            |   |   |
| <i>in</i> instead of <i>at</i> | ... <i>working in a switchboard</i> ...<br>[working at a switchboard]                 | 4 |
| <i>to</i> for <i>in</i>        | ... <i>has changed a lot to the community</i><br>[has changed a lot in the community] | 4 |
| <i>with</i> for <i>in</i>      | ... <i>so beautiful with her outfit</i> [so beautiful in her outfit]                  | 2 |
| ∅ instead of <i>of</i>         | ... <i>dying, because hunger</i> [dying, because of hunger]                           | 2 |
| ∅ instead of <i>on</i>         | ... <i>I will pass it to my family</i> ... [I will pass it on to my family]           | 2 |
| <i>of</i> instead of ∅         | ... <i>I wrote about different of jobs</i> ... [I wrote about different jobs]         | 2 |
| <i>at</i> instead of <i>in</i> | ... <i>his life at hospital</i> [his life in hospital]                                | 1 |
| ∅ instead of <i>to</i>         | ... <i>was conected ___ his body</i> ... [was connected to his body]                  | 1 |
| <i>for</i> for ∅               | ... <i>enjo very much for my life</i> [enjoy my life very much]                       | 1 |

|                                  |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>on for from</i>               | <i>... feech items on the top ...</i> [fetch items from the top]                    | 1 |
| <i>of for for</i>                | <i>... have respect of women ...</i> [have respect for women]                       | 1 |
| <i>on for in</i>                 | <i>... I see on this pictures</i> [I see in these pictures]                         | 1 |
| <i>to for on</i>                 | <i>... concentrated to what they ...</i> [concentrated on what they]                | 1 |
| <i>with for about</i>            | <i>what I like with my daughter</i> [what I like about my daughter]                 | 1 |
| <i>with for in</i>               | <i>... him alone with his family house</i> [him alone in his family house]          | 1 |
| $\emptyset$ instead of <i>of</i> | <i>On the 16th June ...</i> [on the 16th of June]                                   | 1 |
| $\emptyset$ for <i>in</i>        | <i>They dressed nice different colours</i> [they dress nicely in different colours] | 1 |
| <i>in for on</i>                 | <i>This started in a cold morning</i> [this started on a cold morning]              | 1 |
| <i>in for to</i>                 | <i>... to come in South Africa to stay ...</i> [to come to South Africa to stay]    | 1 |

#### 4.4.5 Oral errors

| <b>OMISSION OF SUBJECT</b> |   |    |
|----------------------------|---|----|
| omission                   | <i>... ___ is wake up ...</i> [he wakes up]<br><i>... ___ is going to the station ...</i> [she is going to the station] | 46 |

| <b>QUESTIONS</b>                                |  |    |
|---|--|----|
| omission of inversion                           | <i>You can give me some keys?</i> [can you give me some keys?]<br><i>The ruler is where?</i> [where is the ruler?]                     | 13 |
| omission of <i>do</i>                           | <i>Joseph, how you come to work?</i><br>[Joseph, how do you come to work?]   | 7  |
| omission of subject                             | <i>Is not open?</i> [is it not open?]  | 4  |
| unusual structure                               | <i>Where is ducks?</i> [where are the ducks?]<br><i>So now you finish?</i> [have you finished now?]                                    | 3  |
| <i>be</i> omitted before <i>verb stem + ing</i> | <i>Where we going to stay?</i> [where are we going to stay?]   | 2  |
| <b>ARTICLES</b>                                 |  |    |
| <i>Definite articles</i>                        |  |    |
| omission  | <i>... he go to fruit shop ...</i> [he went to the fruit shop]<br><i>May we borrow ruler please?</i> [may we borrow the ruler please?] | 20 |
| addition  | <i>... next month is the June ...</i> [next month is June]   | 7  |
| <i>Indefinite articles</i>                      |  |    |
| omission  | <i>... this is small chicken ...</i> [this is a small chicken]<br><i>I had a champagne ...</i> [I had champagne]                       | 17 |

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| addition  | ... <i>turkey also ... got a eggs</i> [the turkey also lays eggs]   | 2  |
| <b>VERBS</b>  |   |    |
| <i>be</i> omitted before <i>verb stem + ing</i>             | <i>I showing the chicken</i> [I am showing the chicken]<br><i>If she not wearing skirt</i> [if she isn't wearing a skirt] | 18 |
| omission  | ... <i>what this word?</i> [what is this word?]<br><i>I think the body at home</i> [I think the body is at home]          | 16 |
| <i>be + verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem</i>                  | ... <i>lady is walk to work ...</i> [the lady walks to work]  | 11 |
| <i>verb stem</i> for <i>verb stem + s</i>                   | ... <i>it say something</i> [it says something]   | 10 |
| present tense for past tense                                | <i>Who write it?</i> [who wrote it?]  | 7  |
| <i>be + verb stem</i> for <i>be + verb stem + ing</i>       | <i>I was think maybe ...</i> [I was thinking maybe]   | 6  |
| <i>be + verb stem</i> for <i>be + verb stem + ed</i>        | <i>The wheel is punch ...</i> [the wheel is punctured]  | 6  |
| omission of auxiliary verb                                  | ... <i>got long neck ...</i> [it has or has got a long neck]  | 3  |
| <i>verb stem + ed</i> for <i>auxiliary + verb stem + ed</i> | ... <i>he not finished ...</i> [he has not finished]  | 1  |
| <i>have</i> for <i>do + have</i>                            | ... <i>no have picture ...</i> [I do not have a picture]  | 1  |
| <i>to be</i> for <i>to have</i>                             | ... <i>this one is long neck ...</i> [this one has a long neck]   | 1  |

|  |  |    |
|--|--|----|
| <i>be + modal + verb stem for modal + verb stem</i>                                | <i>I'm can start 5 o'clock</i> [I can start at 5 o'clock]                              | 1  |
| <i>auxiliary + negative + verb stem + ing for auxiliary + negative + verb stem</i> | <i>I don't working shifts now</i> [I don't work shifts now]                            | 1  |
| <b>PREPOSITIONS</b>  |  |    |
| $\emptyset$ for <i>at</i>  | <i>I'm go home tomorrow 4 o'clock</i><br>[tomorrow I'm going home at 4 o'clock]        | 11 |
| <i>to</i> for <i>at</i>  | <i>... I starting to 7 o'clock</i> [I start at 7 o'clock]                              | 3  |
| <i>on</i> for <i>at</i>  | <i>... any time on 10 o'clock</i> [any time at 10 o'clock)                             | 2  |
| <i>to</i> for <i>for</i>   | <i>I bought the flash light to my camera</i><br>[I bought a flash light for my camera] | 1  |
| $\emptyset$ for <i>of</i>  | <i>... another kind dog ...</i> [another type of dog]                                  | 1  |
| <i>by</i> for <i>in</i>  | <i>I don't know what to say by English</i> [I don't know how to say it in English]     | 1  |
| <i>at</i> for <i>after</i>   | <i>... he looking at sheep ...</i> [he looks after sheep]                              | 1  |
| <i>for</i> for <i>after</i>  | <i>... there look for the sheep ...</i> [they look after the sheep]                    | 1  |
| <i>for</i> for <i>to</i>   | <i>... going to give for the baby ...</i> [going to give to the baby]                  | 1  |
| <i>for</i> for <i>from</i>   | <i>... this story is for the Bible ...</i> [this story is from the Bible]              | 1  |

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| Ø for <i>by</i>                                   | <i>I come taxi ...</i> {[I come by taxi]}   | 1  |
| <i>on</i> for <i>in</i>                           | <i>... maybe on December ...</i> [maybe in December]  | 1  |
| Ø for <i>in</i>                                   | <i>... sometime is working Johannesburg</i><br>[sometimes he is working in Johannesburg]      | 1  |
| <i>in</i> for <i>to</i>                           | <i>I'm going home in the farm</i> [I;m going home to the farm]                                | 1  |
| <i>to</i> for Ø                                   | <i>... everybody is going to home</i><br>[everybody is going home]                            | 1  |
| <i>for</i> for Ø                                  | <i>... I must phone for George ...</i> [I must phone george]                                  | 1  |
| <i>about</i> for <i>with</i>                      | <i>I've got a problem about my daughter</i><br>[I have a problem with my daughter]            | 1  |
| Ø for <i>to</i>                                   | <i>We just praying God to get a cure</i> [we just pray to God to get a cure]                  | 1  |
| <i>at</i> for <i>in</i>                           | <i>... let me say I put the money at the bank</i><br>[let me say I put the money in the bank] | 1  |
| Ø for <i>on</i>                                   | <i>... it depend on how much you earn</i> [it depends n how much you earn]                    | 1  |
| <b>SUBJECT VERB CONCORD</b>                       |   |    |
| no concord  | <i>... other books is very hard ...</i> [other books are very hard]                           | 11 |
| <b>WORD ORDER</b>                                 |   |    |
| inversions, omission of words, unusual structures | Tutor : <i>Did you enjoy it Philip?</i><br>Philip : <i>Very enjoy it</i>                      | 7  |



| PRONOUNS                             |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| proper noun/noun followed by pronoun | ... <i>the boys they were</i> ... [the boys were]         | 5 |
| double pronoun                       | ... <i>me I put the board on</i> ... [I put the board on] | 1 |

In the next section, the findings as to how the educators treat their learners' errors are presented.

## 4.5 TREATMENT OF ERRORS

### 4.5.1 Introduction

The findings from the classroom interaction matrix (see Appendix C) regarding how educators correct their learners' errors, as well as the findings from the error correction forum are presented in this section.

### 4.5.2 Educators treating their learners' errors

#### Pre-level 1

untreated errors            66.3%                                    treated errors            33.7%

=> of the treated errors, 56% were treated by repetition, while 45% were treated by rephrasing the error.

#### Level 1

untreated errors            81.8%                                    treated errors            18.2%

=> of the treated errors, 34% were treated by repetition, while 66% were treated by rephrasing the error.

#### Level 2

untreated errors            80.4%                                    treated errors            19.6%

=> of the treated errors, 22.2% were treated by repetition, while 77.8% were treated by rephrasing the error.

### Level 3

untreated errors            51%    treated errors            49%

=> of the treated errors, 74% were treated by repetition, while 26% were treated by rephrasing the error.

All the treated errors were attended to immediately.

### 4.5.3 Error treatment forum

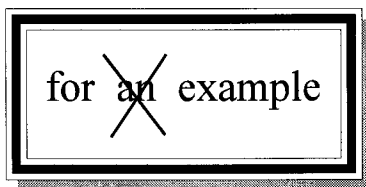
When asked which errors to correct, the educators at the forum stated that it is important to correct those errors which were made following a lesson which had that structure taught, or where that structure was taught in a previous lesson. The errors made by the learners regarding a structure which they had not learnt yet, should not be corrected. This then raised the question that learners may think that that structure is in fact correct as it was not addressed by the educator. Learners could then memorise this structure and use it regularly in their written and oral work until it becomes fossilized. In response to this, one of the educators said that she prefers to mark all her learners' work with them in the classroom, so that difficult structures which the learners had not come across yet, could be discussed. The educator would write the correct version on the board but tell the learners that they needn't worry about the error at this stage, and that that structure will be addressed in a later lesson. If it is not possible to mark the work with the learners, one of the educators suggested a coding system discussed previously with the learners. For example, if there is a spelling error, an *sp* could be placed above the word and then it would be up to the learner concerned to enquire from the educator how to spell the word correctly. Another code could be the ^ sign indicating that something has been omitted. Educators could also number the errors and at the end of the text could provide a detailed explanation of the errors and possibly even the corrected version. In this way, learners start taking responsibility of their own learning and become active participants in finding out more about their errors, and how the language functions. This method also ensures that the learner's page is not a bloody battlefield

covered with red writing. To receive work back from the educator with a few squiggles and lines is uplifting for the learners.

One of the educators said that she received an excellent essay from one of her learners, where the content was outstanding but the grammar was “all over the place”. She did not correct much of the grammar as she felt this would have probably demotivated the learner who spent so much time compiling this essay.

It was also suggested that learners build a portfolio of their written work, so that they can see how they are progressing from their first piece of writing to their current writing. This is very motivating for the learners particularly when they feel that they are not progressing.

When asked when they correct oral errors, the educators said that it depended on the purpose of the conversation. If it was a social or informal conversation, then errors would not be corrected, but in a formal grammar exercise, errors would be corrected. If an error occurs frequently, educators were emphatic that a learner should not be stopped in mid sentence so that the educator could correct it, but it could be addressed later in the lesson. There are also certain learnt errors which have been ingrained in the learners for many years. An example is *for an example*. The educators were asked how they would try to eradicate this. A suggestion was to put this expression on a flashcard and delete the *an* and place the flashcard on an “error wall”:



Every time a learner says *for an example*, the educator can point to the flashcard as a gentle reminder that this saying is incorrect. Before a lesson starts for example, the learners who arrive early can also browse the “error wall” and check common errors. One of the educators commented that this could be negative as the incorrect version is seen by the learners. He suggested that the correct version should be placed on the flashcard.

It does happen that an error is corrected many times, but learners seem to ignore these corrections and continue making the same errors. Educators were asked what they do in this situation. One educator suggested a ten minute drill activity once a week where the corrected versions of common errors are “drilled”. The other educators were opposed to this and suggested that it would be more beneficial to introduce a rap song or games to try to overcome these fossilized errors.

There was general consensus that spelling is not a major issue provided that the message is understandable and not ambiguous, and that communication takes place.

What was emphasised was that learners should not feel that they need to produce perfect writing or produce perfect utterances. The educator needs to create a conducive environment in which learners can feel free to communicate without having to worry that they will be treated like linguistic offenders in front of a firing squad should they make an error.

#### **4.5.4 Learners’ responses to error treatment**

From the mini survey conducted, 92% of learners felt that their educator should correct them when there is an error; 5.7% felt that their educators should not correct their errors; while 2.3% answered to both *yes* and *no*. Some of the learners’ reasons are provided in Appendix N.

The next section deals with the findings from the stakeholders’ questionnaires on evaluating the effectiveness of learning.

## **4.6 EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING**

### **4.6.1 Introduction**

In this section, the findings from the various questionnaires sent to the stakeholders will be presented and discussed.

#### 4.6.2 Learner questionnaire

Fifty five learners from ABET pre-level 1, levels 1, 2 and 3 took part in this research. Each month - over a period of five months - learners were asked to complete a questionnaire. In total, 154 questionnaires were collected.

In question 1, learners stated the activities which they enjoyed the most in that specific month. These included reading a map; playing certain language games; making posters; using an atlas; learning about the importance of a signature; writing a story; English grammar; debates to solve problems; bank statements; expanded notation; preparing to write examinations; traditional songs; learning to tolerate others; and preparing projects.

The second and third questions looked at which activities the learners found easy and which they found difficult. Some activities which they found easy included reading certain books; spelling; writing sentences; writing letters; reading flashcards; and talking about life experiences; while some difficulties were experienced in activities such as vowels in words; pronunciation; certain games; maths; pronouns; verbs tenses; expressing oneself clearly; comprehension; doing a project; and as one learner said “to cough out a speech”.

Question 4 asked learners to say which activities they did not enjoy, and these included maths; spelling; Audiblox; and discussions; but most learners said there were no activities which they did not enjoy.

Question 5 asked learners to list the activities which taught them a lot; and these are the same as those in question 1. In question 6, learners had to state what things they wanted their educators to explain to them again. These included how to spell certain words; how to pronounce certain words; certain mathematical concepts; certain grammatical parts of speech; how to construct a sentence properly; and the meanings of words.

Question 7 was a multiple choice question which looked at what the lessons taught the learners. The responses were as follows:

0.7%      learnt things they didn't want to know

- 31.3%      learnt new things which they found interesting
- 55%        learnt many things which they can use, while
- 13%        did not respond to this question.

In response to how useful and interesting the lessons were (question 8), the responses were as follows:

- 51%        found the lessons very useful and interesting
- 15.7%     found the lessons useful and interesting
- 7.8%       found that some of the lessons were useful and interesting
- 2%         found that the lessons were not useful and not interesting, while
- 23.5%     did not respond to this question.

Question 9 outlined whether the learners were ever bored in the class. The responses were as follows:

- 24.8%     of the learners were bored in some of the lessons
- 58.2%     of the learners were not bored, while
- 17%        did not respond to this question.

For question 10, learners were asked to say how they felt about asking questions, sharing information and making mistakes. The responses were as follows:

*Asking questions*

- 63.4%     felt they could ask questions
- 0.7%       felt they could not ask questions, while
- 35.9%     did not respond.

*Sharing information*

- 62.1%     felt they could share information
- 0.7%       felt they could not share information, while
- 37.2%     did not respond.

*Making mistakes*

- 51%        felt they could make mistakes
- 7.2%       felt they could not make mistakes, while
- 41.8%     did not respond.

In response to question 11, where learners were asked whether they ask questions, and how many, the responses were as follows:

- 81.7% ask questions
- 0.7% do not ask questions, while
- 17.6% did not respond.

Of the learners who asked questions,

- 7.2% asked only one question
- 37.6% asked a few questions
- 55.2% asked many questions.

In question 12, learners were asked to say whether the educator asked them questions, and how many:

- 78.4% responded that the educator did ask them questions, while
- 21.6% did not respond to this question.

Of the learners who said that the educator asked them questions,

- 0.8% said that the educator asked them only one question
- 18.4% said that the educator asked them a few questions
- 80.8% said that the educator asked them many questions.

When asked about their participation in the class (question 13), the learners responded as follows:

- 70.6% said they participated a lot in the class
- 13% said they participated a little in the class
- 0.7% said they did not participate at all in the class, while
- 15.7% did not respond to this question.

With regards to the educator's pace during the lessons,

- 5.2% of learners felt that the educator went too fast
- 3.3% of learners felt that the educator went too slow
- 77.8% of learners felt that the educator went at the right speed, while
- 13.7% did not respond.

Question 15 asked learners what they had learnt in the class which they were able to use at their workplaces, and these included completing forms; reading street addresses; how to write letters; respecting everybody at work; reading instructions in English; speaking better English; communicating with different people; checking payslips; providing personal information; understanding tax; the rules of the road; filling in worksheets; using a tape measure; filling in job lists; talking with supervisor; writing a report; counting linen in the laundry; pronunciation; how to explain something to someone at work; doing stationery orders; and giving directions.

Question 16 asked learners what they had learnt in the class which they were able to use at home, and these included reading books, magazines and newspapers; reading letters; writing personal letters to the family and to friends; completing bank withdrawal forms; writing better English; understanding television programmes better; using a map; plotting a route; giving directions; understanding shopping advertisements; checking change at a shop; working out a monthly budget; using money in the right way; how to buy groceries and compare prices and differentiate between kilograms and grams; using measurements to buy clothes for children; teaching the family about the rules of the road; how to speak English without making too many mistakes; measurements; teaching children; helping children with homework; helping the family to improve their English; how to communicate with the family; how to prevent divorces; and to quote one learner, “to sit down with my family and solve problems together”.

#### **4.6.3 Educator questionnaire**

Educators were asked to complete one questionnaire per month on every learner over a period of five months. 5.2% of educators submitted one questionnaire (these could not be used for comparative analyses); 22.4% submitted two questionnaires; 43.1% submitted three questionnaires; 13.8% submitted four questionnaires; and 15.5% submitted five questionnaires. A total of 183 questionnaires evaluating the learning of 55 learners were submitted.



The outcomes of the first six questions were as follows:

98.2% of learners did participate in the class activities, and learners who did not initially participate, later took part in class activities.

92.7% of learners spoke in class; 5.5% who initially did not speak eventually did speak; and 1.8% did not speak at all.

81.8% of learners asked questions; initially 9.1% did not ask questions, but later did so; and 9.1% asked no questions at all.

83.6% responded to the educators' questions; 10.9% initially did not respond, but later did so; and 5.5% never responded.

76.4% contributed to the success of the lesson; 16.4% initially did not contribute, but later did so; and 9% contributed initially but later stopped doing so.

70.9% of learners were comfortable with the learning process; 23.6% were initially not comfortable; and 5.5% were initially comfortable, but later changed.

In question 7, educators had to reflect on the activities which they thought their learners enjoyed in the past month. These included activities such as: learning new vocabulary; creating posters on other countries; language games; writing their signatures; listening to stories; learning how to read a map; completing forms; visiting an exhibition; sentence construction; giving directions; mathematics; taking and recording measurements; debates and discussions; learning how to read a bank statement; how to cancel a lost ATM card; dictionary work; interpreting newspaper pictures; conflict resolution at home, in the workplace and in the hostel; asking questions; organising meetings; letter writing; writing the Independent Examinations Board project: sharing ideas with others.

In question 8, educators listed the activities that their learners could do in class; in question 9, they listed the activities they found were beneficial to their learners; in question 10, they listed the activities their learners struggled with; and in question 11 they provided a reason why they thought their learners struggled with the activities listed in question 10.

According to the educators, 89.1% of learners understood their educators' instructions, while 10.9% did not understand all the instructions.

In question 13, educators were asked to rate how well they thought their learners understood

their instructions. The responses were as follows:

- 31.5% understood 'very well'
- 24.1% understood 'well'
- 14.8% understood 'not so well'
- 18.5% improved from a 'well' rating to a 'very well' rating
- 1.9% improved from a 'not so well' rating to a 'very good' rating
- 5.6% deteriorated from a 'well' rating to a 'not so well' rating
- 1.8% deteriorated from a 'very well' rating to a 'not so well' rating
- 1.8% deteriorated from a 'very well' rating to a 'well' rating.

In question 14, educators had to state whether their learners were able to achieve the outcomes of the lessons.

- 74.9% of learners achieved the outcomes
- 18% of learners did not achieve all the outcomes
- 2.2% of learners did not achieve the outcomes at all, and
- 4.9% of the educators did not respond to this question.

For the learners who did not achieve or only partly achieved the outcomes, educators were asked to state what they thought the problem was, and what they could do to assist their learners in achieving these outcomes. Some of the problems and ways to assist the learners included:

| <i>problem</i>                              | <i>assistance provided</i>   |
|---|--|
| - comprehension/slow worker                 | - give them fewer items to work on   |
| - slow processing skills                    | - provide language enrichment activities and use activities to stimulate processing skills |
| - cannot achieve written/reading activities | - give them guided text  |
| - cannot cope with all writing exercises    | - set individual outcomes : fewer sentences to write                                       |
| - attention or sequencing problem           | - provide more sequencing exercises  |
| - slower learner                            | - more individual work, provide supplementary exercises                                    |
| - educator method of explaining             | - educator to try different method   |

- primary concern is to finish first and appear skilled
- redirect priorities

When asked whether learners compare their work or findings with other learners,

- 83.6% of educators stated that their learners did so
- 3.3% of educators stated that their learners did not do so
- 10.9% of educators stated that they were not sure, and
- 2.2% of educators did not respond to this question.

In question 16, educators were asked whether their learners co-operated with other learners in order to solve a problem,

- 90.7% said that their learners did co-operate with others
- 1.1% said that their learners did not co-operate with others
- 5.5% were not sure whether their learners co-operated with others, and
- 2.7% did not respond to this question.

In question 17, educators had to say whether their learners disagreed with a point of view and offered alternatives:

- 69.9% of learners did offer alternatives
- 23.5% of learners did not offer alternatives
- 4.4% of educators were not sure, and
- 2.2% of educators did not respond to this question.

In question 18, educators were asked to state whether their learners made any suggestions on what to do and how to do it:

- 73.2% of learners offered suggestions
- 16.9% of learners did not offer suggestions
- 7.7% of educators were not sure whether their learners offered suggestions, and
- 2.2% of educators did not response to this question.

In question 19, educators had to say whether their learners asked any questions about the issued discussed in class:

- 83% of learners raised questions
- 12.6% of learners did not raise questions
- 2.2% of educators were not sure whether their learners raised questions, and
- 2.2% of educators did not respond to the question.

In question 20, educators had to say whether their learners did homework that was set:

- 90.2% of learners did their homework
- 2.7% of learners did not do their homework
- 0.5% of educators were not sure whether their learners did homework, and
- 6.6% of educators did not respond to this question.

Question 21 required educators to state whether they had seen any changes in their learners' vocabulary; use of language; expressive language; confidence; and participation:

***vocabulary***

- in 76% of learners there was a change
- in 13.7% of learners there was no change
- 4.9% of educators were not sure whether there was a change, and
- 5.4% of educators did not respond to this question.

***use of language***

- in 74.9% of learners there was a change
- in 14.2% of learners there was no change
- 1.1% of educators were not sure whether there was a change, and
- 9.8% of educators did not respond to this question.

***expressive language***

- in 80.9% of learners there was a change
- in 10.9% of learners there was no change
- 1.6% of educators were not sure whether there was a change, and
- 6.6% of educators did not respond to this question.

***confidence***

- in 86.3% of learners there was a change
- in 6% of learners there was no change, and
- 7.7% of educators were not sure whether there was a change.

### ***participation***

in 86.9% of learners there was a change  
in 8.2% of learners there was no change, and  
4.9% of educators did not respond.

In question 22, educators were asked to say whether their learners were enthusiastic:

93.4% of learners were enthusiastic  
3.8% of educators were not sure whether their learners were enthusiastic, and  
2.8% of educators did not respond to this question.

#### **4.6.4 Supervisor/manager questionnaires**

Questionnaires were sent to 65 of the learners' supervisors or managers; 39 supervisors completed both questionnaires, 14 supervisors completed either the first or the second questionnaire, while 12 did not complete either of the questionnaires. For comparative analyses, only the results from the supervisors who completed both questionnaires will be used. The findings from these questionnaires will be discussed according to the various components of the questionnaire.

#### ***Learners' ability to express themselves in English***

In the first questionnaire,

10.3% of the supervisors rated their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as very good  
33.3% of the supervisors rated their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as good  
35.9% of the supervisors rated their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as satisfactory  
12.8% of the supervisors rated their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as not so good, and  
7.7% of the supervisors rated their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as not good.

In the second questionnaire,

94.9% of the supervisors noticed a change in their staff members' ability to express themselves in English, and the ratings for this change were as follows:

- 5.4% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as very good
- 48.7% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as good
- 43.2% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as satisfactory, and
- 2.7% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as not so good.

### ***Learners' confidence***

In the first questionnaire,

- 7.7% of the supervisors rated their staff members' confidence as very good
- 79.5% of the supervisors rated their staff members' confidence as good
- 7.7% of the supervisors rated their staff members as not being very confident
- 5.1% of the supervisors rated their staff members as not being confident.

In the second questionnaire,

89.7% of the supervisors noticed a change in their staff members' confidence, and the ratings for this change were as follows:

- 20% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' confidence as very good
- 42.8% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' confidence as good
- 34.3% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' confidence as satisfactory, and
- 2.9% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' confidence as not so good.

### ***Learners' participation in the workplace***

In the first questionnaire,

- 23% of the supervisors rated their staff members' participation in the workplace as very good
- 61.6% of the supervisors rated their staff members' participation in the workplace as good
- 15.4% of the supervisors rated their staff members' participation in the workplace as having room for improvement.

In the second questionnaire,

82% of the supervisors noticed a change in their staff members' participation in the workplace, and the ratings for this change were as follows:

- 21.9% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' participation in the workplace as very good
- 50% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' participation in the workplace as good
- 28.1% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' participation in the workplace as satisfactory.

### ***Learners' interaction with others in the workplace***

In the first questionnaire,

- 18.4% of the supervisors rated their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace as very good
- 57.9% of the supervisors rated their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace as good
- 18.4% of the supervisors stated that their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace can improve
- 5.3% of the supervisors stated that their staff members do not interact with others in the workplace.

In the second questionnaire,

87% of the supervisors noticed a change in their staff members' interaction with others in the

workplace, and their ratings for this change were as follows:

- 9.1% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace as very good
- 69.7% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace as good
- 21.2% of the supervisors rated the change in their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace as satisfactory.

### ***Learners' use of English***

95% of the supervisors noticed an improvement in their staff members' use of English in the workplace. Of these supervisors,

- 62.2% noticed a change in their staff members' ability to ask questions
- 86.5% noticed a change in their staff members' ability to understand instructions
- 56.8% noticed a change in their staff members' ability to request information
- 16.2% noticed a change in their staff members' ability to give directions and/or instructions
- 51.4% noticed a change in their staff members' ability to share information
- 5.4% noticed other changes in their staff members' ability to use English.

### ***Changes in learners' general knowledge, communication skills, job skills and life skills***

#### ***General knowledge***

- 5.1 % of supervisors found a great change in their staff members' general knowledge
- 30.8 % of supervisors found a functional and visible change in their staff members' general knowledge
- 18 % of supervisors found a slight change in their staff members' general knowledge
- 12.8 % of supervisors found no change in their staff members' general knowledge, while
- 33.3% did not respond to this section.

#### ***Communication skills***

- 7.7% of supervisors found a great change in their staff members' communication



- skills
- 69.2% of supervisors found a functional and visible change in their staff members' communication skills
- 18% of supervisors found a slight change in their staff members' communication skills
- 2.5% of supervisors found a no change in their staff members' communication skills, while
- 2.6% did not respond to this section.

*Job skills (in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening)*

- 7.7% of supervisors found a great change in their staff members' job skills in terms of the four language skills
- 53.8% of supervisors found a functional and visible change in their staff members' job skills in terms of the four language skills
- 18% of supervisors found a slight change in their staff members' job skills in terms of the four language skills
- 2.5% of supervisors found no change in their staff members' job skills in terms of the four language skills, while
- 18% did not respond to this section.

*Life skills (e.g. filling in forms, budgeting, managing conflict)*

- 5.1% of supervisors found a great change in their staff members' ability to manage life skills related to the workplace
- 25.6% of supervisors found a functional and visible change in their staff members' ability to manage life skills related to the workplace
- 20.6% of supervisors found a slight change in their staff members' ability to manage life skills related to the workplace
- 12.8% of supervisors found no change in their staff members' ability to manage life skills related to the workplace, while
- 35.9% did not respond to this section.

***Learners benefiting from attending adult education classes***

95% of supervisors felt that their staff members were benefiting from attending classes, and some of their reasons for saying this are listed below:

“He is now participating a lot in our monthly meetings”  
 “He has gained more confidence”  
 “He can express himself much better in English”  
 “He is more friendly and his outlook towards his work has improved”  
 “He has become more approachable probably due to confidence gained”  
 “He carries out instructions as given to him”  
 “His communication has improved, thus he is easily understood by his colleagues”  
 “Has helped her overcome her shyness”  
 “Has become more reliable with regards to giving messages”  
 “Seems happy to be at work”  
 “Norman is able to articulate far better his feelings and frustrations and we are therefore able to resolve issues that may have festered previously”  
 “He is more enthusiastic”  
 “He can now organise himself better and he is helpful”  
 “Confidence and interest in job and department have improved”  
 “More confident and less inclined to complain”  
 “Seems to have direction in way of thinking”  
 “Able to express his views”.

What follows are some of the reasons provided by the 5% of supervisors who stated that their staff members had not benefited from attending classes:

“Nelson still depends on the caretaker to do all the communication”  
 “No change whatsoever in his daily reports - even after I correct him”.

***Learners’ attitude, behaviour, social interaction, etc.***

87.2% of supervisors noticed that there had been some change in attitude, behaviour or social interaction in their staff members. Some of the things which they noticed include:

“Her general attitude has changed completely - she was a very difficult person”  
 “He is making an effort to interact in English”  
 “He is more interactive with branch staff”  
 “Not afraid to voice his opinions”  
 “He is co-operative lately”

“More confident and independent - improving daily in his duties”

“More eager to assist”

“More friendly and open - will speak first rather than only when spoken to”

“Joins in with her colleagues more”

“Much more patient”

“Because he is so much more confident, he has improved overall in his attitude and behaviour”.

### ***Supervisors' involvement in staff members' learning***

On a rating scale of 1 (not involved at all) to 6 (totally involved), supervisors indicated the following:

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| Scale 1 | 15.4% |
| Scale 2 | 5.1%  |
| Scale 3 | 15.4% |
| Scale 4 | 18%   |
| Scale 5 | 12.8% |
| Scale 6 | 33.3% |

### ***Supervisors' input as to what areas their staff members need assistance from the Centre***

59% of the supervisors provided input in this section. The areas which they feel their staff members need attention include reading, writing, spelling, speaking, comprehension, pronunciation, telephone skills, confidence building, team building, typing, computer skills, and mathematics.

### ***Supervisors recommending other staff members to attend***

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 59% | of the supervisors said they would recommend other staff members in their departments to attend classes   |
| 23% | of the supervisors said they would not recommend other staff members in their departments to attend classes (the only reason for this is that they do not have other staff members in their departments), and |
| 18% | did not respond to this question.   |

### ***Overall supervisors' impressions of staff members' learning***

- 2.6% of the supervisors felt that the learning that took place was excellent
- 28.2% of the supervisors felt that the learning that took place was very good
- 51.3% of the supervisors felt that the learning that took place was good
- 12.8% of the supervisors felt that the learning that took place was average
- 5.1% of the supervisors felt that the learning that took place was poor.

Some of the reasons for giving these ratings include improved self-confidence, there is a significant change, he passed his examination, improvement in communication, and able to communicate and interact better.

### ***Supervisors' rating of service provided by ABET Centre***

- 25.6% of the supervisors rated the service provided by the centre as excellent
- 35.9% of the supervisors rated the service provided by the centre as very good
- 20.5% of the supervisors rated the service provided by the centre as good
- 7.7% of the supervisors rated the service provided by the centre as average, while
- 10.3% did not provide a rating.

Some supervisors commented on the service provided, and these comments include: prompt feedback, the centre has the ability to teach and motivate, teachers seem to care, the centre gives staff members the opportunity to improve themselves, the centre increases the value of our staff, and the centre communicates regularly.

No one responded to question 13 of the second questionnaire, where supervisors were asked to let the centre know whether they were experiencing any problems in dealing with the centre.

The last question of the second questionnaire asked for "any other comments" and very few supervisors completed this section. The few who did, commented as follows:

"My wish is to see the Adult Education Centre grow and share its knowledge with our staff members. Maybe with more competent staff we can challenge the future"

"I wish the Adult Education Centre will be there for us in the next two decades to provide us with its knowledge"

"Thanks for sharing your knowledge with our staff members"

“Keep up the good work”

“Thank you for your support in helping those who need this education”.

#### **4.6.5 ABET Centre questionnaire**

According to the management of the ABET Centre involved in this research, there is a plan of development for ABET at the centre; there is a statement of scope; there is a target number of learners for the ABET programme; there is a formal procedure for monitoring and evaluating; and there is a written set of aims and objectives. These aims and objectives have not always been determined in consultation with all the stakeholders involved and they are not made available to all the stakeholders. The aims and objectives are reviewed annually but not always with all the stakeholders involved. An annual report as such is not produced, but a summary of what took place at the centre is prepared.

When it comes to resources, there is a specific budget allocated to ABET, and learners are fully sponsored by the organisation and do not have to make any financial contributions.

In the provision section, management believes that sufficient marketing is undertaken to ensure that all staff members in the organisation are informed about the ABET Centre; tuition is available throughout the year; equity and equality are ensured; provision is made for learners with learning disabilities, however learners with physical disabilities (e.g. in wheelchairs) may have some difficulty accessing the classrooms; there is a wide range of reading and learning material available to the learners, as well as teaching and resource material for educators.

When it comes to practices at the centre, potential learners are given a personal interview and a placement assessment before joining classes; the results of this assessment are made available to the learners; the learning material is appropriate for the learners' educational level; there is no 'learning plan' for each learner; educators use written lesson plans and keep records of work undertaken in each session; educators make use of ongoing assessment techniques; learners' records are kept; assessment of progress is a joint effort between the learners and their educators; the results of an assessment of progress are made available to the learners; continuing support is provided for learners progressing to further education;

appropriate follow-up is carried out when learners drop out, although this is not rigorous enough; progress reports of learners' progress are sent to their supervisors; and attendance at the centre is fairly good.

Educators are interviewed and selected according to a clear set of criteria before they are employed; they have a clear outline of their role and responsibilities at the ABET centre; they are well qualified; and provision is made for their professional development.

The environment in which learning takes place is very conducive to learning, as the centre is well equipped and has many facilities available.

Learners have the opportunity of writing nationally accredited examinations which are transferable and transportable to other industries; the ABET programmes offered at the centre are in line with the National Qualifications Framework; and the programmes meet most of the learners' needs.

Management believes the programmes are effective in that the knowledge and skills learned at the ABET centre are transferred to the workplace and to the community. According to management, the evaluation techniques used at the centre show that the ABET programmes are making a difference to the organisation and to the learners' lives.

The ABET centre networks extensively with other ABET centres and providers.

#### **4.6.6 Union questionnaire**

The union where this research was conducted is not very involved in ABET, therefore no questionnaire was completed.

### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on the findings from the various analyses on classroom interaction; questions; errors; treatment of errors; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning. The next chapter will deal with the interpretation of these findings.



# interpretation of findings

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, some of the most salient findings of the various research phases were elucidated. It is necessary in this chapter to provide an interpretation of this data in order that recommendations for language learning, teaching, and development can be presented in the subsequent chapter. This chapter deals with an interpretation of data obtained on classroom interaction; questions; errors; treatment of errors; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning.

## 5.2 CLASSROOM INTERACTION

### 5.2.1 Classroom interaction

The total number of classroom interactions undertaken by educators and learners in the two observations and at the various levels, vary from 56% educator interactions and 44% learner interactions, to 75% educator interactions and 25% learner interactions. There appears to be a personal trend in the educators' interactions in that their interaction frequencies in both sessions are very similar. The pre-level 1 educator realises 58% and 63% of all interactions; the level 1 educator realises 68% of all interactions in both sessions; the level 2 educator realises 62% and 56% of all interactions, while the level 3 educator realises 75% and 71% of all interactions. As learners progress through the various levels, however, the educator

should realise fewer and fewer interactions and allow the learners to increase their interactions. By the time learners reach level 3, they should be realising more interactions than what actually took place in the level 3 class being researched. In fact, the level 3 learners realised the least interactions of the four levels, with only 25% and 29% respectively.

## **5.2.2 Breakdown of classroom interactions**

### **5.2.2.1 Initiations**

The percentages of educators initiating interactions vary from 46.6% to 68.9%. In both the sessions being researched there appears to be similarities in the number of initiations by the educators. The pre-level 1 educator initiated 53.4% and 52.3% respectively of interactions; the level 1 educator initiated 52.2% and 46.6% respectively of interactions; the level 2 educator initiated 53.8% and 68.9% respectively of interactions; and the level 3 educator initiated 47.4% and 48.3% respectively of interactions. The greatest difference was in the level 2 educator, where there was a difference of 15.1% between the two sessions. The learners initiate very few of the interactions, and the percentages vary from 2.8% to 14.8%. At pre-level 1 the learners have a very limited command of the English language and they initiate 6.0% and 6.4% respectively of interactions. Once again, at level 3, where learners would be expected to initiate more interactions, they in fact only initiate 3.8% and 2.8% respectively of interactions.

### **5.2.2.2 Responses**

In this section, the total responses of the educators and learners were recorded. The percentages of educators' responses varied from 1.6% to 6.8%; and the learners' responses varied from 65.5% to 90.6% of the total interactions. Once again the level 3 learners' interactions in the second session seem to be restricted to responding.

### **5.2.2.3 Feedback**

It may appear that feedback should be restricted to educators in that they give feedback to a learner's response, but this is not necessarily the case. Within the framework used in this study, feedback also refers to comments which both the educator and the learners can



provide. The percentage of feedback realised by educators varies from 24.9% to 43.0%, while the percentage of feedback realised by learners varies from 1.5% to 27.7%. It is important for educators to provide feedback, either in the form of letting learners know whether their responses are correct or in the form of providing additional information to elucidate a point. It is equally important for learners to comment on certain issues raised in the classroom. In the level 2, session 2 class, learners were encouraged to give their opinions and comment on the topic presented, and their feedback interactions totalled 27.7%.

#### **5.2.2.4 Other**

This section looked at other interactions which take place in the classroom, for example markers (*okay, well, now*) and starters. Some educators are in the habit of saying *okay* and *alright* very often during their lessons, and this is reflected in the percentages of the level 1 educator in session 2 where 20.9% of educator interactions fall into this category. The level 2 educator seldom uses markers and starters and only realised 2.8% and 3.8% of such interactions.

The initiate, respond and feedback interactions discussed confirm what Sinclair and Brazil (1982:58) observed with regards the differences in the discourse contributions from the learners: “The pupils have a very restricted range of verbal functions to perform. They rarely initiate, and never follow-up. Most of their verbal activity is response, and normally confined strictly to the terms of the initiation”. Ellis (1984:106) adds that “the structure of the discourse is rigid in the three-phase mould, offering little opportunity to the pupil to exercise his own communication strategies”.

#### **5.2.3 IRF pattern**

The percentages of IRF patterns, as discussed in section 2.2.4.7, emerging from this study vary from 14.3% to 28.1%. The IRF pattern and the IRF(F) pattern, which will be looked at in 5.2.4, do not allow learners any opportunities of initiating or actively contributing to the discourse. Dreyer (1990:143) states that learners “need to interact and negotiate with their teachers in order to receive ‘optimal’ as well as challenging input”. With these patterns, learners merely respond to their educator’s initiation and the educator then provides them

with feedback on their responses.

#### **5.2.4 IRF(F) pattern**

The researcher noticed a pattern which emerged from the classes under investigation and it seemed necessary to analyse it further. Apart from the rather stilted IRF pattern discussed in 5.2.3, a new pattern, IRF(F) occurred frequently. The educator initiates, the learner responds, the educator provides feedback, and continues either with further feedback or finds it necessary to comment further on the topic or on the learners' responses. At pre-level 1 this pattern occurred 4.2% and 7.6% respectively; at level 1 this occurred more frequently with 16.4% in both sessions; at level 2 it did not occur often, only 5.5% and 0.7%; while at level 3 it occurred 46.2% in session 1 and 15.0% in session 2. In the outside world when people engage in conversations, it is not natural to follow an IRF(F) pattern, and this should not be found occurring frequently in the classroom.

#### **5.2.5 IRI pattern**

This pattern occurs in the classrooms, and is quite a natural pattern used outside the classroom as well, where one person asks a question, the other responds, and the first asks another question. However, if used too often, it can appear to be a cross interrogation and may be a little stilted. The percentages of this pattern vary from 13.3% to 44.9%. The highest figure, 44.9%, may be an issue which would need to be addressed with the educator involved as this occurrence is too high.

#### **5.2.6 IR (learner initiated) pattern**

As Sinclair and Brazil (1982) mentioned earlier, learners rarely get the opportunity to initiate an interaction followed by the educator's response. This was in fact confirmed in this study where most learner initiations followed by the educator's response fell below 7% of all interactions. In some cases, for example level 3 session 2, learners realised 0.5% of this pattern. Once again, at level 3 learners should be initiating more and more responses should be provided by the educator. The highest figure was 6.8% at level 2, session 1. In many

cases, learners initiate, but the educator does not respond.

The next section looks at the interpretation of findings regarding the questions used by educators and learners, as well as the questions used in the Independent Examinations Board examinations.

## **5.3 QUESTIONS**

At the beginning of this century, Stevens (1912) found that in his research teachers asked 66% memory or knowledge type questions which came directly from the textbook. Even more alarming is that in Floyd's (1966) study, half a century later, 75% of the questions asked by teachers in his research were of the type which required specific fact answers. Does the same apply at the end of the century in an ABET programme at levels 1, 2 and 3?

### **5.3.1 Analysis of classroom questions at pre-level 1, levels 1, 2 and 3**

In the first observation of the pre-level 1 class, most of the educator's questions were knowledge questions (88.9%). However, in the second observation, only 45.9% were knowledge questions, while 36.7% were at the comprehension level. The educator shifted from asking predominantly knowledge questions to asking more comprehension type questions. Although very few higher order questions were asked in both observations, there was a shift from a 98:2 (lower:higher ratio), to an 87:13 (lower:higher ratio). This also indicates a shift as the educator asked more cognitively challenging questions. The educator asked very few affective questions. Learners at this level only asked lower order questions.

At level 1 the focus is still on knowledge questions. However, there was also a shift from 68.2% knowledge questions in the first observation to 55.9% of the same type of questions in the second observation, and more comprehension questions were asked in the second observation. Although there were fewer application questions asked in the second observation, more analysis questions were asked in the second observation. In the second observation the educator asked more affective questions, possibly as a result of the nature of the lesson. The ratio between higher and lower order questions remained constant in both

observations. Learners asked more questions in the second observation, but in both observations learners asked lower order questions.

At level 2 there was a similar shift regarding knowledge questions, where in the first observation 79% of questions were at this level, while in the second observation only 38.3% were at this level. More comprehension questions were asked in the second observation, although fewer application questions were asked. However, more analysis, synthesis and evaluation questions were asked in the second observation. In fact, the lower higher order ratio of questions changed from 94:6 in the first observation to 69:31 in the second observation. In the first observation, learners only asked lower order questions, whereas in the second observation, learners asked higher order questions as well.

At level 3 as well, fewer knowledge questions were asked in the second observation, while more comprehension questions were asked. More application questions were asked in the first observation, while in the second observation more analysis questions were asked. The lower higher order ratio shifted from 91:9 in the first observation to 79:21 in the second observation. The learners' questions in the second observation were lower order type questions, whilst in the first observation they asked a few higher order questions.

To consolidate these findings, it is encouraging to see that as the course progresses educators ask fewer knowledge questions and shift to asking more challenging questions. However, educators at levels 2 and 3 should be asking more questions at the higher levels in order to stimulate their learners' thinking and to make them think more critically in order to function more effectively in their personal lives, in their communities, and in their workplaces. Learners as well, should be encouraged to ask more questions so that the discourse in the classroom assimilates the real world where communicative interactions include questions from both parties involved in the interaction.

### **5.3.2 Analysis of the levels of questions in the Independent Examinations Board examinations for levels 1, 2 and 3**

The analysis of the Independent Examinations Board's examinations has been divided into

the three levels of examinations, and there is also a cross-level analysis of these three examination levels.

### **Level 1**

At level 1, the majority of questions (49.4%) are at the knowledge level, followed by questions at the comprehension level (24.9%). It is interesting to note the irregular usage of questions at the various levels in different examinations. Although 49.4% is the mean or average of all the questions asked at the knowledge exam level for the eight examinations under observation, the extremes range from 26.3% to 73.6% . In most cases where learners have the opportunity to write IEB examinations, the educator usually provides her learners with a “mock” examination before they sit the “real” examination. For the educator, this is an opportunity to gauge how her learners will fare in the examination, and for the learners, it is an opportunity to experience and get a feel of what it is like to write an examination at whatever level they are at. Usually past IEB examinations are used as mock examinations. Should an educator, for example, choose the April 1996 examination as the mock examination for her learners, they may all do reasonably well as most of the questions are at the knowledge level (73.6%); and in fact 94.7% of the examination contains questions which are of a lower order type. However, when they write the “real” examination, which may be similar to the July 1996 one, they would invariably be less successful than the mock examination they wrote. The July 1996 examination contains 26.3% of knowledge questions with the bulk of questions at the comprehension level (47.4%); and furthermore, 15.8% of questions are at the higher order level. The November 1995 examination has most of the questions (47.6%) at the comprehension level and only 28.5% of questions at the knowledge level.

It is also interesting to note that at the application level, two examinations (November 1995 and March 1997) do not have questions at this level; while the November 1997 (on request) examination has 23.8% of its questions at this level. Similarly, three examinations (April 1996, July 1996 and June 1997) have no questions at the analysis level, while the other examinations do; and the November 1997 examination has in fact, 17.6% at this level. Only two examinations (November 1995 and November 1997 on request) have questions at the evaluation level.

However, when examining the lower order and higher order division of questions, there is a relatively even distribution, with an average ratio of 83:17. Apart from the November 1995 examination with 76.1% and the November 1997 examination with 76.5% of questions in the lower order level; and the April 1996 examination with 94.7% of questions in the lower order level; the other examinations are distributed evenly.

## **Level 2**

The bulk of the questions at level 2 are at the comprehension level (46%). Although 46% is the average, there are great variations within the comprehension level, ranging from 22.2% (July 1996) to 67.9% (April 1996). With the July 1996 examination, with 22.2% of questions at the comprehension level, the majority of questions in this examination are at the knowledge level (51.9%).

As with the level 1 examinations, an educator may give her learners a mock examination before they sit the final examination. Should learners attempt the July 1996 examination as the mock examination, for example, with 51.9% of questions at the knowledge level and 22.2% at the comprehension level, they may be shaken if they were to write the actual examination which could be similar to the November 1997 examination with only 8.8% of questions at the knowledge level and 65.2% of questions at the comprehension level. The April 1996 examination also has a similar distribution with 7.1% of questions at the knowledge level and 67.9% at the comprehension level.

As with the level 1 examinations, there is a relatively even distribution of lower order and higher order questions, with an average ratio of 78:22. However, the November 1997 (on request) examination has a staggering ratio of 54.5% lower order questions and 45.5% higher order questions. For a level 2 examination this is too demanding on the learners who probably were not exposed to such a great number of higher order questions, both in the classroom and in previous level 2 examinations which could have been used as mock examinations. The comprehension level questions are 36.4% while the analysis and synthesis levels combined also form 36.4% of the examination questions. This examination also causes the figures to be distorted as this is not a true reflection of a “typical” level 2 examination. If this examination is excluded and the ratio between lower order and higher

order questions is calculated, the result would be 72:28.

Furthermore, two examinations (June 1997 and November 1997) do not have any questions at the analysis level, while the October 1996 examination has 14.3% of questions at this level. As already mentioned, the November 1997 (on request) examination has 18.2% of questions at this level. All the examinations have questions at the synthesis level, ranging from 3.7% (July 1996) to 13% (November 1997), and also the November 1997 (on request) examination with 18.2%. Two examinations (October 1996 and November 1997) have no evaluation type questions, while the others range from 3.6% (April 1996) to 10% (June 1997). It is also interesting to note that overall there are more synthesis questions (10.8%) asked than analysis questions (6.4%).

### **Level 3**

The majority of questions at level 3 are at the comprehension level (37.3%). The comprehension level is fairly evenly distributed ranging from 22.2% in the August 1994 examination, to 55.3% in the June 1997 examination. At the knowledge level, there are greater variations, ranging from no questions at this level (July 1995), to 6% (April 1996), to 21.4% (April 1997). The application level also has large variations, ranging from no questions at this level (June 1997), to 7.1% (November 1995), to 38.9% (August 1994).

Once again, if an educator gives her learners a mock examination, for example the June 1997 examination with most of the questions at the comprehension level (55.3%) and no questions at the application level; and the examination the learners sit is cognitively similar to the August 1994 examination with 22.2% at the comprehension level and 38.9% at the application level, learners may find it very difficult as they had no been exposed to application questions in their mock examination.

Examining the higher order questions, starting with the analysis level, the August 1994 examination has no questions at this level, the April 1996 examination has 8.8% at this level, while the November 1997 has 26% at this level. Once again, should learners write the August 1994 examination with no analysis questions, and then sit the November 1997 examination with 26% analysis questions, they may not fare too well. The synthesis level

has percentages ranging from 2.9% (July 1996) to 23.7% (June 1997). Again the mock examination - real examination dilemma continues. Four examinations (July 1995, April 1997, June 1997 and November 1997) have no questions at the evaluation level, while the July 1996 examination has 5.9% of questions at this level.

The ratio between lower order and higher order questions is 70:30, and the distribution is fairly even, with the lowest being 68:32 (July 1995) and the highest 80:20 (April 1996).

### **Cross-level analysis**

In analysing the knowledge level of the three levels of examinations, there is a big difference between level 1 (49.4%) and level 2 (19.0%), with a smaller difference between level 2 and level 3 (14.3%). At the comprehension level, an increase between the levels would be expected. This is the case between level 1 (24.9%) and level 2 (46.0%), but then there is a drop between level 2 and level 3 (37.7%). At the application level there is a steady increase from level 1 (8.4%) to level 2 (12.6%) and to level 3 (18.8%). At the analysis level, there is in fact a drop from level 1 (6.6%) to level 2 (6.4%), then a big gap to level 3 (13.8%). The synthesis level has a fairly steady increase from level 1 (9.5%) to level 2 (10.8%) and to level 3 (13.6%). The evaluation level is also inconsistent in that level 1 has 1.2%, level 2 has 5.2%, then level 3 drops to 2.2%, just one percent more than the level 1 figure.

When considering lower order and higher order questions, there is a 5.1% difference between level 1 (82.7 : 17.3) and level 2 (77.6 : 22.4) while the difference between level 2 and level 3 (70.4 : 29.6) is only 7.2%. The cognitive difference between level 2 and level 3 is not as great as the difference between level 1 and level 2. It would be expected that the cognitive difference between level 2 and level 3 be greater.

### **Synopsis**

If the "trend" of these examinations is followed, and where the bulk of the questions lie, it could be postulated that level 1 is the "knowledge" level where learners are in fact, acquiring knowledge, and having this knowledge tested. Looking at the performance outcomes for level 1, most of the outcomes are "knowledge" based. Some of these outcomes include:

*- read, interpret and follow simple instructions*



- *write own name, address and today's date for practical purposes*
- *write single words appropriate to given text*
- *use capital letters appropriately for names and initial words in a sentence*

Again, looking at level 2, it could be postulated that it is the "comprehension" level, where learners have gained the knowledge in level 1, and are now gaining a better understanding of the language, and are having this understanding tested. Some of the performance outcomes for level 2 include:

- *use clues such as chapter headings, titles, layout, format, punctuation, illustrations, etc. to help understand the text*
- *identify less obvious meanings which are not directly stated in the text*
- *extract information from and respond to visual texts such as pictures, simple graphs/tables, maps, book covers, etc.*
- *structure the writing logically and coherently within a paragraph*

From this it should follow that level 3 should then be the "application" level, where the learners have acquired the knowledge, have mastered the understanding and should now start applying this to different contexts and situations. However, the bulk of level 3 questions is not at the application level, but rather at the comprehension level. Some of the performance outcomes for level 3 include:

- *write narrative, factual and persuasive text*
- *write for practical purposes*
- *give and get information*
- *express and respond to suggestions, offers and requests*

These outcomes require the skill of being able to apply the learning and understanding of the content of the course.

Furthermore, there should be a steady cognitive progression in the examinations in order to prepare learners for successive levels of study. At the post-level 3 levels, it is expected that learners will need to focus more on analysing, synthesizing and evaluating.

If this concept of level 1 focuses on knowledge, level 2 on comprehension and level 3 on

application, the type of questions asked in the classroom should follow a similar pattern.

### **5.3.3 A comparison between the questions asked in the classroom and the questions asked in the Independent Examinations Board examinations**

The focus of the IEB level 1 examinations is on knowledge questions. Learners in the level 1 class being observed should be able to answer these questions as they have been exposed to knowledge questions by the educator. However, the findings from the IEB level 1 examinations reveal that 17.3% of the examinations have higher order questions, whereas learners had not been exposed to so many higher order questions in the classroom. At level 2, the IEB examinations have most of the questions at the comprehension level. Although there was a shift from the first to the second observation regarding knowledge questions, educators would need to focus more on comprehension type questions. 22.4% of the questions in the IEB examinations were of a higher order, while learners were not exposed to many higher order questions in the classroom. At level 3, the focus of the IEB examinations is between comprehension and application questions, while learners in the classroom as still exposed to too many knowledge questions. The higher order questions asked in the examinations comprise 29.6% of the examinations, but learners are not exposed to such a high percentage of higher order questions in the classroom.

The next section deals with an interpretation of the findings of the learners' errors.

## **5.4 ERRORS**

### **5.4.1 Written errors: pre-level 1 and level 1**

At pre-level 1 and level 1, the following errors were prevalent:

- The most common error is the pronoun following a proper noun or noun, for example *my wife she is cooking*, even though it does not hinder communication.
- In many cases, learners also omit the pronoun, for example *she is asked \_\_\_ mother* (she asked her mother).
- Regarding errors relating to verbs, the most common error is the usage of the present

tense to denote the past tense. This is understandable as most learners at these levels are starting to learn English for the first time, and are introduced to the present tense.

- Another common error with verbs is the omission of *be* before a verb + *ing*, for example *the boy sithing on chair* (the boy is sitting on the chair). This could be caused by the confusion of the present simple tense - *the child eats apples* - meaning that the child habitually eats apples versus the present continuous tense - *the child is eating apples* - denoting that the child is eating apples at the present time.
- Punctuation seems to be problematic at these levels, where the first person singular is not written with a capital letter (*i*); no capital letter is used to start a sentence ( *... at house. and my family ...*); a fullstop is placed at the end of each line versus the end of each sentence; and often there is a fullstop in mid sentence.
- Articles are also problematic in that often the definite article is omitted (*she put \_\_\_ letter in box*) or a definite article is added (*I go to the work*). Indefinite articles are also often omitted (*I see \_\_\_ gell*).
- The word order of some of the sentences is at times rather unusual (*A frog i see*), but this is probably due to the fact that the learners are still learning to string different words to form sentences.
- Concord between the subject and the verb of a sentence is also an area that would need attention (*My children is ...*).
- Prepositions are always a problem in that many vernacular languages of South Africa do not have prepositions.

#### 5.4.2 Written errors: level 2

At level 2, the following errors were prevalent:

- Many verbs used at this level are still written in the present tense whereas they should be in the past tense. This could be that the learners are starting to learn the past tense but still confusing the two tenses.
- The definite article is still often omitted in sentences (*about 1 km \_\_\_ taxi rank*), whilst in other cases the definite article is added unnecessarily (*I want to go to the Captown*). The indefinite article is also often omitted (*we must write \_\_\_ letter*).

- Pronouns are often omitted from sentences (*before \_\_\_ is too late*), and, similar to the previous levels, a pronoun is often placed after a proper noun or noun (*Her sisters they*).
- Subject verb concord is still problematic at this level where there are many sentences which lack this concord (*my house have*).
- There are fewer punctuation problems at this level, and the most frequent issue seems to be a capital letter used in mid sentence (*What happened At home?*).
- However, the most salient error regarding prepositions is the omission of the preposition *at* (*tea \_\_\_ five o'clock*).
- There are still unusual sentences in that the word order is incorrect (*home I went*).

### 5.4.3 Written errors: level 3

At level 3, the following errors were prevalent:

- Interestingly, most level 3 errors relate to the omission of the plural marker (*official \_\_\_ are*). At this level this error should not be occurring.
- The indefinite article is added where one should not appear (*I have read a books*), and the definite article is still frequently omitted (*most of \_\_\_ times*).
- Subject verb concord is still problematic (... *have brains that is helping* ...).
- A pronoun is still placed after a proper noun or noun (... *people from big companies they visit* ...).
- In the verb section, learners tend to omit the third person singular *-s* (... *he like gardening* ...), and the present tense is still used extensively instead of the past tense.
- As with the other levels, prepositions are still problematic.

### 5.4.4 Oral errors

The most common oral errors included:

- The omission of the subject of the sentence (... *is wake up* ...), followed by the omission to invert questions (*the ruler is where?*).
- The definite article is often omitted (... *he go to fruit shop* ...), as is the indefinite article (... *this is small chicken* ...).

- In the verb section, the *be* is omitted when learners use the present continuous tense (*If she not wearing the skirt*), while the verb is omitted in many cases (... *what this word?*). Another common error with verbs is the addition of *be* to a present tense verb (... *the lady is walk ...*).
- Prepositions are also problematic in the oral utterances of learners, with the greatest error being the omission of the preposition (*I'm go home tomorrow \_\_\_ 4 o'clock*).
- Interestingly, there are few errors in pronouns, particularly where a pronoun is placed after a proper noun or noun (... *the boys they were ...*).

## 5.5 TREATMENT OF ERRORS

### 5.5.1 Educators treating their learners' errors

From the classroom interaction matrix, it appears that in every lesson educators do treat errors to a greater or lesser extent, ranging from 18.2% to 49%. What is important to bear in mind is that errors are treated depending on the objective of a particular lesson. If educators require their learners to speak (or write) freely in order to build their confidence and communicate their thoughts and opinions, constantly treating errors may in fact have the opposite effect, in that learners may feel embarrassed or scared to express their ideas and feelings. If, however, the aim of an exercise is to improve grammar and learners provide input, educators feel that learners have the right to be corrected so that they have the correct answer.

It is up to the individual educator to establish how, when and which errors need to be treated as this is a very sensitive issue, even though many learners (92%) feel that their educators must correct their errors in order to improve their language abilities.

The findings from the stakeholders' questionnaires regarding the evaluation of effectiveness of learning are presented in the next section.

## 5.6 EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING

### 5.6.1 Introduction

The findings from the various stakeholders' questionnaires will be presented in terms of the learners', educators', supervisors', and the ABET Centre's input.

### 5.6.2 Learners

Many of the activities the learners enjoyed in the class included life skills such as reading a map, using an atlas, learning about the importance of a signature, bank statements, and debates to solve problems. This confirms that learners enjoy activities which are meaningful and relevant to their lives, and which they can use to enrich their lives. In fact, 55% of learners found that the lessons taught them many things which they could use, while 31% learnt new things which they found interesting. In addition, 66.7% of learners found the lessons to be useful and interesting.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are important for the educators as the information gleaned from the learners' responses to these questions gives the educators an insight into what activities their learners enjoy; which ones they do not enjoy; which ones they found easy to do; which ones they found difficult to do; which ones they didn't enjoy; and what activities taught them a lot. This allows the educators to plan future lessons accordingly, as they have a richer understanding of what their learners' needs are and what their learners feel about certain activities. Question 6 is also meaningful as learners are given an opportunity of stating what they would like their educators to explain again. These six questions allowed learners to express themselves freely about how they feel about certain activities in a non-threatening way. The educators will not single out a specific learner and say to her *why did you not understand this?* or *why didn't you tell me earlier that you struggled with this?* These questions can almost act as a diagnostic system where any problem areas can be detected.

Although 24.8% of learners indicated that they were bored in some of the lessons, this may not necessarily be a true reflection. Many learners indicated they were bored, but in the

same questionnaire contradicted this response by stating that they had learnt new and useful things, they enjoyed all the activities and indicated that they were able to use these activities outside the classroom. It is a possibility that learners did not understand the term 'bored'.

Looking at the environment where learning takes place, it is important that learners do not feel restricted in any way as they need to be comfortable and feel free to express their concerns without worrying about being reprimanded. It is encouraging to note that 63.4% of learners felt they could ask questions; 62.1% felt they could share information; and 51% felt they could make mistakes. In this last category - making mistakes - it is interesting to note that 49% either felt they could not make mistakes or they did not respond. Many adult learners feel that it is not right to make mistakes and could even withhold expressing themselves for fear of making a mistake, or appearing foolish and incompetent in front of other learners and the educator. This section - question 10 - was not answered very well: 35.9%, 37.2% and 41.8% respectively did not respond. This may be an indication that learners did not understand the question even though the vernacular version was available. In addition, from the educators' questionnaire (question 2), 92.7% of learners spoke in class which means that learners felt comfortable expressing themselves in the classroom environment.

In question 12, where learners had to say whether the educator asked them questions, 78.4% responded that the educator had asked them questions, and 80.8% of learners said the educator asked them many questions. Linking this information to the learners' previous response as to whether they ask questions - 81.7% - it is very encouraging, as questions are the nucleus around which all communication between educators and learners takes place. Questions are an integral and indispensable means of teaching and lie at the very heart of promoting critical thinking abilities in learners. From the educators' questionnaire, 81.8% stated that their learners asked questions, and 83.6% of the learners responded to their educators' questions. This is also confirmed by the educators' questionnaire - question 19 - where the educators stated that 83% of their learners raised questions about issues discussed in class.

It is also very meaningful for learners to participate in the class, and 70.6% of learners said

they participated a lot in the class activities. This is confirmed by the educators' questionnaire (question 1) where they stated that 98.2% of learners participated in classroom activities. Although there is a difference of 27.6% between the learners' and educators' scores, this could be attributed to the fact that if learners discuss an issue in class, educators see this as active participation, whereas the learners may not see this as participation. Often learners only believe they are participating if they use their books and are involved in some form of reading or writing.

It is important for learners to be able to say whether they feel that the educator is going at the right pace for them, and 77.8% felt that this was the case.

A major concern with education, and particularly adult education, is that the classroom and the outside world are seen as two separate parallel entities which never intersect. This means that very often the knowledge and skills learners acquire in the classroom are reserved for the classroom only, and are never transferred outside the classroom into their worlds. Questions 15 and 16 asked learners to state what knowledge and skills learnt in the classroom they were able to use at their workplaces and in their homes. These questions also allowed learners to reflect on what they had learnt in the classroom, and what they were actually using outside the classroom. It is remarkable how many skills and how much knowledge was actually transferred - this is reflected on page 155. The supervisors who evaluated the learners' learning also commented on the educational growth of their staff members. This will be discussed in detail in section 5.6.4.

### **5.6.3 Educators**

Many adult learners who may have attended school for a few years or who had never attended school, do not feel very comfortable in the classroom and with the learning process as the methodologies and techniques used are unfamiliar to them. Many are not used to expressing their own views and opinions; working in pairs and groups; debating issues; playing games; or role playing. In this research, educators stated that 70.9% of learners felt comfortable with the learning process, while 23.6% initially felt uncomfortable but later changed. This is probably attributed to the fact that the educators at this ABET Centre are *au*



*fait* with the principles of adult learning and teaching and apply these principles in their classes, and they encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning.

In question 7, educators reflected on the activities which they thought their learners enjoyed, and these coincided with the learners' response to the same question in their questionnaire. Classes at this ABET Centre are small - maximum 10 learners - so the educators have the opportunity of developing a close educational relationship with their learners and get to know them, as well as their likes and dislikes.

Questions 8, 9, 10, and 11 gave educators the opportunity of reflecting on the work done by their learners. Educators listed the activities their learners could do; which ones were beneficial for them; which ones they struggled with; and then provided a reason why they thought the learners struggled with these activities. It is important for educators to think about what happens in the classroom and how their learners are handling the learning process as they may need to provide alternative means of achieving the aims and objectives of the programme.

A positive note is that educators felt that 89.1% of learners understood their instructions which means that the educators give instructions using the appropriate register for their learners. However, 31.5% of learners understood their educators' instructions very well, and 24.1% understood the instructions well. A flaw in the questionnaire is that educators were not asked to state how many times they had to repeat or rephrase their instructions in order for the learners to understand. In fact, 9.2% of learners 'deteriorated' in their ability to understand their educators' instructions, while only 20.4% improved their ability to understand.

Another important aspect of the questionnaire was to ascertain from the educators whether they felt that their learners had achieved the desired outcomes, as a pass mark on a written class test does not necessarily indicate that the outcomes have been achieved. Educators therefore reflected on this issue, and 74.9% of them believed that their learners had achieved the required outcomes. For the learners who did not achieve or only partly achieved the outcomes, educators had to state what they thought the problems might be and what they

were going to do to assist their learners in achieving these outcomes. This, once again, allowed educators to think about their learners' learning and gauge what could be done in order to make sure that the desired outcomes were achieved.

Other important aspects of adult principles of learning and teaching include the learners comparing their work and findings with other learners; co-operating with other learners; disagreeing with a point of view and offering alternatives; and offering suggestions on what to do and how to do it. From the educators' responses to these questions, it is evident that these principles are applied in the classrooms. 83.6% of learners compared their work and findings with other learners; 90.7% of learners co-operated with other learners; 69.9% of learners offered alternatives to a particular issue; and 73.2% of learners offered suggestions on what to do and how to do it.

Although it is not always possible for learners to do homework because of work and home commitments and pressures, 90.2% of learners did their homework. This further emphasizes the commitment and dedication of adult learners at this ABET Centre. In addition, educators also stated - in question 22 - that 93.4% of their learners are enthusiastic about attending classes.

In question 21, educators stated whether they had seen any changes in their learners' vocabulary; use of language; expressive language; confidence; and participation. The results are very positive: 76% of educators noticed a change in their learners' vocabulary; 74.9% noticed a change in their learners' use of language; 80.9% noticed a change in their learners' expressive language; 86.9% noticed a change in their learners' participation in the classroom; and the educators noticed an 86.3% change in their learners' confidence. This change in the learners' confidence is further confirmed by the supervisors' rating of their staff members. This will be discussed in detail in the next section.

#### **5.6.4 Supervisors/managers**

The first four questions of the supervisors' two questionnaires were based on their staff members' ability to express themselves in English; their staff members' confidence level;

their staff members' participation in the workplace; and their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace. The results were positive and encouraging. 94.9% of supervisors noticed a change in their staff members' ability to express themselves in English. Initially 12.8% of supervisors rated their staff members' ability to express themselves in English as 'not so good', whereas in the second questionnaire, only 2.7% rated the change in this ability as 'not so good'. 89.7% of supervisors noticed a change in their staff members' confidence. This is an indication that not only are learners acquiring knowledge and skills in the classroom, but they are also gaining confidence which reflects positively in the workplace. As stated in BCEL's booklet (1987:19), "attention should be given to whether there are observable changes in employee self-esteem, self-confidence, and ease of learning. Adults who lack good basic skills often have been made to feel they can't learn. Improvement in attitude and demeanor can be important signs of program success". The fact that observable changes in confidence have been reported by so many supervisors can be seen as an indication that the ABET programmes run at this centre are successful. 82% of supervisors also noticed a change in how their employees participated in the workplace (for example, they express their opinions at meetings, and offer some input to certain problems), while 87% noticed a change in their staff members' interaction with others in the workplace. These results could also be attributed to the learners' increase in self-confidence and self-esteem. Linked to this is the learners' attitude, behaviour and social interaction skills. 87.2% of supervisors noticed that there had been a change in their staff members in these areas.

Supervisors were asked to state whether they had noticed any changes in their staff members' general knowledge, communication skills, job skills and life skills, and the results are also very positive. 53.9% of supervisors had noticed some change (either great, functional or slight) in their staff members' general knowledge; 94.9% noticed a change in their staff members' communication skills; 79.5% noticed some change in their staff members' job skills in terms of reading, writing, speaking and listening; and 51.3% noticed a change in their staff members' life skills, for example filling in forms, managing conflict, and budgeting. The most significant change was in communication skills. This is, once again, an indication that the learners are more confident and transferring the learning from the classroom to the outside world.

Another positive aspect is that 95% of supervisors stated that their staff members were benefitting from attending classes. They felt that their staff members were participating more in work meetings; were expressing themselves better in English; were more friendly; were carrying out instructions better; were more reliable; seemed happier at work; were more enthusiastic; were organising themselves better; and had a greater ability to express their views.

Thus far it appears that supervisors have provided results which show very positive changes in their staff members. It is also important to ascertain to what extent supervisors feel they should be involved in their staff members' learning. In the first questionnaire, supervisors were asked this question, where they had to rate their involvement on a scale of *1* to *6* (where *1* is not involved at all and *6* is totally involved). If the results of the *4*, *5*, and *6* ratings are taken into account and considered to be a reflection of the supervisors being involved in one way or another, it reveals that 64.1% of supervisors fall into this category. Only 15.4% of supervisors provided a *1* rating which means they do not feel they should be involved. These supervisors may feel that "being involved" in their staff members' learning means assisting their staff members with homework or helping them understand the contents of a lesson for example. Involvement however, does not only take this form, but can also mean showing an interest in what the staff member is learning, providing encouragement, and praise for work well done.

It often happens that there is little or no communication between the learners' supervisors and the ABET Centre. This makes it difficult for the ABET Centre and the educators to prepare lesson plans which would fulfil the needs of the organisation or the different departments within the organisation. A supervisor, for example, agrees to send a staff member for classes but hopes that the staff member, amongst other things, will learn how to take proper telephone messages. The supervisor, however, does not convey this message to the ABET Centre. The educator does not know this information, so may not think of preparing a lesson which incorporates taking telephone messages. After a few months the supervisor is concerned and blames the education offered by the ABET Centre as the staff member still cannot take telephone messages, and sees it as a waste of time to send the staff member to classes. To overcome this situation, supervisors were asked to provide input into

the areas they felt their staff members needed assistance from the ABET Centre. Only 59% provided input in this section.

When asked whether they would recommend other staff members to attend classes, 59% of supervisors said they would, while 23% said they would not recommend others because there were no other staff members in their departments.

Overall, supervisors were impressed with the learning which took place at the ABET Centre: 2.6% rated the learning that took place as excellent; 28.2% rated it as very good; 51.3% rated it as good; while 12.8% rated it as average and 5.1% rated it as poor. The poorer ratings could be attributed to a number of factors. It could be that the supervisors' expectations were not met, or they may have felt that their staff members were not contributing as much as they should have been after having attended classes. It must also be noted that some supervisors believe that their staff members who may have obtained a Standard 2 in 1965, should become fully functionally literate in a couple of months, despite the fact that they were informed that learning is a long and lifelong process.

It is also important for the ABET Centre to receive feedback from the supervisors about the service provided by the centre. 25.6% rated the service as excellent, 35.9% rated it as very good, 20.5% rated it as good, and 7.7% rated it as average. These results are positive and show that the service provided by the ABET Centre is of a high calibre. No one responded to question 13 of the second questionnaire, where supervisors were asked to let the ABET Centre know whether they were experiencing any problems in dealing with the centre.

#### **5.6.5 ABET Centre**

It is imperative that ABET centres have a plan of development for ABET at the centre; that there is a statement of scope; that there is a target number of learners for the ABET programme; that there is a formal procedure for monitoring and evaluating; and that there is a written set of aims and objectives which are reviewed annually. The ABET Centre being researched meets all these criteria. However, it does fall short when it comes to areas where all the stakeholders need to be involved. These include the aims and objectives which have

not always been determined in consultation with all the stakeholders involved and in addition, they are not made available to all the stakeholders. The ABET Centre produces an annual summary of what took place at the centre including all the events. In this summary the number of learners who enrolled, the number who write examinations and passed, the number of educators, etc. are included.

As the ABET Centre is fully sponsored by the organisation, there is a specific budget allocated to ABET, and learners are also fully sponsored and do not have to make any financial contributions.

Sufficient marketing is undertaken by the ABET Centre to ensure that all staff members in the organisation are informed about the programmes provided by the centre. A leaflet is sent out regularly informing staff members of the programmes offered by the centre. In addition, the management of the centre often does presentations to various departments within the organisation. Classes start in January and run to the end of November, so learners have the option of starting at various points during the year, and they can still qualify to write Independent Examinations Board examinations should they wish to do so. The pre-level 1 class which is offered at this ABET Centre makes provision for learners with learning differences; but learners with physical disabilities (e.g. in wheelchairs) may have some difficulty accessing the classrooms, although they have never had learners with physical disabilities enrolling at the centre. There is a wide range of reading and learning material available to the learners; and the educators have an excellent resource library stocked with teaching and resource materials.

When staff members within the organisation decide that they would like to attend classes, they are given a personal interview and a placement assessment before joining classes. After the assessment has been marked, the results are made available to the learners and they are advised when they can start classes. Educators make use of ongoing assessment techniques in the classroom, and this assessment of progress is a joint effort between the learners and their educators. Learners are kept informed of their results of all assessments undertaken. However, there is no learning plan for each learner. Educators use written lesson plans and keep records of work undertaken in each session.

At times, learners drop out for a number of reasons including work pressures, being transferred to different departments, and lack of interest. Appropriate follow-up is carried out to establish why they dropped out, although this follow-up should be more stringent and supervisors need to be more involved in this process. As the ABET Centre is part of a large organisation, it is important that supervisors receive regular progress reports on their staff members' progress at the centre. This is done twice a year.

Educators are interviewed and selected according to a clear set of criteria before they are employed, and management tries to recruit educators of a high calibre. Initially, contract educators sign a three month contract, and upon completion of this contract, if all the parties are in agreement, the contract is renewed on a yearly basis. The centre is very committed to the professional development of its educators and provides regular courses to achieve this aim.

The ABET programmes offered at the centre are in line with the National Qualifications Framework, and learners have the opportunity of writing nationally accredited examinations through the Independent Examinations Board. These examinations are transferable and transportable to other industries.

The programmes run at the centre are effective in that the knowledge and skills learned at the ABET centre are transferred to the workplace and to the community. The evaluation techniques used at the centre show that the ABET programmes are making a difference to the organisation and to the learners' lives.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter the various findings were interpreted and discussed. The next chapter will offer recommendations:

# 6

## recommendations

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Based on the research findings presented in the previous chapter, recommendations are provided in this chapter as to what educators can do with this information.

### 6.2 CLASSROOM INTERACTION

#### 6.2.1 Educator training

ABET training courses should focus on classroom interaction as educators need to have a sound understanding of this concept as it is a vital component which facilitates the acquisition of a language. The language and the interactions in the classroom should approximate the language used in the outside world as closely as possible, and many educators are not aware of the impact these interactions have on the language learning process. Although one does not want to prescribe to educators how to facilitate, nor does one want to invade and alter their personal facilitation styles, it is important for them to be made aware of the various interaction patterns which occur in their classrooms. A section of any ABET training programme should be devoted to classroom interactions and trainee educators as well as trained educators should possibly spend time analysing the interactions which occur in their classrooms and ascertain whether these approximate the language interactions used in the outside world. They should also investigate whether the patterns of



interaction used in the classroom are beneficial to the learners in terms of acquiring the language concerned. As McCarthy (1991:19) points out, “the classroom ..... is not the ‘real’ world of conversation. It is a peculiar place, a place where teachers ask questions to which they already know the answers, where pupils ..... have very limited rights as speakers, and where evaluation by the teacher of what the pupils say is a vital mechanism in the discourse structure”.

On training courses, educators should also be taught how to teach conversation, a concept which sounds like a contradiction in terms. Cook (1989:116) states that “the characteristic features of conversation include greater spontaneity and freedom, and a greater equality among participants than in other discourse types. All these features are at odds with the nature of the classroom, where language is directed towards a specific purpose, and where one person (the teacher) is traditionally in charge of the others (the students)”. He continues by asserting that “conversation ..... involves far more than knowledge of the language system and the factors creating coherence in one-way discourse; it involves the gaining, holding, and yielding of turns, the negotiation of meaning and direction, the shifting of topic, the signalling and identification of turn type, the use of voice quality, face, and body”. Educators should be made aware of these issues and shown how to apply them in the classroom situation.

### **6.2.2 A more communicative approach to language learning**

What happens frequently in language classes is that learners learn and know the rules of language usage, but are not able to use the language. Larsen-Freeman (1986:123) points out that “since communication is a process, it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge of target language forms, meanings, and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge in negotiating meaning. It is through interaction between speaker and listener ..... that meaning becomes clear”. Some of the principles of the communicative approach to language learning and teaching include using authentic language, that is language used within a real context; working out the intentions of the speaker is part of communicative competence; communicative interaction assists with cooperative relationships among learners; and the educator is an advisor and not a teacher during communicative activities. Larsen-Freeman (1986:135) provides some techniques which can

be used by educators in the classroom to aid communicative competence: using authentic materials, for example newspaper articles, timetables, grocery labels; scrambled sentences which learners need to restore to their original order which assist learners to learn about the cohesion and coherence properties of language; language games which give learners valuable communicative practice; picture strip stories where parts of the strip are not shown and learners need to predict what is missing; and role plays which give learners an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles.

Dreyer (1990:149) notes that educators should make time during their lessons for social goals as this gives learners the opportunity to become involved in the interactions in the classroom. She states that the learners “can initiate and their answers to questions are longer and more creative”. These interactions can facilitate language acquisition and the focus of the lesson can be moved from a more formal setting into a more relaxed and social setting where learners may feel more comfortable speaking and expressing their views.

The activities which learners do in the classroom need to stimulate the kind of communication that goes on in the real world. Ellis (1984:129) states emphatically that “unless the learner is free to express his own meanings, there can be no need to communicate”. Larsen-Freeman (1986:128) points out that “the target language is a vehicle for classroom communication, not just the object of study”. Are ABET learners given enough opportunities to express their own meanings and opinions, or are they merely responding to their educator’s questions and directives, and studying the rules of the language without being able to apply them outside the classroom?

The next section deals with recommendations for questioning skills.

## **6.3 QUESTIONS**

### **6.3.1 Introduction**

To become proficient in the skill of questioning, it is important for the educator to know what good questions are, know how they should be presented, and have the ability to present them in the classroom, and adapt them to meet the dynamics of the situation. The researcher

feels that it is not sufficient to conclude from the previous chapters that there is a critical need for educators to be trained in questioning skills, without providing detailed recommendations directed at educators and at people who design courses and train educators, particularly in the ABET field. Therefore, in this sub-section, recommendations are given in terms of planning questions, asking questions, how to increase learner-initiated questions, as well as some activities to stimulate the affective domain. A model for effective questioning is also presented, and a checklist on questioning skills for the educator is provided.

With many educators in ABET having to undergo the transition from "teaching" to "facilitating" a group of adult learners, where the participation of learners in the classroom is very important, it becomes very easy for the educator to increase the quantity of learner participation by asking too many knowledge type of questions, instead of moving towards asking more higher level cognitive questions. Perrott (1982:91) states that "recall questions should be asked only in so far as they are necessary for the development of higher-order questions". There is little value in increasing the number of learners answering if most of their answers remain at the knowledge level.

The training of educators often focuses on the content, rather than the process. Questioning skills can be classified as process and therefore do not receive as much attention as they deserve. Another reason why educators tend to focus on knowledge type questions or seem to ask questions without a clear purpose is what Yanicke (1975:2) believes, that is, educators "do not know why they ask questions". The professional training of adult basic education and training educators should make them aware of their own performance skills and of their duty to improve learners' thinking skills. Studies (Borg *et al.* 1970; and Perrott *et al.* 1976) examined higher order questioning skills used by educators before and after training. In both studies it was clear that there was a significant increase in the number of higher order questions asked by the educators after training had taken place. Takalo (1989:42) states that educators "who lack the art of questioning inhibit their students by discouraging their questions". To emphasise the importance of educators being trained in questioning techniques, Postman and Weingartner (in Moodley 1985) state that "once you have learned to ask questions, relevant and appropriate and substantial questions, you have learned how to learn, and no one can keep you from learning whatever you need to know".

### 6.3.2 Planning questions

Without having a clear idea of the purpose of a lesson, facilitating it will be aimless and the questions asked will be ineffective. It is important for the educator to formulate key questions that will assist him in achieving the lesson objectives. Planning the lesson starts with setting objectives which in turn influence the nature of questions to be asked. By planning the lesson - including the appropriate questions - the educator is able to look back over his lesson plans and see whether he is asking mainly knowledge questions or whether he is assisting his learners to learn and think for themselves. By doing this, educators will not only be what Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982:107) term "dispensers of information", but they will be able to guide their learners in finding answers for themselves and become more independent and self-directed in their learning. In addition to planning key questions with specific objectives in mind, it is also important to grade these questions in order to necessitate different levels of thinking. Key questions should also be logically thought out, and it is important to note what Kerry (1982:43) states: "it is helpful ... to think of questions not as isolated events so much as sequences which build up from small beginning into endings which have cognitive significance". Beyond planning, the success of any lesson depends on the educator's ability and flexibility to adjust his plans during classroom interaction as dictated by the needs of the class. By merely asking and answering questions, it is not guaranteed that learning will take place. Learning follows from the interaction of all aspects of instruction and particularly with the involvement of the learners.

When it comes to the language used in formulating questions, it is important for educators to keep the language simple and clear in order to avoid ambiguity; the questions should be kept short; and the words used in the questions should require precise answers from the learners. The language used in questions should be pitched at the appropriate level for the learners. The educator should also take note of the words he uses to start his questions as often these dictate the style of the learner's answer. Words like *can*, *will*, *did*, *do*, *should*, *would*, *are*, and *is* require a *yes* or *no* answer. There are three question types which should be avoided by educators. Firstly, the question that requires learners to try and guess what the educator wants. Secondly, the general and vague question, for example *Are there any questions?* which does not assist learners to focus their thoughts on important issues. Thirdly, the

rhetorical question, for example *Don't you all agree that this is a good book to read?* This type of question limits the learners' chance to think for themselves and they merely agree with the educator's point of view that that was a good book even if they don't agree. Moore (1989:22) concludes that questions should stretch the mind, but at first, the educator should ask questions which the learners will nearly always succeed in answering. Once they gain confidence, the questions need to become more difficult and challenging.

### 6.3.3 Asking questions

A step-by-step process on asking a question is provided to assist educators when they are faced with the task of actually asking the question in the classroom:

- educators should speak in a clear tone so that all learners can hear the question, and understand what the intent of the question is
- key questions should be presented at the beginning of the discussion so that learners can direct their attention to the important issues being presented
- educators should only ask one question at a time, without trying to elaborate on it and thus influence the learners' answers, or confuse the learners
- a question should only be asked once; as repetition wastes time, reduces the level of learner concentration and slows down the pace and flow of the lesson
- questions must be directed to the whole class and all learners should be involved
- the educator must then pause to give his learners time to think and plan their answers. (before asking a question he could say *before you answer the next question, I would like you to think about it carefully*, and then give the learners enough time to think about the answer)
- a question can then be directed to a particular learner, and the educator, according to Walters (1990:74) must develop the reputation that he may ask learners who do not want to answer
- questions need to be distributed throughout the class, and not only to certain learners
- non-volunteers should also be asked questions, especially questions which the educator knows they are able to answer
- if the educator wants a specific learner to answer, he should name or call the learner

before asking the question, in order to gain his attention

- learners should be prompted and given clues whenever the educator feels this is necessary
- a learner's answer should only be repeated if it requires reinforcement. This repetition can be verbal (by the educator or learners) or visual (i.e. written on the board or gestured at)
- the educator needs to always acknowledge a learner's answer
- the learners' answers (correct or incorrect) should be used in a positive way, and the educator needs to be tolerant of all answers
- learners should be encouraged to comment on their fellow learners' answers
- educators should not be unnecessarily critical of their learners' answers as this will stop learners from wanting to attempt to answer
- the educator should not finish his learners' answers for them
- the educator should not answer his own question until he is certain that learners are unable to even attempt an answer for themselves
- questions which can be answered with a *yes* or *no* should be avoided
- should a learner answer a question with a *yes* or a *no*, the educator can elicit further information from the learner by asking questions such as *why?*, *how do you ...?* or *what makes you think that?*
- asking questions, as well as reacting to the answers to these questions, should be handled in a sensitive way
- an educator should practice making progressively greater cognitive demands on his learners by using sequences of higher order questions. By being aware of the different levels of questions, an educator can prepare a number of higher order questions in his lesson preparation. Appendix A offers some guidelines to the higher order type of questions.

Perrott (1982:56) offers the following in order to improve the quality and quantity of learners' participation:

**Objectives**

A. to help learners

**Related teaching skills**

i. pausing

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>to give more complete and thoughtful answers</p>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. prompting</li> <li>iii. seeking further clarification</li> <li>iv. refocusing a learner's answer</li> </ul>   |
| <p>B. to increase the amount and quality of learners' participation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. redirecting the same question to several learners</li> <li>ii. framing questions that call for sets of related facts</li> <li>iii. Framing questions that require the learner to use higher cognitive thought</li> </ul> |

#### **6.3.4 Increasing learner-initiated questions**

Not only is it important for the educator to ask questions, it is vital for the learners to be given the opportunity to ask questions as well, as it is a critical life skill in communicating with other people. As was seen from the poor findings in section 4.2.7 on the IR (learner initiated) pattern, this section is critical for educators who should encourage more learner initiated questions. In addition, Moore (1989:24) states that educators should “try to build in them [the learners] a confidence in their ability to answer, so that they are not afraid to come out with slightly unusual ideas”.

- educators can ask a question then pause for a longer period of time. This will increase the opportunity for learners to ask questions
- educators should not always provide the answers or tell learners to 'find out for yourselves'. Educators should assist their learners in finding the information to answer the question - this will increase the number of questions the learners ask
- an educator should get learners interested in the subject so that from their interest they will ask questions
- educators should create a classroom environment in which learners are shown respect for the questions they ask
- educators can arrange the seats in the classroom in such a way that learners can comfortably converse with other learners in the classroom

- by being exposed to more higher order and cognitively challenging questions from the educator, learners will have a model to follow on how to phrase their own questions
- an educator needs to provide his learners with a variety of opportunities and experiences, both in and out of the class, to stimulate their thinking. With this stimulation, learners will find more reasons to ask questions and enquire further into their own environments
- educators should set aside a few minutes of every lesson to encourage their learners to ask questions about any topic that interests them. Other learners are then encouraged to answer these questions or to ask additional questions around the topic. This should really become very learner-centred and driven by the learners
- an educator can take his learners on field trips, for example to the post office, and encourage them to ask questions
- an educator could present his learners with a problem, ask them to ask him questions so that they can arrive at an answer
- an educator can give a demonstration of something without telling the learners what he is doing. If the learners want to know something about the demonstration, they must ask questions
- an educator can show his learners an unusual object, and they need to ask him questions in order to establish what it is
- an educator can give his learners a “reverse” test where he provides the answer and they need to formulate the questions.

### **6.3.5 Activities to stimulate the affective domain**

As the affective domain is such an important component of the learning process, and is so often neglected - as was clearly evident from the classroom research undertaken and presented in previous chapters - the researcher has provided some activities which can be used by educators to engage and stimulate this area. In a classroom environment, such as an ABET class, where many different value systems are brought together, it is important for the educator to be impartial and accepting so that meaningful dialogue in the target language can



take place, and there can be a bonding between learners. Adults all have strong values and when these are integrated with a learning experience, the adult's emotions will be easily available. This is important as emotional engagement during learning is a necessary aspect of learning.

Affective activities are not suited for the educator who is not comfortable with sharing feelings and opinions, or for the educator who wants to change the beliefs of others. The activities must be presented by an educator who is willing to share and who unconditionally accepts his learners for who they are. When involved in these activities, learners should not be forced to answer certain questions if they do not feel comfortable in doing so; they have the right to be heard; and their opinions need to be respected. Wlodkowski (1985) asserts that when the instructional process or the content does not dovetail with the learners' own values, there is a strong possibility for a value collision and they may feel tense, frustrated and even angry about the learning experience. When involved in affective activities, it is important for the educator to see himself as a facilitator who encourages honest responses, who listens with interest to his learners, and who invites sharing. The educator should not be dogmatic, he should not moralise, he should acknowledge that learners have the right to different opinions, and that his and his learners' opinions may vary. Simon *et al.* (1972:26) state that "the best time for the teacher to give his views is toward the end, after the students have had a chance to think things through for themselves and to express their own points of view. The teacher should present himself as a person with values (and often with values confusion) of his own. Thus the teacher shares his values, but does not impose them. In this way, he presents the class with a model of an adult who prizes, chooses and acts according to the valuing process. The teacher gets a chance to share his actual values as does any other member of the class. The particular content of his values holds no more weight than would anyone else's".

Affective activities can be used at almost any time, but there are certain situations in which they can be very useful. On some days learners may be very tense or emotionally down, especially before examinations, and such activities can be of comfort. The educator can prepare activities which can enhance their self-concept. Learners can all sit in a circle, one person at a time becomes the focus of attention, and all other members in the circle need to

say something they like about that person. Richard-Amato (1988:161) provides an example where learners are reading a book in which the character has to decide whether to marry for love or for money. The educator can use this opportunity to create an affective activity on related choices. She states that "in this way the content of the various genres can be related to the lives of the students". Jensen (1995a:34) suggests that to engage positive emotions within the learner, the educator can make use of drama, role-plays, debates, music, guest speakers, creative controversy, celebrations, quiz shows, and emotive storytelling. Initially learners may be a little reluctant or feel uncomfortable engaging in affective activities, so the educator can introduce a role play in which learners act out a character and then discuss what that character's values might be. Once learners feel at ease expressing the feelings that belong to someone else, they may find it easier to express their own. Richard-Amato (1988:175) states that "one important reason for using affective activities in the classroom is to help students reach an understanding of those beliefs and behaviours that give meaning to their lives". These activities can also assist learners in developing dialogue in the target language. Appendix D provides a set of questions to promote affective outcomes.

Questions should, amongst other things, stimulate curiosity and the desire to know. On the one hand, curiosity can never be satisfied as total knowledge is beyond us. While on the other hand, curiosity should never be satisfied as it is a motivating factor in learning. Kerry (1982:8) asks how, at the end of a lesson, an educator can achieve both ends, namely "the summarisation of things learned and the stimulation of sustained curiosity"? At the end of a lesson either the educator or the learners can summarise the learning that took place by writing key points on the board, doing a quiz, a fun practical test, or the educator can give the learners a handout for revision purposes. Alternatively, the educator could end the lesson with a follow-up question for homework which can encapsulate what was learnt in that lesson and give learners some 'food for thought'. This thought can then be used to start the next lesson.

### **6.3.6 Effective questioning model**

Gabi Witthaus and the researcher have designed a model which can be used for both verbal and written questioning based on section 2.3.5. The model is provided on the next page and an explanation follows.



**Figure 3** Vaccarino and Witthaus effective questioning model

The base of the pyramid has the four language skills, namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. The questions asked are on a continuum from easy to difficult. Educators often ask a conceptually or cognitively easy question but the language is difficult. The learners do not respond and the educator thinks they are not very bright. Educators should aim at asking more cognitively difficult and challenging questions but using easier language. The one side of the pyramid refers to the genre. An educator could ask a very good question at the correct level for the learners, but the text for example is not appropriate for his learners. The other side of the pyramid refers to the learners' prior knowledge and experience. This is a very important aspect as educators cannot expect their learners to be involved in activities which they cannot relate to or do not have the background in order to answer questions. Prior learning and experience is a very important aspect which educators need to bear in mind at all times, and as Jensen (1995a:68) asserts, "when prior learning is activated, the brain makes many more connections". Therefore comprehension and learning increase. The flag on top of the pyramid serves as a reminder to educators to always keep the outcomes clearly in mind, especially when preparing their lessons and formulating their key questions.

The 'door' which opens to the left of the pyramid contains the affective and the cognitive domains. Once again it is important for educators, when planning their lessons and key questions, to check that they include affective questions and that the cognitive questions become progressively more challenging and that they do not get 'stuck' at one level.

The 'steps' leading to the pyramid represent the questioning behaviour of the educator. It is important for the educator to think about the wording of his questions, how to ask the question, the timing and pacing, then how to attend to his learners' answers, and the follow-up questions to elicit more involved and challenging answers from his learners.

### **6.3.7 Checklist on questioning skills**

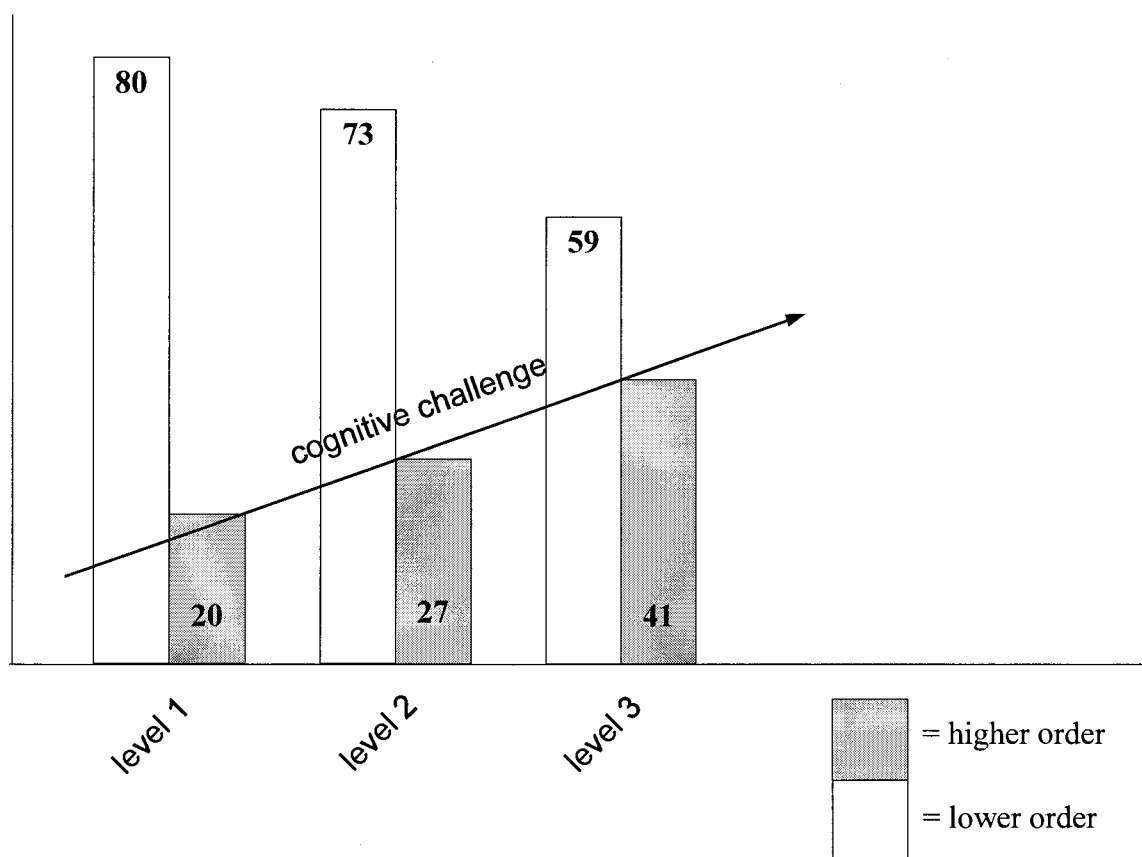
The researcher has compiled a checklist for educators for when they prepare to ask questions, and after a lesson in which they have asked questions (see Appendix O). Educators can use this checklist to assess their progress in the field of questioning techniques, or they can use it as a diagnostic tool to see whether there are any specific areas which need special attention.

This process can be repeated at any time either by asking a colleague to observe their class and give feedback, or they can video or tape record a lesson and be their own armchair critics in their own privacy.

### **6.3.8 Independent Examinations Board**

The researcher has presented his findings to the Independent Examinations Board. They are very open to suggestions and input from the public and from the users of their examinations. In future, they will consider the cognitive domain more thoroughly. They did, however, mention that many other variables also impact on the examination. These include the structure of the examination; the relevance of the content of the examinations to the lives of the learners; the background knowledge required to understand the content of the examination; the linguistic complexity of the examination; the sequencing of information; the genre or text type used in the questions; and density of information. These are all issues which could be studied independently in another research, while the focus of this study is on the cognitive components of the examinations.

The researcher suggests that there should be a greater cognitive “gap” between the three levels of the Independent Examinations Board examinations. This suggestion is depicted graphically on the following page.



From the above graph one can see that there needs to be a steady cognitive progression in order to prepare learners for post-level 3 examinations as well as - and maybe more importantly - to prepare our learners to challenge their everyday lives and to contribute even more meaningfully to their families, friends, communities and workplaces.

In conclusion, Katz (1978:59) captures the essence and importance of providing educators with appropriate training in good questioning techniques by stating that " ... the art of asking the right questions involves the felicitous merging of both analytical skills and creative insight". And Jensen (1995b:172) reminds us that "no answers are incorrect, all are just possibilities".

The next section deals with recommendations in terms of errors produced by the learners.

## **6.4 ERRORS**

### **6.4.1 Error analysis**

It is recommended that educators create their own error analyses in order to establish which areas of the language are causing their learners the greatest problems. There could be areas in which the entire class is struggling to master, in which case the problematic structures need to be addressed and explained in an alternative and possibly more creative way. Should individual learners be struggling with specific areas or structures, it is important for the educator to be aware of this and provide supplementary individual remediation exercises to these learners. An error analysis can also assist the educator in objectively assessing how his educational intervention is assisting his learners. By keeping a record of his learners' errors, he can ascertain, over a period of time, whether instruction is assisting his learners in improving their language usage.

Although educators would not necessarily need to create in-depth complicated error analyses, they would however need to be trained on how to effectively prepare analyses to use in their classrooms. A recommendation is that courses which offer training to ABET educators should include a section on the different types of errors that learners make, and how to prepare an error analysis to identify the most common and frequently occurring errors so that remediation can be undertaken.

The next section deals with recommendations for educators regarding the treatment of their learners' errors.

## **6.5 TREATMENT OF ERRORS**

### **6.5.1 Introduction**

With reference to Vigil and Oller's (1976) model on affective and cognitive feedback presented in section 2.5.3, the task of the educator is to discern what Brown (1987:193) terms "the optimal tension" between positive and negative cognitive feedback. Enough

green lights need to be given in order to promote continued communication, but not too many otherwise critical errors could go unnoticed. Educators also need to give enough red lights so that learners become aware of these critical errors, but not too many red lights otherwise learners become disheartened and may not want to attempt speaking. Although it is difficult for educators to know how many green and red lights they give, it is suggested that educators occasionally tape one of their lessons and when playing it back, they need to be aware of their own input and the type of feedback they provide to their learners. This could be part of the educator's self-reflective approach to facilitating ABET classes.

At this point it is appropriate to recall the application of Skinner's operant conditioning model of learning. According to Skinner (1938), operant behaviour operates on the environment where the importance of stimuli is de-emphasised. He believes that one should not be concerned with the stimulus, but rather the consequences, that is the stimulus that follows the response. The stimuli, or reinforcers that follow a response and that are inclined to augment behaviour or increase the likelihood of the response occurring again, constitute a dominant force in the control of human behaviour. When one applies this principle of operant conditioning to feedback in the classroom, the affective and cognitive modes of feedback are reinforcers to the learners' responses. As learners become aware of 'positive' reinforcement or the green lights, they are led to internalise certain speech patterns. If the educator ignores erroneous behaviour, the effect is that of a positive reinforcer. This means that if learners' errors are never corrected, they will internalise these errors and believe that in fact they are not errors at all, but the correct way of saying things. What educators must avoid at all times is punitive reinforcement, that is corrections that are perceived by the learners as affective red lights, that is, insulting and devaluing. Skinner (1953:183) states that punishment "works to the disadvantage of both the punished organism and the punishing agency".

It is more important for learners to be able to communicate successfully rather than perfectly in the target language.

Roos (1991:25) states that "the learner's **motivation** to eliminate his own errors can influence the extent to which he will benefit from an error remediation programme". At



times, learners may be aware of errors in their language use, but they do not make an effort to eradicate them as there may be such a high degree of tolerance that learners believe that errors do not matter at all. Such acceptance could lead to poor communication abilities.

### **6.5.2. Differential correction**

Rinvoluceri (1998b:48) states that differential correction “has theoretical backing from Neuro-Linguistic Programming, which has identified that some people depend a lot in their decision-making on the ideas and opinions of others, while a second group of people are very ‘self-referenced’: they draw on their inner criteria and feelings in making decisions”. This is important information for language educators as the first group of learners gratefully accept any educator-initiated correction while the second group may find educator-initiated correction irrelevant or annoying. The best way to find out which group learners prefer, is to ask them, and Rinvoluceri (1998b) suggests giving them a writing exercise to do and tell learners they can choose to have the educator read over their shoulders and correct any errors, or they can call the educator when they need assistance.

If a learner makes an error of a specific language aspect, for example the past tense or the indefinite article, which has already been dealt with in the classroom, then the educator should treat this error.

Educators may need to tolerate errors as too much time spent on correcting errors may detract from further exposure to the language. However, some language items which occur frequently and are critical to communication need to be used correctly before the educator goes on to cover new material. Instead of the educator always providing the correct form, however, learners could be asked to discover the correct forms of the language on their own and find out where and why they went wrong. This allows the learner to be more cognitively involved in the correction of his own errors, and more likely to learn from his experience. Mechanically copying down correct sentences has never been shown to have any lasting effect on learners.

As mentioned in section 2.5.5, if a learner is expressing his own opinion or expressing a

meaning, he should not be stopped and corrected in mid sentence. This does not mean that educators should not pay any attention to the learner's manner of expressing meaning. If the purpose of the exercise is to communicate freely, this is exactly what the learner must do - communicate freely - without interruptions. The educator could make a note of common errors and discuss them after the communicative exercise. Norrish (1983:50) and Chastain (1971:250) concur with this approach to correcting and reviewing the most common errors at the end of the exercise or the lesson.

As was mentioned in 2.5.6, it is very important that educators approach the treatment of errors with a consistent and reasoned strategy, and not on an *ad hoc* or haphazard basis. If the educator decides to correct all third person singular present tense verbs, then all these incorrect forms must be addressed and not only some of them as it suits the educator.

### **6.5.3 Correcting written errors**

Hendrickson (1987:363) offers a suggestion by stating that the educator should “first identify and record the error types that each learner produces frequently. Then, the student reads his or her written work to search out and correct all high-frequency errors, one such error type at a time”.

An approach which Swart (1988:42) suggests is that the educator mark an entire piece of writing for one specific type of error only, for example errors of concord. The educator would indicate clearly the type of error he will be concentrating on in his evaluation. Learners will be able to recognise their own particular weaknesses quite easily; and follow-up remedial lessons will be more meaningful and focussed than when the educator tries to handle the entire spectrum of grammatical errors.

Educators could also use different colour inks for distinguishing more important errors from less important ones.

One of the educators who attended the error correction forum agreed with Hendrickson (1987:364) who suggests some indirect correction techniques, for example underlining all misspelled words, using an arrow to show a missing article or verb. Indirect methods are

used whenever the educator knows that learners can correct their own errors by using a good dictionary or grammar book. With these indirect techniques, learners discover their errors and correct them. When the educator reviews the learners' work and finds the same error occurring or it was not corrected, the corrected form is then provided.

Learners could be given the opportunity to write journals or diaries and the aim of this activity is to use writing to communicate. It must be made clear to the learners that these are entirely private and their errors will not be corrected directly. The educator reads the journal entry and responds at the bottom of the page without correcting any errors. Should there be errors, the educator can include the correct version in his response to the learner's entry. This has the added advantage of building relationships. Rinvoluceri (1998a:59) is a great believer in diaries and journals in that "talking to yourself, writing to yourself in the target language is an extremely intimate thing to do and gradually helps the language shift from 'foreign' to 'own'. Trying things out in the intimacy of inner monologue is a huge boost to learning". He does not however, read or comment on his learners' diary entries.

While learners are working in pairs or in groups, the educator walks around and listens to what they are saying and writes down any excellent phrases as well as any erroneous phrases. He then jots each phrase down on a separate card. At the end of the activity, he divides the board with a vertical line down the middle and on the left side writes *good English* and on the right side *could-be-better English*. The cards are handed to the learners and they must decide on which side of the board each card goes. Once all the cards have been used, the educator and the learners discuss each phrase and comment on it, and the erroneous ones are corrected collaboratively (Rinvoluceri 1998b:46). Another variation is that the educator writes all the sentences on the board and in groups, learners decide which sentences are correct and which ones need correcting.

Educators can ask each learner to choose a 'correction buddy'. The pair must agree on which errors each will listen out for in the other's speech, for example third person singular -s. Whenever the correction buddy hears his partner make this error, he discreetly corrects it. Generally, it is easier for learners to accept peer correction than educator correction.

The educator can dictate a sentence and once all the learners have written it down, each

learner must pass his paper to the person next to him. Each learner then checks the sentence he has just received and corrects it if necessary. The educator then dictates the next sentence, it is written down, and passed on to the next person, and so the cycle continues until the dictation is complete. The educator then shows the learners a master copy so they can verify the correct spellings.

Lopez (1998:37) suggests a 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' technique to correcting errors in the classroom. The educator transforms himself from the understanding educator "to the typical person on the street with whom the students will be required to communicate, using their English outside the classroom". The educator asks a lot of questions like *Sorry, I can't understand what you're saying* and *What? I didn't understand what you meant*. The educator also asks other learners whether they've understood. She continues by stating that the purpose of this activity is "to replicate a native speaker's possible response or confusion to show the students what is really important to express clearly (e.g. tenses)".

The 'fishbowl' technique is also useful and fun to do. A group of learners sit in the centre of the class and discuss a predetermined topic, while the remaining learners sit around the group in the 'fishbowl' and listen silently to the discussion and note any errors made. After the discussion, any errors are written on the board and discussed as a group activity. The roles are then switched so all learners get an opportunity to be in the 'fishbowl' and to listen to errors.

#### **6.5.4 Peer correction**

Swart (1988:43) asserts that the advantages of peer correction are that the critical sense is developed as learners are actively involved in the recognition of errors, and the imagination is stimulated by coming into contact with the ideas of other learners. Freiermuth (1997:5) states that "peer correction is especially important because it takes some of the focus off the teacher, and it has been shown to be effective".

When dealing with written work, Lopez (1998:38) suggests that "peer correction of first drafts may include underlining any problems, adding written comments at the end of an

essay about clarity, or suggesting improvements”. Learners can also discuss these errors and comments after they have corrected them.

Freiermuth (1997:2) suggests that learners be given abundant opportunities and enough time to self-correct. The educator should be more patient and not be too quick to interrupt with corrections.

### **6.5.5 Correcting oral errors**

In order to assess individual learners’ oral errors, an educator should listen to their utterances for a certain period of time to ascertain language trouble spots. The educator can condense the list of errors to a manageable number and work on them with the particular learner until there is significant improvement. Should a specific error be troublesome for the majority of the class, the educator may use explicit instruction or drills to reinforce that specific point (Freiermuth, 1997:2).

### **6.5.6 Learner self-correction**

Freiermuth (1997:4) states that “self-correction with the teacher’s help is an excellent way to address errors”. He offers the following techniques:

- *pinpointing*, where the educator narrows down the error by repeating the learner’s utterance up until the point where the error occurred, and then overemphasises the word which has preceded the error with a rising intonation.
- *rephrasing* a question, can be used when a learner does not answer or answers incorrectly without confidence. The rephrased question is generally a reduced form of the original question.
- *cueing* can be used when a learner stumbles when answering or when he makes an obvious error. The educator then offers him various options to fill in the missing element or repair the error.
- *modelling* a word or phrase which the educator does not understand, or where the pronunciation is so poor that the educator feels it is important to model it.

Another way an educator can assist his learners in self-correction is by providing his answer

to a question which he posed. For example, he may ask *What did you do over the weekend?*; the learner hesitates or starts responding nervously with a few ums; the educator then says *I went shopping on Saturday, I went to church on Sunday morning and visited friends in the afternoon*; the learner has a correct structure to follow and then changes it according to his own situation.

Roos (1991:26) points out that “problem-solving techniques could play a role in the remediation of learners’ errors by alerting learners to their fossilized errors and thereby urging them to revise their current hypotheses about target language rules”. When using problem-solving procedures, the language rule is not stated explicitly, but the learner is exposed to input in which the target structure is used. The learner then infers generalizations about the use of this structure.

The next section looks at recommendations for evaluating the effectiveness of learning.

## **6.6 EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING**

### **6.6.1 Stakeholders’ questionnaires**

All the stakeholders’ questionnaires were useful in evaluating the effectiveness of learning within the ABET Centre where this research took place. In order to get a comprehensive insight into the learners’ perspective on their own learning, it is recommended that learners complete at least four questionnaires during a specific ABET course. These questionnaires need not necessarily be completed each month, but every second month would also be acceptable and adequate. A suggestion is for the educator to write on a flipchart sheet all the activities undertaken in each lesson. This sheet can be placed on a wall, and after each lesson, new activities can be added. This will assist learners when they need to complete their questionnaires. An additional benefit of this system is that peripheral learning can also take place, in that each time learners enter the classroom, they can glance at the flipchart sheet and be reminded of the previous lessons. It is almost a “subconscious recap” method. It could also act as a motivator for the learners as they can visually see how much they are achieving at the end of each month. Learners who cannot attend lessons for whatever reason

also have a clear idea of what they missed in the previous lessons. It would also assist the educator who may want to assist learners who were absent from previous lessons. The educator may be involved in facilitating many classes and cannot always remember exactly what was covered in the previous months' lessons - this system would provide the educator with a clear picture of what activities he needs to revise with the learners who were not present in those lessons.

The educators completed a monthly evaluation questionnaire on each learner over a period of five months. As with the learners' questionnaire, it is recommended that educators complete at least four questionnaires during a specific ABET course. These questionnaires need not necessarily be completed each month, but every second month would also be suitable. If educators choose to complete the questionnaires in April, June, August, and October for example, then the learners should complete their questionnaires during the same months. Care must be taken that educators do not circle the *yes* or *no* responses for all their learners in order to complete the questionnaires as quickly as possible. Although it will take longer to complete the questionnaire, a suggestion is to provide additional space on the questionnaire and ask educators to state a reason why they chose a *yes* or a *no* response.

Another aspect of the evaluation process which is used by this ABET Centre is the evaluation of educators by senior educators and by peer educators. This is important for educators as it gives them valuable information about their performance in the classroom. It also gives the management of the ABET Centre an insight into any problem areas which may need to be addressed, either with the individual educator involved or collectively. If warranted, a workshop, seminar or course may need to be arranged in order to further enhance or develop certain skills which may need to be refined. The questionnaire used to evaluate educators appears in Appendix P.

Both supervisors' questionnaires were effective and valuable information was obtained from them. It is important that supervisors complete both questionnaires so that a comparative analysis can be conducted over a set period of time. Most supervisors and managers are overloaded with their own work and may get a bit agitated at the thought of adding another chore to their daily tasks. It is therefore important to include supervisors as soon as their

staff members decide they want to attend classes. Supervisors need to be informed as to what this entails, and they should also be told of the evaluation procedure which is in place and what is expected of them. The person undertaking the evaluation would also need to follow-up when supervisors do not return their completed questionnaires. This is applicable to all the stakeholders' questionnaires. In addition, a very thorough control system needs to be in place to conduct an evaluation of this nature, otherwise it becomes impossible to ascertain who has completed questionnaires and who still needs to be sent questionnaires.

The questionnaire completed by the management of the ABET Centre is straightforward and is only completed once a year. An added bonus of this questionnaire is that it acts as a checklist as well, in that management can refer to it often to see whether all the issues covered in the questionnaire are being addressed. If for example, the centre does not use individual learner plans, it can then initiate some action in order to put these in place.

Where a union is involved, it is imperative for them to endorse the questionnaire and agree to the evaluation. Understandably, the union would also need to be involved in the whole ABET process from the needs analysis to the evaluation.

### **Additional partnerships**

Additional partnerships that may need to be formed, depending on the environment, are amongst the ABET Centre, the union, and the funders. The reason for this is that the union as well as the funders are a support mechanism to the effectiveness of the programme. In a highly unionized country as South Africa, if the union is not fully involved, it could cause the entire programme to flounder. Therefore it is imperative that a positive and interactive partnership be formed between these two entities. The relationship between the funders and the ABET Centre is also critical because the funders need to feel that they are a vital shareholder in the process, and that their opinions, needs and interests are addressed on an on-going basis. This relationship should not be based on a 'request for funds' and an annual report or feedback session only. It should rather be seen as a working partnership. A practical way of managing this whole process of interaction between the union and the funders is to set up regular meetings during the year and ensure that representatives from the ABET Centre, the union and the funders are present, in addition to representatives from the



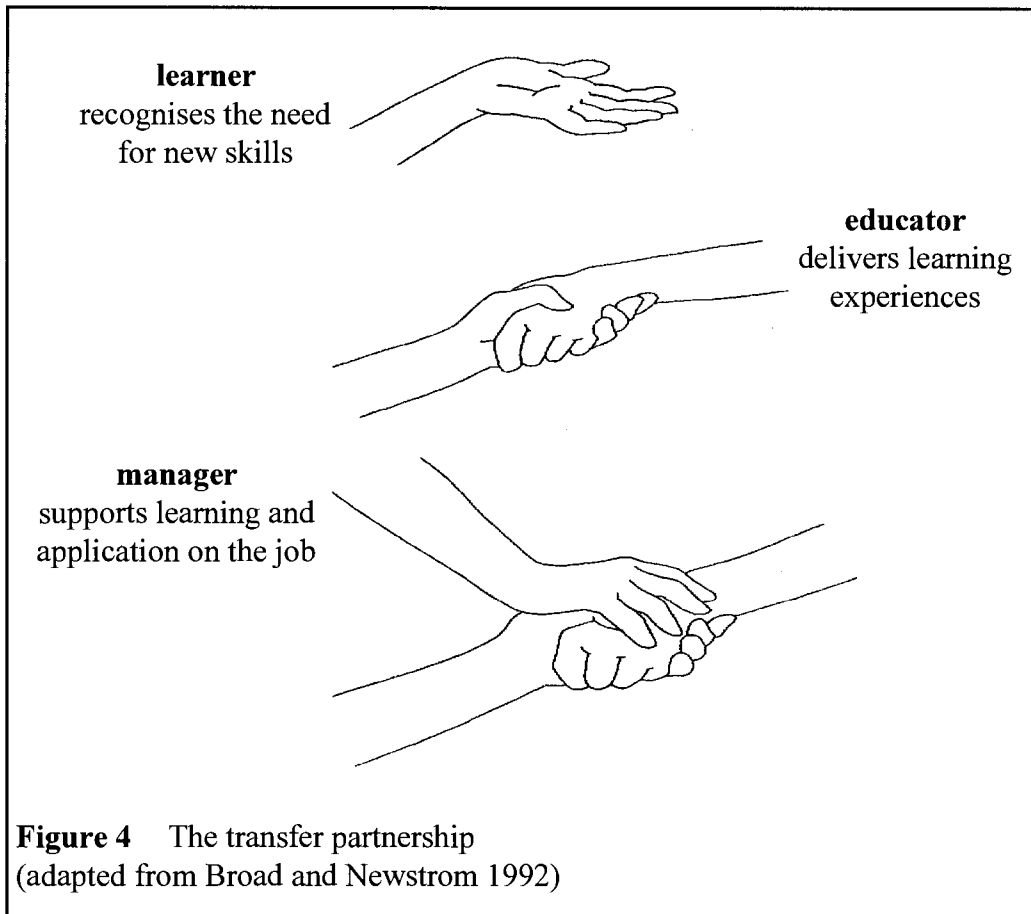
organisation, supervisors, educators, and learners.

### **6.6.2 Building relationships**

Draper (1991:508) states that “it is possible that some employers may perceive as a threat and not understand the use of such terms as ‘self-assertiveness’, ‘gaining a voice’, ‘the empowerment of workers’, ‘shared needs assessment’ and ‘problem solving’, and such goals as encouraging people to be critical thinkers and to be self-directing”. These “political” terms should not be seen as threatening as they refer to power relationships between people, that is, between employer and employee. When people learn new skills or receive additional knowledge, they tend to change. There has been a shift in *status quo*, and this changes their “power” relationships. This process should be viewed positively. Involving staff members in their own education, and producing more responsible workers who may think differently, should be accepted as it is critical and essential to the empowerment of staff members in any organisation. In order for this holistic and participatory approach to workplace education to be effective, it is important to develop partnerships. These partnerships include more than the mere functions of teaching. As Draper (1991:510) points out, workplace educational partnerships are “being formed within the workplace itself, between employer and employee”, and “between tutors and employee-students”. Workplace educational programmes should be perceived “more in their wider context and within the broader framework of continuing and life-long education” (Draper, 1991:513). All forms of education should be viewed within the broader framework of improving communication skills.

#### **The transfer partnership**

The transfer partnership, as depicted by Broad and Newstrom (1992:12), involves the learner, the educator, and the learner’s supervisor or manager, who should all work together to support the full application of the educational intervention to the job. This partnership is represented graphically on the next page:



The only true requirement for the transfer partnership, is that all members involved should be, as Broad and Newstrom (1992:14) state, “committed to making the training investment pay off”. This is not only in monetary terms, but also in terms of the development of human resources. The multiple knowledge and skills needed by staff members to function effectively in the workplace are growing constantly. As the learners are vitally important members of the transfer partnership, they need to be encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own development of new knowledge and skills.

Broad and Newstrom (1992:14) assert that “each partner has an important contribution, and full transfer requires that all partners cooperate to maximize the application of new knowledge and skills to the job”.

It must be reported that there was considerable co-operation and support from all stakeholders involved in this specific evaluation.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

The data obtained in the various phases of research was interpreted against the backdrop of classroom interaction; questions; learners' errors; the treatment of these errors by their educators; and evaluating the effectiveness of learning. These findings gave rise to recommendations for classroom practices and in particular for educator training and curricula for ABET practitioners. It is suggested that educators of second language learners would benefit from specific skills and understanding of questioning techniques and error treatment.

In the following chapter some recommendations for future ABET language research are suggested.



## conclusion

From the national Department of Education's definition of ABET presented in chapter 1, it is clear that ABET is not merely literacy, but it proposes to address a range of social, economic, political and developmental roles, and is essential in building the self-esteem, confidence, and dignity of learners. The national Department of Education views ABET as an integral part of lifelong learning to ensure that learners can make use of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learnt through ABET in their daily lives in order to realise and develop their full potential. Through ABET, learners can be equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which will assist them in becoming more active participants in their communities, their workplaces and towards the development of South Africa.

This study examined whether ABET programmes prepare learners to acquire the language which is needed to achieve the above objectives. In order for ABET programmes to be effective, they need to be outcomes-based and not content-based. Outcomes-based education aims at developing learners who can problem solve and who can think critically in order to participate in the development of this country in a productive and active way. The focus of this study was on the language which is learnt in an ABET programme. This falls within one of the eight learning areas defined by the National Qualifications Framework, namely the *language, literacy and communication* learning area.

In order to research the effectiveness of learning in the area of *language, literacy and communication* within an ABET programme, it was important to analyse the interaction

which takes place within a classroom; the type of questions both educators and learners ask; the type of errors learners make in the classroom; and how the educators treat these errors. What was also of paramount importance was whether the language skills learnt in the classroom were transferred to outside the classroom. This study dealt with the above issues.

The research findings from the classroom interaction concur with many of the authors' views in chapter 2, in that educators still dominate the interactions in the classroom; the IRF pattern and the IRF(F) pattern are common interactions in the ABET classes; and learners initiate very few interactions.

From the classroom interaction analysis, the researcher identified the types of questions asked by the educator and the learners, as well as established the ratio between educator questions and learner questions, and how cognitively challenging these questions were. Educators tend to ask lower order questions rather than more cognitively challenging questions.

The researcher provided an overview of the type of errors commonly made by learners at each level, and presented specific types of errors which occur frequently. This provides educators and curriculum developers with important information in terms of certain language items which need additional attention or remediation in the classroom.

It was argued that there has been a shift in pedagogical focus from preventing errors to learning from errors. This was evident with the educators in this study whose main aim was not to focus extensively on treating their learners' errors. Correcting every error, however, is counter-productive to learning a language, and as Hendrickson (1987:366) points out, educators "need to create a supportive classroom environment in which their students can feel confident about expressing their ideas and feelings freely without suffering the threat or embarrassment of having each one of their oral or written errors corrected".

The main objective of education is to achieve a change in behaviour which enhances performance, therefore an evaluation of the effectiveness of the learning which takes place at the ABET centre concerned was undertaken. This included all the stakeholders involved in

the learning process. Based on these findings it is appropriate to conclude that the learning which takes place at the ABET Centre is effective, and it is meeting the needs of the learners and the organisation. In addition, the learning which takes place in the classroom is transferred to the workplace. Learners have started taking the initiative and are applying the knowledge and skills learnt at the ABET centre to their work places by doing additional tasks not stated in their job descriptions.

This study illuminates the fact that effective language learning took place in the ABET programme being studied. This is despite the fact that from the findings it appears that the classes are educator-centred where the educator dominates the interactions; and despite the fact that educators ask more lower order questions. These statements are validated by looking at the learners' questionnaires where they state what they had learnt in the classes and what they were able to apply outside the classroom; the educators' questionnaires evaluating their learners' learning; and the learners' supervisors who provided very positive input regarding the learning of their employees.

It would seem from this study that if outcomes-based education principles are applied in the *language, literacy and communication* learning area, learners become more confident, more assertive, their self-esteem is increased and their dignity is restored, making them feel empowered to participate in communication contexts. Furthermore, it suggests that if outcomes-based education principles are adopted, learning is effective not only in specific learning outcomes, but also in critical field outcomes which serve to empower the learner through the acquisition of knowledge, attitude, and skills to reach their full potential.

If educators ask fewer lower order questions and focus on more cognitively challenging questions and give the learners opportunities to answer them effectively, and if learners are given opportunities to interact more in the classroom, how much more empowered would they be?

The researcher recommends further research in the *language, literacy and communication* area within the ABET field. From the analysis of classroom interactions and the analysis of questions educators ask, it is evident that the educators dominate the number of interactions

in the classroom, and they also tend to ask too many questions at the lower level of the cognitive domain. Educators could receive training in questioning skills as well as in cooperative facilitating techniques which would allow learners more freedom to express their views and participate more actively in the classroom. After this training, it would be useful to replicate this study over a period of time to ascertain whether there have been any changes in the types of interactions in the classroom, and the types of questions asked as well as the quality of answers given by the learners. Learners should become even more confident in using the language and an evaluation similar to the one conducted in this study, could be replicated and the findings compared to this study's findings.

Educators could also use the researcher's analysis of the most common errors at the various ABET levels to develop additional or supplementary exercises for their learners. Each month the educators could conduct an error analysis to ascertain whether their learners are making fewer errors as a result of these exercises.



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## ***ACTION WORDS AND PHRASES USED AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS IN THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN***

The following action words and phrases were taken from Perrott (1982); Van der Horst and McDonald (1997); Gruenewald and Pollak (1990); Walters (1990); Brown (1975); and Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982). There may be some words or phrases which appear at two or more levels. This depends on the cognitive thinking outcome which is required from the learners.

### **KNOWLEDGE level:**

|               |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| define        | name          | list          |
| recall        | match         | recognise     |
| memorise      | outline       | observe       |
| state         | give          | provide       |
| identify      | label         | select        |
| remember      | retell        | report        |
| tell          | describe      | are ...?      |
| is ...?       | were ...?     | can you ...?  |
| who?          | what?         | where?        |
| when?         | when did ...? | how many ...? |
| how much ...? |               |               |

### **COMPREHENSION level:**

|                       |           |            |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| describe              | compare   | contrast   |
| explain               | rephrase  | support    |
| give examples         | identify  | paraphrase |
| report                | summarise | tell       |
| put in your own words | predict   | convert    |
| distinguish           | estimate  | infer      |



classify

differentiate

rearrange

conclude

relate

translate

contrast

interpret

### **APPLICATION level:**

apply

use

give an example

manipulate

show

demonstrate

operate

make use of

calculate

build

employ

choose

solve

organise

change

discover

predict

how ...?

which ...?

classify

illustrate

select

sequence

compute

modify

transfer to

design

what is ...?

### **ANALYSIS level:**

analyse

distinguish

infer

subdivide

cause

identify cause or reason

select

support

draw conclusions

break down

perceive the pattern of

do you think ...?

what do you think will happen ...? would you ...?

deduce

identify

point out

analyse

evidence

examine

compare

determine

determine the evidence

separate

why ...?

what factors ...?

classify

illustrate

relate

contrast

characterise

draw a diagram

recognise

conclude

differentiate

distinguish between

what way ...?

does that follow ...?

## **SYNTHESIS level:**

|            |              |              |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| predict    | develop      | propose      |
| construct  | revise       | formulate    |
| infer      | categorise   | combine      |
| create     | generate     | plan         |
| relate     | produce      | invent       |
| compose    | compile      | devise       |
| modify     | rearrange    | write        |
| design     | hypothesize  | explain      |
| organise   | reconstruct  | reorganise   |
| integrate  | speculate    | formulate    |
| draw up    | rewrite      | put together |
| illustrate | suggest      | change       |
| propose    | what if ...? |              |

solve (more than 1 correct answer)

can you develop a new way ...?

what would you do if ...?

what would it be like ...?

how can we solve ...?

what do you think would happen if ...?

## **EVALUATION level:**

|           |               |             |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| judge     | assess        | decide      |
| justify   | evaluate      | appraise    |
| argue     | compare       | consider    |
| criticise | prioritise    | rank        |
| recommend | summarise     | support     |
| value     | conclude      | contrast    |
| describe  | defend        | choose      |
| select    | do you agree? | could ..... |

would .....

justify your choice

for what reason would you ...?

which of ... would you consider of greater value?

do you agree ...? why?

do you think ...? why?

what is your opinion ...? why?

would it be better ...? why?

which is best ...? why?

which do you like ...? why?

do you believe ...? why?

do you consider ...? why?

which is better? why?

what, in your opinion ...?

how would you relate ...?

on what basis?

do you think ...?

## ***ASSESSMENT OPTIONS FOR THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN***

The following assessment options were taken from Van der Horst and McDonald (1997)

Knowledge    Written tests (fill in the blanks, matching, simple multiple choice)

Observation of learners' answers

Comprehension                      Written tests (true/false, multiple choice, short answer)

Learners' assignments (summaries, explanations)

Observations of learners' discussions

Interviews

Application    Written or oral problem solving

Multiple-choice tests (with answers based on solving problems)

Observation of simulations, role-play

Projects

Analysis        Essay tests

Multiple-choice tests that require classifying, coding, inferring or using criteria

Learners' assignments (comparisons)

Portfolios

Synthesis      Essay tests

Learners' projects with a plan, product

Written or oral problem solving

Portfolios

Evaluation    Essays (comparisons)

Projects (evaluating process and product)

Portfolio (judging the merit, value of contributions)

| questions |           | tutor treatment of errors |             |         |            |            |                 |  |     |      |   |     |      | questions  | learner errors |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|-------------|---------|------------|------------|-----------------|--|-----|------|---|-----|------|--|----------------|
| affective | cognitive | untreated                 | treated     |         |            |            | type of address | educator   | act | move | learner/s                                   | act | move |  |                |
|           |           |                           | immediately | delayed | repetition | rephrasing |                 |  |     |      |   |     |      |  |                |
| X         | k         | X                         |             |         |            | X          | E-L (C)         | Oh, right. And how did you go?   | ack | Fr   | I ... I've gone with the taxi               | rep | R    | ¶ <i>have + verb stem + ed</i> for <i>verb stem + ed</i><br>¶ preposition <i>with</i> for <i>by</i><br><br>¶ omission of pronoun <i>it</i> |                |
|           | c         |                           |             |         |            |            | E-L (C)         | You went by taxi?  | el  | I    | Yes, I went ... I went by taxi with my wife | rep | R    |  |                |
|           | k         | X                         |             |         |            |            | E-L (C)         | Excellent, yes. And did the bus then take you from one place to another? | acc | F    | Yes, was using a bus to tour the places     | i   | I    |  |                |
|           |           |                           |             |         |            |            | E-L (C)         | So you enjoyed that?   | el  | I    | Very much.                                  | rep | R    |  |                |
|           |           |                           |             |         |            | E-L (C)    | So that's good. | com  | F   |      |   |     |      |  |                |

MATRIX USED FOR THE ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM LANGUAGE INTERACTIONS

## ***SET OF QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE AFFECTIVE OUTCOMES***

This set of questioning strategies for clarifying the valuing process is taken from Raths, Harmin and Simon (1978:64-66)

### **1. Choosing freely**

- a. Where do you suppose you first got that idea?
  - b. How long have you felt that way?
  - c. What would people say if you weren't to do what you say you must do?
  - d. Are you getting help from anyone? Do you need more help? Can I help?
  - e. Are you the only one in your crowd who feels this way?
  - f. What do your parents want you to be?
  - g. Is there any rebellion in your choice?
  - h. How many years will you give to it? What will you do if you're not good enough?
  - i. Do you think the idea of having thousands of people cheering you when you come out on the field has anything to do with your choice?

### **2. Choosing from alternatives**

- a. What else did you consider before you picked this?
- b. How long did you look around before you decided?
- c. Was it a hard decision? What went into the final decision? Who helped? Do you need any further help?
- d. Did you consider another possible alternative?
- e. Are there some reasons behind your choice?
- f. What choices did you reject before you settled on your present idea or action?
- g. What's really good about this choice which makes it stand out from the other possibilities?

**3. Choosing thoughtfully and reflectively**

- a. What would be the consequences of each alternative available?
- b. Have you thought about this very much? How did your thinking go?
- c. Is this what I understand you to say ... [interpret tatement]?
- d. Are you implying that ... [distort statement to see if the student is clear enough to correct the distortion]?
- e. What assumptions are involved in your choice? Let's examine them.
- f. Define the terms you use. Give me an example of the kind of job you can get without a high-school diploma.
- g. Now if you do this, what will happen to that ...?
- h. Is what you say consistent with what you said earlier?
- i. Just what is good about this choice?
- j. Where will it lead?
- k. For whom are you doing this?
- l. With these other choices, rank them in order of significance.
- m. What will you have to do? What are your first steps. Second steps?
- n. Whom else did you talk to?
- o. Have you really weighed it fully?

**4. Prizing and cherishing**

- a. Are you glad you feel that way?
- b. How long have you wanted it?
- c. What good is it? What purpose does it serve? Why is ti important to you?
- d. Should everyone do it your way?
- e. Is it really something you prize?
- f. In what way would life be different without it?

**5. Affirming**

- a. Would you tell the class the way you feel some time?
- b. Would you be willing to sign a petition a supporting that idea?
- c. Are you saying that you believe ... [repeat the idea]?
- d. You don't mean to say that you believe ... [repeat the idea]?

- e. Should a person who believes the way you do speak out?
- f. Do people know that you believe that way or that you do that thing?
- g. Are you willing to stand up and be counted for that?

**6. Acting on choices**

- a. I hear what you are for; now, is there anything you can do about it? Can I help?
- b. What are your first steps, second steps, etc.?
- c. Are you willing to put some of your money behind this idea?
- d. Have you examined the consequences of your act?
- e. Are there any organizations set up for the same purposes? Will you join?
- f. Have you done much reading on the topic? Who has influenced you?
- g. Have you made any plans to do more than you already have done?
- h. Would you want other people to know you feel this way? What if they disagree with you?
- i. Where will this lead you? How far are you willing to go?
- j. How has it already affected your life? How will it affect it in the future?

**7. Repeating**

- a. Have you felt this way for some time?
- b. Have you done anything already? Do you do this often?
- c. What are your plans for doing more of it?
- d. Should you get other people interested and involved?
- e. Has it been worth the time and money?
- f. Are there some other things you can do which are like it?
- g. How long do you think you will continue?
- h. What did you *not* do when you went to do that? Was that alright?
- i. How did you decide which had priority?
- j. Did you run into any difficulty?
- k. Will you do it again?



**LEARNERS' WRITINGS**

These are some samples of learners' writings in pre-level 1:

gear-poteeng Leati  
 the Hoomen-seirng the fLoot  
 the-Hooman-and the baib  
 the-dog-Lineng Koo feek

|        |          |   |
|--------|----------|---|
| meats  | owl      | The Areadingnatio is<br>a winning&nation. |
| garlic |          | frog                                      |
| snake  | The a fo | The a sat ot<br>legiya                    |
| hat    | fish     |   |

De man hok boyskl  
 De doc rang - SALE bend POT  
 TAXI TOTAC SAMPHI POLI  
 SM-PHI POLI - slit FROD  
 Whi-sat - and Fro  
 De TAXI to CAM FLOM  
 to TH awn

**LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**NAME**

**TUTOR**

**MONTH**

**We need this information so that we can improve the way we teach.**

1. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.
2. In some questions you need to choose an option - please circle it.

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | What activities did you enjoy the most this month?<br>_____<br>_____ |
| 2. | What activities did you find easy to do?<br>_____                    |
| 3. | What activities did you find difficult to do?<br>_____               |
| 4. | What activities didn't you enjoy this month?<br>_____                |
| 5. | What activities taught you a lot?<br>_____                           |
| 6. | What things do you want your tutor to explain again?<br>_____        |

|     |   |                     |
|-----|---|---------------------|
| 7.  | The lessons this month taught me:                               |                     |
| a.  | nothing   |                     |
| b.  | things I didn't want to know                                    |                     |
| c.  | new things I found interesting                                  |                     |
| d.  | many things that I can use                                      |                     |
| 8.  | How useful and interesting did you find the lessons this month? |                     |
| a.  | very useful and interesting                                     |                     |
| b.  | useful and interesting  |                     |
| c.  | some were useful and interesting                                |                     |
| d.  | not useful and not interesting                                  |                     |
| 9.  | Were you ever bored in the lessons?                             |                     |
| a.  | yes   |                     |
| b.  | no  |                     |
| 10. | In the classroom, I feel I can:                                 |                     |
| a.  | ask questions   | yes/no              |
| b.  | share information   | yes/no              |
| c.  | make mistakes   | yes/no              |
| 11. | Did you ask any questions?                                      | yes/no              |
|     | How many questions did you ask?                                 | only one/a few/many |
| 12. | Did your teacher ask you any questions?                         | yes/no              |
|     | How many questions did your tutor ask you?                      | one/a few/many      |
| 13. | How much did you take part in the lesson?                       |                     |
| a.  | a lot   |                     |
| b.  | a little  |                     |
| c.  | not at all  |                     |
| 14. | During the lesson, did your tutor go:                           |                     |
| a.  | too fast  |                     |
| b.  | too slow  |                     |
| c.  | just at the right speed?  |                     |

15. What did you learn in the class this month that you were able to use at work?

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---

16. What did you learn in the class this month that you were able to use at home?

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Thank you

**LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE (ZULU)**

**EMIBUZO YABAFUNDI**

**IGAMA**

**UTHISHA**

**IMPELASONTO**

**Sidinga lolulwazi ukuba sikhuphule izinga lethu lokufundisa.**

1. Sicela uphendule imibuzo ngendlela le efanelekile.
2. Kweminye imibuzo udinga ukuba ukhethe, wenze lokhu ngoku zizungeza.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1.   | Imiphi imisebenzi oyijabulela kakhulu kuleviki?            |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/> |  |
| 2.   | Imiphi imisebenzi oyithole ilula ukuyenza?                 |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>  |  |
| 3.   | Imiphi imisebenzi oyithole inzima ukuyenza?                |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>  |  |
| 4.   | Imiphi imisebenzi le ungayijabulelanga kuleliviki?         |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>  |  |
| 5.   | Imiphi imisebenzi ekufundisile kakhulu?                    |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>  |  |
| 6.   | Yiziphi izinto obekade ufuna uthisha wakho azichaze futhi? |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/>  |  |

|     |   |                           |
|-----|---|---------------------------|
| 7.  | Izifundo zakuleliviki zingifundise:                       |                           |
|     | a. lutho  |                           |
|     | b. izinto ebengingafi ukuzazi                             |                           |
|     | c. izinto ezintsha nezinomdlandla                         |                           |
|     | d. izinto eziningi engingazisebenzisa                     |                           |
| 8.  | Uzithole kanjani ukufunda isifundiso kuleliviki?          |                           |
|     | a. izifundo kuleliviki bezifundisa zinogqozi kangakanani? |                           |
|     | b. bezifundisa futhi zinogqozi                            |                           |
|     | c. ezinye bezifundisa zinogqozi                           |                           |
|     | d. bezingafundisi futhi zingenalo ugqozi                  |                           |
| 9.  | Bezingakudini na izifundo zakho?                          |                           |
|     | a. Yebo   |                           |
|     | b. Cha  |                           |
| 10. | Umangise kilasini ngizizwa sengathi nginga:               |                           |
|     | a. buza imibuzo   | yebo/cha                  |
|     | b. sabelana ulwazi  | yebo/cha                  |
|     | c. ngenze amaphutha                                       | yebo/cha                  |
| 11. | Ubuzile imibuzo ekilasini na?                             | yebo/cha                  |
|     | Ubuze imibuzo emingakhi                                   | oyedwa/ezimbalwa/eziningi |
| 12. | Uthisha wakho ukubuzile imibuzo na?                       | yebo/cha                  |
|     | Mingakhi imibuzo u thisha akubuze yona?                   | inye/ezimbalwa/eziningi   |
| 13. | Osebenze kangakanani ekilasini?                           |                           |
|     | a. kakhulu  |                           |
|     | b. kancane  |                           |
|     | c. angenzanga lutho                                       |                           |
| 14. | Uthisha bekafundisa kanjani?                              |                           |
|     | a. ngokushesha kakhulu                                    |                           |
|     | b. kancane kakhulu  |                           |
|     | c. ngendlela e fanele                                     |                           |

15. Yini into oyifundile ngase kilasini kuleliviki, wakhona ukuyenza emsebenzini wakho?

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16. Yini into le oyifundile e kilasini kuleliviki, wakhona ukuyenza ekhaya?

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Ngiyabonga

**EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

**EDUCATOR EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS**

**LEARNER**

**TUTOR**

**MONTH**

1. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.
2. In some questions you need to choose an option - please circle/tick your choice.
3. This evaluation will also assist you when preparing reports on your learners.

|   |     |          |    |
|---|-----|----------|----|
| 1. Did he participate in the class activities?                | yes | no       |    |
| 2. Did he speak in class?                                     | yes | no       |    |
| 3. Did he ask questions?                                      | yes | no       |    |
| 4. Did he respond to all your questions?                      | yes | n/a      | no |
| 5. Did he contribute to the success of the class?             | yes | not sure | no |
| 6. Do you think he was comfortable with the learning process? | yes | not sure | no |
| 7. What activities do you think he enjoyed?                   |     |          |    |
| _____   |     |          |    |
| _____   |     |          |    |



|  |  |     |         |    |
|--|--|-----|---------|----|
| 8.   | What activities could he do?                                 |     |         |    |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/> |  |     |         |    |
| 9.   | What activities were beneficial for him?                     |     |         |    |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/> |  |     |         |    |
| 10.  | What activities did he struggle with?                        |     |         |    |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/> |  |     |         |    |
| 11.  | Why do you think he struggled with these activities?         |     |         |    |
| <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/> |  |     |         |    |
| 12.  | Did he understand all your instructions the first time?      | yes | no      |    |
| 13.  | To what extent do you think he understood your instructions? |     |         |    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. very well</li> <li>b. well</li> <li>c. not so well</li> <li>d. not at all</li> </ul>                   |  |     |         |    |
| 14.  | Was he able to achieve the outcomes of the lessons?          | yes | not all | no |

a. If he couldn't achieve the outcomes, what do you think the problem is?

---



---

b. What can you do to assist him achieve the outcomes?

---



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|     |   |     |          |    |
|-----|---|-----|----------|----|
| 15. | Did he compare his work or findings with those of other learners? | yes | not sure | no |
| 16. | Did he co-operate with other learners to solve a problem?         | yes | not sure | no |
| 17. | Did he disagree with a point of view and offer alternatives?      | yes | not sure | no |
| 18. | Did he make any suggestions on what to do and how to do it?       | yes | not sure | no |
| 19. | Did he raise any questions about the issues discussed in class?   | yes | no       |    |
| 20. | Did he do any homework that was set?                              | yes | n/a      | no |

|  |     |          |    |
|--|-----|----------|----|
| 21. Over the last month, have you seen a shift in his: |     |          |    |
| a. vocabulary?   | yes | no       |    |
| b. use of language?                                    | yes | no       |    |
| c. expressive language?                                | yes | no       |    |
| d. confidence?   | yes | no       |    |
| e. participation?                                      | yes | no       |    |
| 22. Does he seem enthusiastic?                         | yes | not sure | no |
| 23. How many lessons has he attended this month?       |     |          |    |

Thank you

**FIRST SUPERVISOR/MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SUPERVISOR/MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SUPERVISOR/MANAGER**

**LEARNER**

**TUTOR**

**MONTH**

1. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.
2. In some questions you need to choose an option - please circle/tick your choice.
3. This evaluation will greatly assist us in evaluating the learning at the Adult Education Centre.

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | How would you rate your staff member's ability to express himself in English? |
| a. | very good   |
| b. | good  |
| c. | satisfactory  |
| d. | not so good   |
| e. | not good  |
| 2. | How would you rate your staff member's confidence?                            |
| a. | very confident  |
| b. | confident   |
| c. | not very confident  |
| d. | not confident   |
| 3. | How would you rate your staff member's participation in the workplace?        |
| a. | very good   |
| b. | good  |
| c. | can improve   |
| d. | does not participate  |

|                  |   |   |   |    |                        |  |
|------------------|---|---|---|----|------------------------|--|
| 4.               | How would you rate your staff member's interaction with others in the workplace?        |   |   |    |                        |  |
| a.               | very good   |   |   | b. | good                   |  |
| c.               | can improve   |   |   | d. | does not interact much |  |
| 5.               | To what extent do you feel you should be involved in your staff member's learning?      |   |   |    |                        |  |
| 6                | 5   | 4 | 3 | 2  | 1                      |  |
| totally involved |   |   |   |    | not involved at all    |  |
| 6.               | In what areas do you feel your staff member needs assistance from the Education Centre? |   |   |    |                        |  |
|                  | <hr/>   |   |   |    |                        |  |
|                  | <hr/>   |   |   |    |                        |  |
|                  | <hr/>   |   |   |    |                        |  |

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation.

**SECOND SUPERVISOR/MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SUPERVISOR/MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SUPERVISOR/MANAGER**

**LEARNER**

**TUTOR**

**DATE**

1. Please answer the questions as accurately as possible.
2. In some questions you need to choose an option - please circle/tick your choice.

The first four questions follow on from the last evaluation you assisted us with in ... (month) ...

**Since ... (month) ...**

1.
  - i. have you noticed a change in your staff member's ability to express himself in English?
 

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| a. yes | b. no |
|--------|-------|
  - ii. how would you rate the change?
 

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. very good    | b. good        |
| c. satisfactory | d. not so good |
| e. not good     |                |



currently .....

5. i. have you noticed an improvement in your staff member's use of English?
- a. yes                                      b. no
- ii. In which areas have you noticed an improvement? Kindly place a tick wherever appropriate:
- asking questions \_\_\_\_\_
  - understanding instructions \_\_\_\_\_
  - requesting information \_\_\_\_\_
  - giving directions/instructions \_\_\_\_\_
  - sharing information \_\_\_\_\_
  - other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Using the score given below:
- 1 great change
  - 2 functional and visible change
  - 3 slight change
  - 4 no change

Have you noticed any changes in your staff member's:

- i. general knowledge \_\_\_\_\_
- ii. communication skills \_\_\_\_\_
- iii. job skills in terms of reading,  
writing, speaking, listening \_\_\_\_\_
- iv. life skills (e.g. filling in forms,  
budgeting, managing conflict, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_



7. Overall, do you feel your staff member benefitted from attending adult education classes last year?

a. yes

b. no

If yes, why do you think so?

---

---

If no, why do you think so?

---

---

8. Have you noticed any changes in your staff member's attitude, behaviour, social interaction, etc.?

a. yes

b. no

If yes, what have you noticed?

---

If no, what changes would you have liked to have seen?

---

9. Would you allow your staff member to continue with his studies next year?

a. yes

b. no

If no, please give a reason:

---

10. Would you recommend someone else in your department to attend adult education classes?

a. yes

b. no

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is your overall impression of your staff member's learning that took place at the Adult Education Centre this year?

a. excellent

b. very good

c. good

d. average

e. poor

Please give reason(s): \_\_\_\_\_

12. How would you rate the service provided by the Adult Education Centre:

a. excellent

b. very good

c. good

d. average

e. poor

Please give reason(s): \_\_\_\_\_

13. Kindly let us know of any problems you have experienced in dealing with the Adult Education Centre:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Any other comments:

---

---

---

Thank you for your assistance and co-operation.

## *ABET CENTRE QUESTIONNAIRE*

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| <b>ABET CENTRE QUESTIONNAIRE</b> |
|----------------------------------|

### PLANNING

|    |  |     |    |
|----|--|-----|----|
| 1. | Is there a plan of development for ABET at the Centre?   | yes | no |
| 2. | Is there a statement of the scope of ABET at the Centre?   | yes | no |
| 3. | Is there a target number of learners for the ABET programme?                                     | yes | no |
| 4. | Is there a formal procedure for monitoring and evaluating the ABET programme?                    | yes | no |
| 5. | Is there a written set of aims and objectives for the ABET programme?                            | yes | no |
| 6. | Have the aims and objectives been determined in consultation with all the stakeholders involved? | yes | no |
| 7. | Are the aims and objectives made available to all the stakeholders?                              | yes | no |
| 8. | Are the aims and objectives reviewed annually with all the stakeholders involved?                | yes | no |

|    |  |     |    |
|----|--|-----|----|
| 9. | Is a report on ABET produced annually? | yes | no |
|----|--|-----|----|

## RESOURCES

|     |   |     |    |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 10. | Is there a specific budget for the ABET programme?    | yes | no |
| 11. | Do staff members have to pay for their own education? | yes | no |

## PROVISION

|     |   |     |    |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 12. | Is sufficient marketing undertaken to ensure that all staff members are informed about the ABET centre? | yes | no |
| 13. | Is ABET tuition available throughout the year?  | yes | no |
| 14. | Does the ABET Centre ensure equity and equality?  | yes | no |
| 15. | Does the ABET centre make provision for adults with physical or learning disabilities?                  | yes | no |
| 16. | Is there a wide range of learning material available for the learners?                                  | yes | no |
| 17. | Is there a wide range of reading material available for the learners?                                   | yes | no |

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 18. Is there a wide range of teaching and resource material available for the educators? | yes | no |
|--|-----|----|

**PRACTICE**

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 19. Are potential new learners given a personal interview and a placement assessment before joining classes?                     | yes | no |
| 20. Are the results of the placement assessment made available to learners?  | yes | no |
| 21. Is the learning material appropriate for the learners' educational level?  | yes | no |
| 22. Is there a 'learning plan' for each learner?   | yes | no |
| 23. Do educators use written lesson plans, and keep records of work undertaken in each session?                                  | yes | no |
| 24. Do educators make use of ongoing assessment techniques, or does assessment take place at the end of a semester or programme? | yes | no |
|  | yes | no |
| 25. Are records of learners' progress kept?  | yes | no |
| 26. Is assessment of progress a joint process between learner and educator?  | yes | no |

|     |  |      |      |
|-----|--|------|------|
| 27. | Is the result of an assessment of progress made available to the learner involved?                 | yes  | no   |
| 28. | Is continuing support provided for learners progressing to further education, or other programmes? | yes  | no   |
| 29. | Is there appropriate follow-up when learners drop out of the course?                               | yes  | no   |
| 30. | Are progress reports sent to the learners' supervisors?  | yes  | no   |
| 31. | What is the attendance of learners at the ABET centre like?  | good | poor |

## STAFFING

|     |  |     |    |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 32. | Are educators interviewed and selected before appointment?                               | yes | no |
| 33. | Are there clear criteria for selecting educators?  | yes | no |
| 34. | Do educators have a clear outline of their role and responsibilities at the ABET centre? | yes | no |
| 35. | Are the educators well qualified to carry out the task of educating staff members?       | yes | no |
| 36. | Is provision made for the professional development of educators?                         | yes | no |

## ENVIRONMENT

|     |   |     |    |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 37. | Is the environment in which tuition takes place conducive to learning (including sufficient desks, chairs, lighting, etc.)? | yes | no |
|-----|---|-----|----|

## LEARNER QUALIFICATIONS

|     |   |     |    |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 38. | Do learners have the opportunity of writing examinations which are transportable and transferable, in other words, are the qualifications nationally accepted and accredited? | yes | no |
| 39. | Are the programmes offered by the ABET centre in line with the National Qualifications Framework?   | yes | no |
| 40. | Do the programmes meet the learners' needs?   | yes | no |

## TRANSFER OUTSIDE CLASSROOM

|     |  |     |    |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 41. | Is the ABET programme effective, in that the knowledge and skills learned at the ABET centre are transferred to the workplace and the community? | yes | no |
|-----|--|-----|----|



|  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| <p>42. Is the ABET programme making a difference to the organisation/community?</p> <p>Please explain how.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <p>yes</p> | <p>no</p> |
|--|------------|-----------|

**OTHER**

|   |            |           |
|---|------------|-----------|
| <p>43. Is there networking with other ABET centres, providers, etc.</p> | <p>yes</p> | <p>no</p> |
|---|------------|-----------|

(Some of these questions were adapted from the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU).

## *UNION QUESTIONNAIRE*

### UNION QUESTIONNAIRE

#### PLANNING

|  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Does the ABET Centre's plan of development meet with the Union's criteria?                            | yes | no |
| 2. Does the Union agree with the statement of the scope of ABET at the Centre?                           | yes | no |
| 3. Is the Union in agreement with the formal procedure for monitoring and evaluating the ABET programme? | yes | no |
| 4. Does the Union agree with the written set of aims and objectives for the ABET programme?              | yes | no |
| 5. Have the aims and objectives been determined in consultation with all the stakeholders involved?      | yes | no |
| 6. Are the aims and objectives made available to all the stakeholders?                                   | yes | no |
| 7. Are the aims and objectives reviewed annually with all the stakeholders involved?                     | yes | no |
| 8. Is a report on ABET produced annually?  | yes | no |

## RESOURCES

|     |  |     |    |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 9.  | Is there a specific budget for the ABET programme? | yes | no |
| 10. | Do staff members have to pay for their education?  | yes | no |

## PROVISION

|     |   |     |    |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 11. | Is sufficient marketing undertaken to ensure that all staff members are informed about the ABET centre? | yes | no |
| 12. | Is ABET tuition available at appropriate times for the learners?  | yes | no |
| 13. | Does the ABET centre ensure equity and equality?  | yes | no |
| 14. | Does the ABET centre make provision for adults with physical or learning disabilities?                  | yes | no |
| 15. | Is there a wide range of learning material available for the learners?                                  | yes | no |
| 16. | Is there a wide range of teaching and resource material available for the educators?                    | yes | no |

## PRACTICE

|     |  |     |    |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 17. | Are potential new learners given a personal interview and a valid placement assessment before joining classes? | yes | no |
| 18. | Are the results of the placement assessment made available to the learners?                                    | yes | no |
| 19. | Is the learning material appropriate for the learner's educational level?                                      | yes | no |
| 20. | Is there a learning plan for each learner?   | yes | no |
| 21. | Are assessment procedures fair?  | yes | no |
| 22. | Are records of learners' progress kept?  | yes | no |
| 23. | Is assessment of progress a joint process between all the relevant parties?                                    | yes | no |
| 24. | Is the result of an assessment of progress made available to the learner involved?                             | yes | no |
| 25. | Is continuing support provided for learners progressing to further education, or other programmes?             | yes | no |

## STAFFING

|     |  |     |    |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 26. | Are there clear criteria for selecting educators?  | yes | no |
| 27. | Do educators have a clear outline of their role and responsibilities at the ABET centre? | yes | no |
| 28. | Are the educators well qualified to carry out the task of educating staff members?       | yes | no |
| 29. | Is provision made for the professional development of educators?                         | yes | no |

## LEARNER QUALIFICATIONS

|     |  |     |    |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 30. | Do learners have the opportunity of writing examinations which are transportable and transferable? Are the qualifications nationally accepted? | yes | no |
| 31. | Are the programmes offered by the ABET centre in line with the National Qualifications Framework?  | yes | no |
| 32. | Are the programmes applicable to the learners needs?   | yes | no |

## TRANSFER OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 33. Is the programme effective, in that the knowledge and skills learned at the ABET centre are transferred to the workplace? | yes | no |
| 34. Is the programme effective, in that the knowledge and skills learned at the ABET centre are transferred to the community? | yes | no |

## ***COMMON SPELLING ERRORS***

### **Pre-level 1 and level 1**

|                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| afther (after)         | alwas (always)           |
| anetwo (wanted to)     | annee thing (anything)   |
| arly (early)           | aske (ask)               |
| athou (although)       | averthing (everything)   |
| avirthing (everything) | beacaus (because)        |
| becouse (because)      | boks (box)               |
| bole (ball)            | bos (bush)               |
| brethe (brother)       | broking (broken)         |
| brothe (brother)       | ce (see)                 |
| cheardran (children)   | cityy (city)             |
| ckoole (school)        | clos (cross)             |
| colld (cold)           | copet (carpet)           |
| dauhter (daughter)     | devisision (division)    |
| doughter (daughter)    | eatng (eating)           |
| en (and)               | esten (Eastern)          |
| except (except)        | fameliy (family)         |
| familie (family)       | farmily (family)         |
| finesh (finish)        | fo (for)                 |
| fou (four)             | frand (friend)           |
| frind (friend)         | gall (girl)              |
| geli (girl)            | gell (girl)              |
| goweng (going)         | gowing (going)           |
| heppy (happy)          | heve (have)              |
| hilli (hills)          | hongre (hungry)          |
| houngre (hungry)       | hous (house)             |
| iteng (eating)         | jop (job)                |
| kheka (see/look)       | khekhng (seeing/looking) |
| khitchen (kitchen)     | layd (laid)              |

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| leading (learning)      | led (late)           |
| leter (letter)          | lik (like)           |
| litte (little)          | lock (look)          |
| mach (much)             | mack (make)          |
| manenge (manager)       | marrd (married)      |
| marred (married)        | may (my)             |
| mea (me)                | mee (me)             |
| melk (milk)             | milik (milk)         |
| moneng (morning)        | monig (morning)      |
| mornng (morning)        | moter (mother)       |
| mothere (mother)        | nase (nice)          |
| nest (next)             | nouw (now)           |
| nus (nice)              | o'clog (o'clock)     |
| or so (also)            | orang (orange)       |
| paynt (paint)           | plas (place)         |
| pleaple (people)        | pley (play)          |
| pup (pap)               | ranig (raining)      |
| rit (write)             | riteng (writing)     |
| robich (rubbish)        | rod (road)           |
| runeng (running)        | saleng (selling)     |
| sam (some)              | saven (seven)        |
| seckoole (school)       | sei (see)            |
| seteng (sitting)        | shi (she)            |
| shis (his)              | sistay (sister)      |
| slipheng (sleeping)     | snak (snake)         |
| soccar (soccer)         | sol (sorry)          |
| steding (standing)      | sume (some)          |
| superviser (supervisor) | tal (tell)           |
| tank (thank)            | tashe (teach)        |
| tech (teach)            | thable (table)       |
| thak (thank)            | thaking (taking)     |
| toad (told)             | treemete (treatment) |



trey (tree)  
vere (very)  
wa (where)  
wakeng (working)  
wat (what)  
werk (work)  
wharid (worried)  
whith (with)  
workeing (working)  
yoo (you)

trole (trolley)  
veri (very)  
wafe (wife)  
wante (want)  
wen (when)  
weting (waiting)  
whife (wife)  
womin (women)  
yeas (years)  
yur (you)

## Level 2

acomonodisiod (accommodation)  
amblela (umbrella)  
anderstand (understand)  
arive (arrive)  
atill (until)  
beacause (because)  
biside (beside)  
bue (bye)  
cabet (carpet)  
che (chair)  
children (children)  
clinink (clinic)  
corogated (corrugated)  
cussins (cousins)  
daugther (daughter)  
devide (divide)  
diposit (deposit)  
dyning (dining)  
evry (every)

adrass (adress)  
ampty (empty)  
aria (area)  
at (that)  
beacaus (because)  
becuase (because)  
braks (bricks)  
buycekle (bicycle)  
carbord (cupboard)  
chears (chairs)  
churchers (churches)  
colle (called)  
covenment (government)  
datty (dirty)  
desidet (deicded)  
did'nt (didn't)  
dougter (daughter)  
emty (empty)  
evrywere (everywhere)

|                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| expecially (especially) | factres (factories)      |
| famer (farmer)          | firstbone (first born)   |
| foot (food)             | fredge (fridge)          |
| gauds (goats)           | geve (gave)              |
| god (got)               | gorvement (government)   |
| goverment (government)  | guese (guess)            |
| hose (house)            | humful (harmful)         |
| ibout (about)           | impotet (important)      |
| inimpotet (unimportant) | khechen (kitchen)        |
| kichen (kitchen)        | kicthine (kitchen)       |
| knoked (knocked)        | liveing (living)         |
| looket (look at)        | mane (many)              |
| mast (must)             | mony (money)             |
| naibourgh (neighbour)   | neccessary (necessary)   |
| necst (next)            | noth (north)             |
| ordroop (wardrobe)      | oright (alright)         |
| painfull (painful)      | parants (parents)        |
| plait (plate)           | plase (place)            |
| prepere (prepare)       | privant (prevent)        |
| reletives (relatives)   | restureut (restaurant)   |
| sababs (suburbs)        | safering (suffering)     |
| sambody (somebody)      | san (son)                |
| sarronded (surrounded)  | shcool (school)          |
| shi (she)               | siboard (sideboard)      |
| simething (something)   | sitted (seated)          |
| sore (sorry)            | sow (so)                 |
| steal (still)           | stoff (stove)            |
| sum (some)              | supermaket (supermarket) |
| taxy (taxi)             | the (there)              |
| thenk (thank)           | thing (think)            |
| thinks (things)         | traying (trying)         |
| univisity (university)  | verey (very)             |

warrid (worried)  
wensday (wednesday)  
wich (wish)  
wutter (water)

we (with)  
wether (whether)  
wich (which)  
yart (yard)

### Level 3

adalt (adult)  
all so (also)  
arrobics (aerobics)  
athletics (athletics)  
beatiful (beautiful)  
becouse (because)  
befere (before)  
boms (bombs)  
cann't (can't)  
clearily (clearly)  
complection (complexion)  
corispond (correspond)  
diescription (description)  
doen (done)  
dosn't (doesn't)  
educatin (education)  
eneger (anger)  
enjoing (enjoying)  
exicise (exercise)  
famouse (famous)  
feather (further)  
feuture (future)  
freind (friend)  
hearlthy (healthy)  
hungre (angry)

aknolenoleoged (acknowledged)  
arcording (according)  
aslo (also)  
automaticly (automatically)  
becouse (because)  
been (bin)  
bettar (butter)  
boos (boss)  
carrying (carrying)  
commited (committed)  
conected (connected)  
countrys (countries)  
dificult (difficult)  
doesen't (doesn't)  
drankard (drunkard)  
eduecation (education)  
enjo (enjoy)  
everthing (everything)  
exited (excited)  
fare (fair)  
feech (fetch)  
fill (feel)  
haven (heaven)  
heired (hired)  
immigrents (immigrants)

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| instate (instead)        | intertaner (entertainer) |
| iterm (item)             | its (it's)               |
| jop (job)                | layar (liar)             |
| les (lets)               | lether (ladder)          |
| live (leave)             | maets (mates)            |
| marathorn (marathon)     | massages (messages)      |
| meanwhy (meanwhile)      | menannals (mammals)      |
| misles (muscles)         | mustahces (moustache)    |
| news peper (newspaper)   | obout (about)            |
| obsorp (absorb)          | organised (organised)    |
| payed (paid)             | permission (permission)  |
| presedent (president)    | quiriocity (curiosity)   |
| reapedted (repeated)     | rearange (rearrange)     |
| recived (received)       | reiceving (receiving)    |
| reletives (relatives)    | resauces (resources)     |
| rusuban (rubbish bin)    | scarted (scattered)      |
| shoese (shoes)           | sleeps (slips)           |
| steel (still)            | streached (stretched)    |
| stupit (stupid)          | supose (suppose)         |
| suppoters (supporters)   | teraly (thoroughly)      |
| the (there)              | tumping (dumping)        |
| unnecisary (unnecessary) | wearhouse (warehouse)    |
| welfair (welfare)        | where (were)             |
| withought (without)      | wont (won't)             |
| worn (won)               | zoe (zoo)                |

## ***REASONS WHY LEARNERS WANT THEIR ERRORS CORRECTED***

The following reasons were given by learners as to why they want or do not want their errors corrected by their educator. The learners' responses are presented as given by them.

### **YES to correction:**

- “It is up to the student commitment to ask for an answers where I have gone wrong. The tutor does not know exactly where the student problem is”
- “If I make a mistake I need to be corrected to know the right answer”
- “I do like to be corrected so that I must know were I went wrong and why, as I am here to learn”
- “It is very important for improvement and know where you go wrong”
- “I want to know the corrections so that I must never make that mistake again”
- “Because if I make a mistake it means I don't understand it. I need to be put right”
- “Because we learn by mistakes. If I make a mistake, you correct it then the next time I know what to do”
- “Because I failed. Now I need you to correct me so I can do it right in future'
- “If the tutor does not correct my work, who else can help me?”
- “For my benefit, when I go through the work again, my understanding is clearer”
- “In order to use English properly, I need to be corrected. To give me a better idea of whether I'm improving”
- “If the tutor doesn't correct it, then who? Once I've had something corrected, I'll never forget it or misunderstand it again”
- “So that I know where I;ve made mistakes. If they not corrected, I might not even realise that I've made mistakes”
- “Corrected mistakes are not likely to be repeated and see the mistakes builds ones inner confidence in one way or another”
- “We are here to learn more about English. Even if we speak it's good to correct us or I'll carry on speaking rotten English. I think its better if you stop me immediately and correct me when I'm reading. You should correct us more than you do at present”

- “A mistake is bad to have. I will not improve if I’m not corrected”
- “We all learn by mistakes, the more I get corrected the better”
- “This enables me to be right”
- “Next time I won’t be wrong”
- “This helps not to continue with wrong things”

**NO** to correction:

- “I must correct it so as to be aware that I made a mistake because if its you I won’t know where I went wrong”
- “I think it is not important because I like to be corrected by other learners. You can help us afterwards - I learn more in that way”
- “I think I should be corrected by other learners first and you at last”
- “I think we should help each other in the class and we need your contribution if you see that answers are not enough”
- “I think it is not important if you are the first person to correct me in the class. I learn by getting corrections from other learners and when we are not sure about the answer you can help us”

**YES** and **NO** to correction:

- “Yes, because as adults I believe it is the duty of tutor to guide us where she/he had made mistake. No, minor mistake the tutor can just evaluate to se whether student were able to detect it”
- “Things that are obviously wrong should be corrected. Small errors should be self-corrected”

## ***CHECKLIST FOR EDUCATORS ON QUESTIONING SKILLS***

It is sufficient for the educator completing this checklist to answer with a *yes* or a *no* response. The last column, *comments*, should be used by the educator to make any notes on specific issues pertinent to a particular lesson. The checklist should be completed regularly by the educator and filed so that he can review his questioning techniques and see whether there are any areas which need to be addressed. For example, if the educator finds that often questions are not clearly understood by his learners and needs to repeat the questions, he may want to review his questions to ensure that they are not ambiguous or he might find that the wording is not at the right level for his learners.

### **BEFORE THE LESSON**

|  | <b>yes</b> | <b>no</b> | <b>comments</b> |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Have I formulated key questions according to my lesson objectives and learning outcomes? |            |           |                 |
| Are my key questions clear and at the appropriate level for my learners?                 |            |           |                 |
| Do I have an appropriate balance between lower and higher order questions?               |            |           |                 |
| Do I have any affective questions?   |            |           |                 |

**AFTER THE LESSON as a self-reflective exercise**

|   | <b>yes</b> | <b>no</b> | <b>comments</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Did I plan my key questions according to my lesson objectives and learning outcomes?  |            |           |                 |
| Were my key questions at the appropriate level for my learners?                       |            |           |                 |
| Were my key questions appropriate to the topic of my lesson?                          |            |           |                 |
| Did I have an appropriate balance between lower and higher order questions?           |            |           |                 |
| Did I ask affective questions?  |            |           |                 |
| Did the learners understand my questions?   |            |           |                 |
| Did I express my questions coherently?  |            |           |                 |
| Were there any questions that I needed to repeat?                                     |            |           |                 |
| Did I need to rephrase certain questions in order to get a response from my learners? |            |           |                 |
| Were any of my questions ambiguous?   |            |           |                 |
| Was the vocabulary I used in my questions appropriate for the level of my learners?   |            |           |                 |
| Did my questions express only one idea?   |            |           |                 |
| Did I direct some questions to the group and some to specific learners?               |            |           |                 |
| Did I distribute my questions evenly amongst my whole group of learners?              |            |           |                 |
| Was I sensitive to my learners when asking questions?                                 |            |           |                 |



|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Did I pause long enough to let learners answer my questions?  |  |  |  |
| Did I vary the pace at which I asked my questions?  |  |  |  |
| Did I allow my learners to ask questions?   |  |  |  |
| Did my learners always have the necessary information required to answer my questions?  |  |  |  |
| Did I give my learners an opportunity to try to answer my questions?  |  |  |  |
| Did I accept my learners' answers and use them effectively?   |  |  |  |
| When my learners provided answers, did I make use of their ideas for further discussion?  |  |  |  |
| Did I always indicate whether a learner's answer was correct or incorrect?  |  |  |  |
| Did I give credit to learners for the correct part of an answer?  |  |  |  |
| Did I use words such as " <i>good</i> ", " <i>well done</i> ", and " <i>excellent</i> " when I was satisfied with my learners' answers? |  |  |  |
| Did I encourage my learners to answer questions by using cues such as smiling, nodding my head, and writing their answers on the board? |  |  |  |
| Did I ask prompting questions to assist my learners to formulate their answers?   |  |  |  |

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Did I ask probing questions to assist my learners to think more deeply about their answers?             |  |  |  |
| Did I provide a "safe" classroom environment for questions and answers where its okay to make mistakes? |  |  |  |

If a learner answered incorrectly or partly correctly, how did I handle the situation?

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How did I feel when I asked questions?

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Were there any questions which I improvised as the lesson progressed?

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Were there any questions I asked which I could improve on?

If so, how can I improve them?

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## *EDUCATOR EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE*

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| <b>EDUCATOR EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE</b> |
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**Kindly use the rating scale provided, where 1 is very poor and 5 is excellent**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Was the educator on time?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Was the educator ready when the learners arrived?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Did the educator make the learners feel welcome and comfortable?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Did the educator have a written lesson plan?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Did the educator link the lesson to a previous lesson?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Did the educator relate the lesson to the learners' own experiences?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Did the educator ensure that there were enough desks, chairs, equipment, stationery, materials, etc. for all the learners? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Did the educator have clear outcomes for the lesson?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Did the learners achieve these outcomes?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Was the educator sufficiently prepared for this lesson?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|     |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | Did the educator have sufficient knowledge about the content of this lesson?                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Did the educator have adequate teaching aids?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Did the educator let the learners know what they were going to learn in the lesson?                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | Did the learners know how they would be assessed?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Was the lesson meaningful to the learners?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Would the learners be able to apply the content of this lesson in their workplace or in their community? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | Did the educator explain the activities carefully?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | Did the educator manage to get the learners to participate in the lesson?                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Did the learners participate in the lesson?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | Did the educator get the learners to work in pairs and in groups?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | Did the educator allow the learners to share information?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Did the educator create the environment where the learners felt free to disagree with a point of view?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | Did the educator allow the learners to offer suggestions and alternatives?                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|     |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24. | Did the educator allow learners to work at their own pace?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | Did the educator go at the right pace for the learners?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. | Did the lesson include problems that the learners needed to solve or an issue that they could discuss? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | Did the learners discuss or debate issues?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | Did the learners know what the educator expected of them?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | Did the learners seem to understand the lesson?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | Did the learners talk more than the educator?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | Did the learners find the educator's explanations clear?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | Did the educator treat any of the learners' errors effectively?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | Did the educator allow the learners to make mistakes?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | Did the educator ask clear questions?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. | Were the educator's questions appropriate?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. | Were the educator's questions asked at the various cognitive levels?                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|     |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. | Did the educator allow the learners enough time to respond to his questions?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. | Did the educator allow the learners to ask questions?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. | Was sufficient time allocated for the various activities in the lesson?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. | Did the educator provide feedback to the learners?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. | Did the learners benefit from this feedback?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. | Did the educator encourage, praise and motivate the learners?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. | Did the learners enjoy the lesson?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. | Did the educator enjoy the lesson?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. | Did the educator notice whether any of the learners needed extra support?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. | Did the learners have a break?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. | If there were learners who were absent, did the educator ask the others learners if they knew where the absent learners were? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. | Did the educator complete all the records, attendance registers, etc.?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

49. Additional comments and suggestions that could assist the educator in facilitating future lessons:

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(This questionnaire was adapted from McKay, 1998)