

UMGENI WATER ABE:
A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ADULT BASIC
EDUCATION PROGRAMME WITHIN A WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT:
1989-1996.

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Sally Joy Frost

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Supervised by

Professor J.J.W. Aitchison

ABSTRACT

The water authority Umgeni Water, has run an adult basic education (ABE) programme from 1989-1996. During 1989 and 1990 Stephen Camp initiated an *ad hoc* pilot programme for 42 learners using Operation Upgrade. His successor, Rosemary Ward, co-ordinated a planned in-house pilot during 1991 and 1992 which reached 50 learners. She was followed by Kim Weyer, who launched a company wide initiative with the aid of the ABE consultants, BESA, and implemented an ABE policy, forum and data base. Finally from 1994, Sally Frost consolidated a programme catering for 342 learners and run by five full time ABE facilitators. It was aimed at those of the 578 unskilled workers at Umgeni Water who were illiterate. Materials used were increasingly in-house and learners were entered for the external Independent Examinations Board examinations. Evaluation of the programme in 1996 revealed that learning was occurring, though at a much slower and more individually erratic rate than predicted. Overall the programme was considered successful.

From a case study of the Umgeni Water experience a generic model for ABE programme implementation has been developed, applicable to many workplace environments.

In the case of Umgeni Water, implementation vision was grounded in educational/social responsibility, productivity and public relations motives. Company funding enabled implementation. Guiding principles for programme implementation included the acquisition of securely employed, high calibre staff / leadership, a directed, demand-driven approach, an ABE policy, and ongoing stakeholder involvement and management

support. Umgeni Water's production environment was catered for, learner needs were met, sufficient budget provided, and the programme evaluated. Implementation ingredients interacted with one another and often occurred simultaneously.

Independent influences affected smooth programme implementation at Umgeni Water. Positive influences included the existence of a demand for English within the organisation and the perception of external pressure to provide. Negative internal influences centred around production demands. The impact of Umgeni Water's big business environment, and of its interaction with internal ABE stakeholders and the external ABE world, were ambiguous. These contextual dynamics were either accounted for, accommodated or harnessed.

One can conclude that given the correct enabling factors, ABE can be successfully implemented within a workplace environment. If certain guiding principles are followed, and independent contextual influences accounted for, programme goals and targets for functional literacy can be achieved.

It is stated unambiguously by the candidate that the whole of the following dissertation, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, is the candidate's own original work.

I would like to thank my friends and family for their support, interest and encouragement. They either saw too little or too much of me. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, John Aitchison, for his input and advice, my father, Jack Frost, for his proofreading, and Dave de Haas for his help with illustrations. Thanks is also owed to Umgeni Water who put their resources at my disposal.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in the text:

ABE	-	Adult Basic Education
AED	-	Adult Education and Development
ANC	-	African National Congress
BESA	-	Basic Education and Skills for Adults
BLL	-	Bureau of Literacy and Literature
BMF	-	Black Management Forum
CAE	-	Centre for Adult Education
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
CEP	-	Continuing Education Project
CET	-	Consulting Educators and Trainers
COSATU	-	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DET	-	Department of Education and Training
DIFR	-	Disabling Injury Frequency Rate
E&C	-	Emergency and Construction (Services)
EFA	-	English for Adults
ELP	-	English Literacy Project
ERU	-	English Resource Unit
HSRC	-	Human Sciences Research Council
IEB	-	Independent Examinations Board
JET	-	Joint Education Trust
JOLT	-	Job Orientated Language Training
LEAP	-	Learning for Empowerment and Progress

MANCO	-	Management Committee
NASA	-	Natal ABE Support Agency
NEHAWU	-	National Educational Health and Allied Workers Union
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organisation
NLC	-	National Literacy Co-operation
NPB	-	Natal Parks Board
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
PAC	-	Pan African Congress
PR	-	Public Relations
PROLIT	-	Project Literacy
RAWSP	-	Rural Areas Water and Sanitation Plan
UCT	-	University of Cape Town
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USWE	-	Use, Speak and Write English

NOTE ON MEANING

The following words connote the meaning given below when used in the text with reference to Umgeni Water:

Director	In charge of a division, eg: Human Resources, Operations
Manager	In charge of a department, eg: Training and Development, Wastewater, Water, Maintenance
Line manager	In direct supervision of the Umgeni Water Peromnes grade 14-18 unskilled workforce (the learners in the ABE programme), ie: supervisors, superintendents and foremen
Facilitator	ABE teacher, taken as meaning 'catalyst' of learning, versus 'lecturer'
Co-ordinator	Supervisor of the ABE programme
Grade 14-18	Peromnes grading system, connoting the unskilled workforce (general workers, security guards, shift attendants, maintenance assistants, drivers etc.). This was the target group for the Umgeni Water ABE programme, and comprised 42% of the workforce.

INTRODUCTION

LITERACY IN CONTEXT

This dissertation offers a detailed case study of the Umgeni Water adult basic education programme, as a typical literacy programme operating within an industrial setting. Its aim is to extract an implementation model applicable to any workplace literacy initiative. To set the Umgeni Water initiative in context a background on 'literacy' is necessary. One needs to define the concept of literacy, discuss the extent of the problem of illiteracy in South Africa, and consider its causes. A history of literacy work in South Africa, of the main literacy organisations, and of the present position is necessary. The growing pressure on industry to provide adult basic education programmes needs also to be investigated. From such a base, a detailed study of the Umgeni Water project can be explored in future chapters.

THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

The concept of literacy is a contested issue. Definitions of literacy and literacy standards vary from country to country according to specific agendas. There is general consensus that literacy involves the ability to read and write. In 1951, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (hereafter cited as UNESCO) defined a literate person as one '... who can both read with understanding and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.'¹

Reading and writing have social, cultural, personal and political manifestations. In 1956, UNESCO further defined literacy in relation to its functional uses and purposes:

'A person is literate when he has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainments in reading, writing

¹ 1951 UNESCO definition quoted in C. Steinberg and M. Suttner, *Never too Old to Learn! Towards formulating policy for adult basic education in a post-apartheid South Africa* (Johannesburg, Learn and Teach/ELP/LACOM, 1991), p. 7.

and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community's development.' ²

UNESCO relates literacy to its context, use and social relevance. Pennington points out that in South Africa, this definition is upheld by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (hereafter cited as COSATU). ³

The International Symposium for Literacy, meeting in Persepolis in 1975, defined the fundamentally political nature of literacy. Literacy was:

'... not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiative and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development. It should open the way to a mastery of techniques and human relations. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right.' ⁴

In South Africa, the term 'literacy' is increasingly used to refer to the basic education of adults, rather than to the technical skills of reading and writing. This dissertation will use the terms 'adult basic education' (hereafter cited as ABE), and 'literacy' interchangeably, especially when literacy refers to 'functional literacy'. 'Functional literacy' is defined as the ability to read, write and speak with understanding at a level that enables one to participate effectively in the workplace, at home, and in the community. Functional literacy for learners is the goal to which many literacy programmes, including Umgeni Water, strive.

THE PROBLEM OF ILLITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

It was estimated in 1990 that, world wide, 882 million people over the age of fifteen, or 25% of the world's population, were illiterate. Approximately 35% of all women in the world were

² 1956 UNESCO definition quoted in Steinberg, *Never too Old to Learn!*, p. 8.

³ S. Pennington ed., *Literacy Training in South Africa. A Critical Ingredient for World Class Performance* (Rivonia, S.P.A. Consultants, 1994), p. 79.

⁴ L. Bataille ed., *A turning point for literacy, Adult Education for development, the spirit and declaration of Persepolis* (Oxford, Pergaman Press, 1976), p. 273.

illiterate compared to 20% of men. Asia had the highest absolute number of adult illiterates (659 million). Africa had the highest rate of illiteracy (48%). Literacy statistics are problematic in that they are based on different perceptions of literacy and unreliable measurement. However, they point to broad trends. The majority of illiterate adults live in poor countries and are excluded from power, information and wealth.⁵

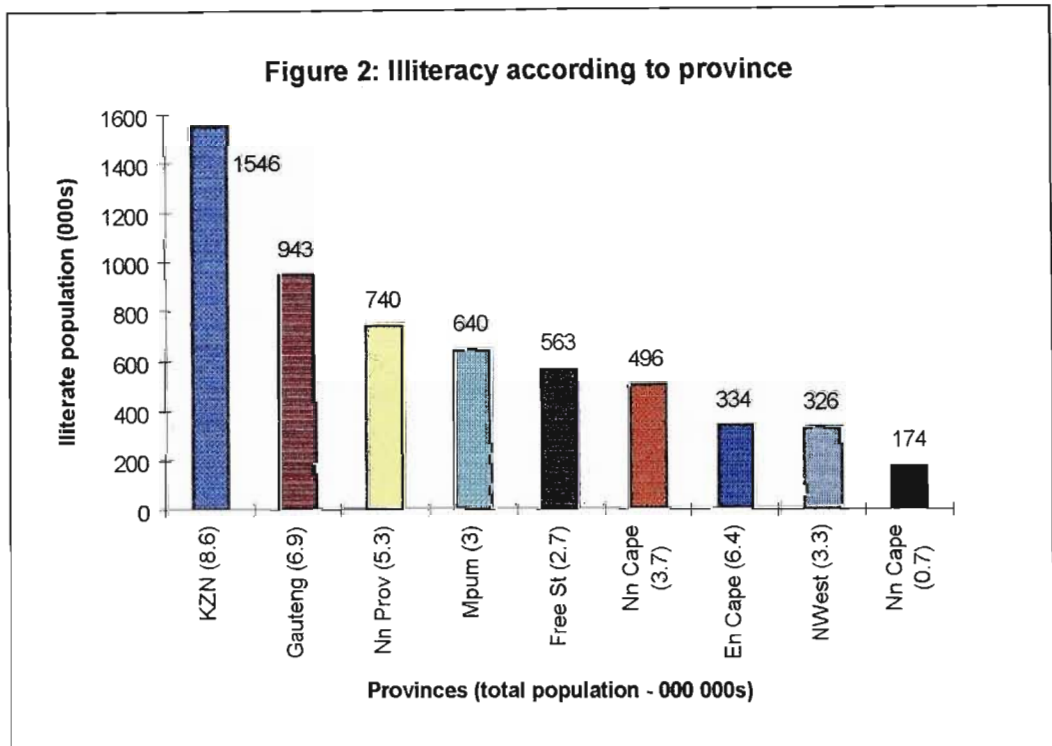
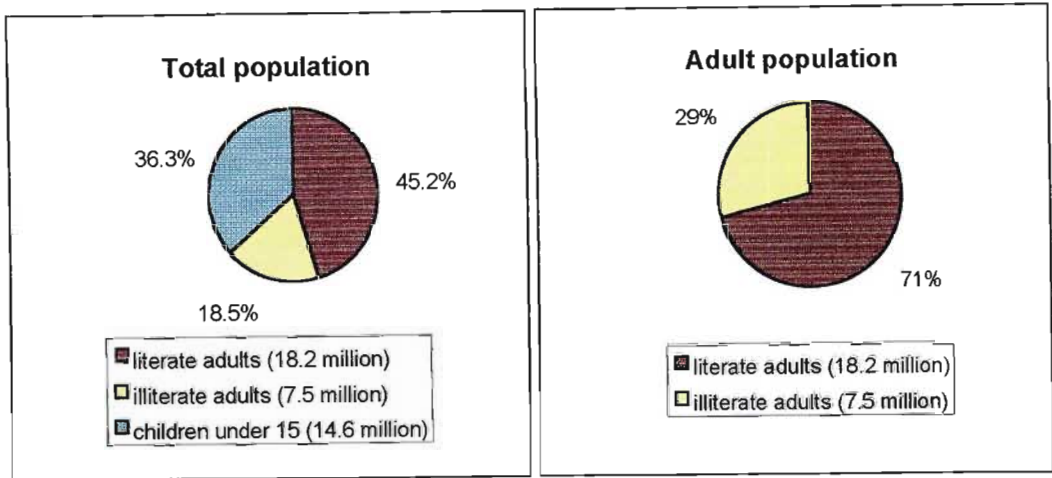
X The most recent statistics on literacy figures for South Africa were compiled by the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg (hereafter cited as CAE), as part of a national research project on capacity building in ABE commissioned by the Joint Education Trust (hereafter cited as JET). These figures were based on the October Household Survey 1994 and on formal education levels. Standard five was taken as the level of functional literacy.

X The ABE report estimated that 7.5 million adults over the age of fifteen required ABE. That represented 18.5% of the total population and 29% of the adult population. Of the 7.5 million adults who required ABE, only 335 500 were in class, i.e. 4.3% of the target group. The highest figures for illiteracy were in KwaZulu-Natal where 1 546 000 people over the age of eighteen had less than a standard five level of education (18% of 8.6 million). A correlation existed between low education and economically depressed areas, for example, Nqutu in the former KwaZulu. The north coast of Zululand and the Hammarsdale / Mpumalanga and Inanda areas had the severest problem. The second highest provincial figures were for Gauteng, where 943 000 were illiterate (14% of 6.9 million). The Northern Province followed with 740 000 illiterates (14% of 5.3 million). Mpumalanga had 640 000 illiterates (23.3% of 3 million), the Free State 563 000 (20.8% of 2.7 million), the Western Cape 496 000 (13.4% of 3.7 million), the Eastern Cape 334 000 (5.2% of 6.4 million), the

X⁵ E. Lyster, 'An overview of the debates', in B. Hutton ed., *Adult Basic Education in South Africa: Literacy, English as a second language, and numeracy* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 14.

North West 326 000 (9.8% of 3.3 million), and the Northern Cape 174 000 (24.8% of 700 000).

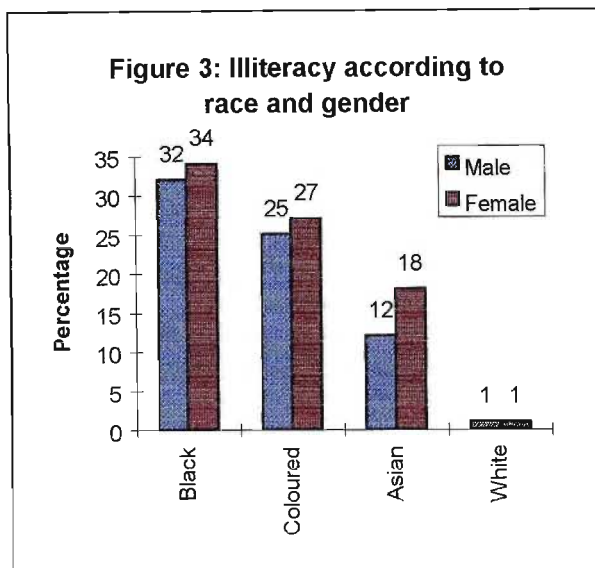
Figure 1: Adult illiteracy in South Africa ⁶



Not much difference emerged in literacy statistics for men and women, with the exception of the Asian community. In South Africa, disparities revolved essentially around race. Black South Africans were the hardest hit. 34% of African women were illiterate, 32% of African

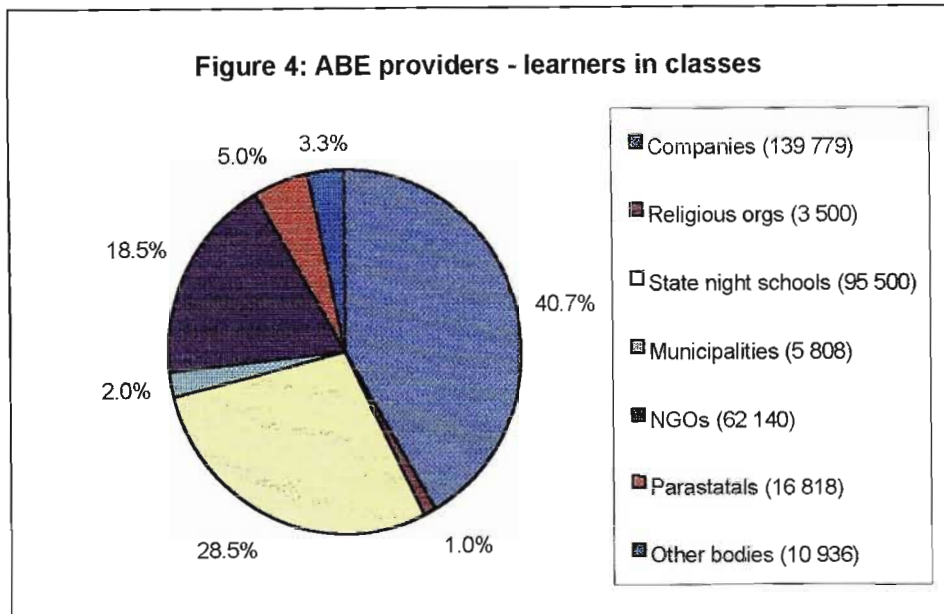
⁶ Data for figures 1-4 is from A. Harley, J.J.W. Aitchison, E. Lyster and S. Land, *A survey of ABE in South Africa for the 1990s* (Johannesburg, Sached Books, 1996), pp. 15-74.

men, 27% of coloured women, 25% of coloured men, 18% of Asian women, 12% of Asian men, 1% of white women, and 1% of white men. The highest concentrations of illiterates were in urban areas, the ex-homelands and the mines.



Of the estimated 7.5 million requiring adult basic education, 4.3% (335 480 people) were catered for. Of these 335 480 in classes, 41.7% (139 779 people) were reached through companies, 28.5% (95 500 people) were in state night schools, 18.5% (62 140 people) were reached by non governmental organisations (hereafter cited as NGOs), 5% by parastatals (16 818 people), 2% by municipalities (5 808 people), 1% by religious organisations (3 500 people), and 3.3% by other bodies (10 936 people). Women made up the majority of people in classes in rural areas and in night schools. In urban areas, men predominated. Both provision and materials were mainly in English.⁷ At the present rate of provision, it would take an estimated eighteen years to remove illiteracy in South Africa.

⁷ Harley, *A survey of ABE in South Africa for the 1990s*, pp.15-74.



CAUSES OF ILLITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The major causes of illiteracy in South Africa can be seen in terms of the country's social and political history. Edward French points out that the communicative worlds of traditional black societies in South Africa were based on orality. These societies were not given access to literacy on any effective scale, and were sometimes actively discouraged from becoming literate. Sometimes they resisted literacy as an alien practice associated with colonial conquest. Many developed resourceful ways of coping and came to believe that literacy offered few benefits, especially when laws and economic deprivation destroyed the hope of social and economic betterment even with literacy skills. The restrictive 'bantu education' system for blacks developed by the Nationalist government after it came to power in 1948 exacerbated this problem by deliberately limiting the participation of black people in the modern, industrial and literate world. The disintegration of the black education system after the Soweto uprisings of 1976 created a new generation of illiterate and semi-literate adults.⁸

⁸ E. French, 'Adult literacy in South Africa: past to present', in Hutton, *Adult Basic Education in South Africa*, pp. 52-53.

A HISTORY OF LITERACY WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first record of literacy work in South Africa was that of missionaries in the nineteenth century, who did work on creating spelling systems, primers and readers for African languages. Missionary promotion of literacy and education among black people was sometimes met with settler resistance. In the second half of the nineteenth century there is evidence of black South Africans working to keep control of their own texts in print. The tightening of white political and economic control in the twentieth century ensured that this movement was not extended or maintained.

The establishment of Afrikaans as an official language in 1925 represented a successful, albeit sectional, drive to promote literacy. This promotion of a culture of reading amongst Afrikaners gave value to the language of ordinary people. The growth of Afrikaner literacy in the 1920s and 1930s contributed to the empowerment of a previously downtrodden people.

Prior to World War Two, under the United Party government, various efforts to promote publishing and reading among black South Africans were made. The Carnegie Library took appropriate reading from an urban base to people in remote areas. However, its paternalistic direction and mismanagement, together with a discouraging political and social context, led to disappointing results. In the 1920s and 1930s the Communist Party's night schools on the Reef focused on worker education, mainly in English and politics, rather than basic literacy. Eddie Roux, then of the Communist Party of South Africa, published texts in easy English for adult neo-literates, which dealt with ideological issues, scientific concepts, and agricultural and ecological practices.

In 1945, in the short period of liberal optimism after World War Two, an official Committee on Adult Education was established, including liberals from the Institute of Race Relations and

supported by the United Party government. The committee recommended that night schools be encouraged by state subsidies. After 1948, however, the Nationalist government undermined the policy of support for night schools. Applications for subsidies were neglected or refused. Education and Group Areas policies, and security legislation in the 1960s, placed legal constraints and inhibitions on non-governmental literacy programmes.

In 1955, the Freedom Charter of the ANC-led Congress Alliance aimed for a 'mass state plan' to end adult illiteracy. This reflected the influence of international interest in literacy work linked to decolonisation. The subsequent banning of the Communist Party, ANC and PAC removed important sources of committed and organised support for community-based literacy work. Restrictive state legislation continued through the 1970s and 1980s. The state itself took no positive steps to promote adult education, and progressive literacy organisations were looked upon with suspicion by the Apartheid government and security police. From the mid-1970s, however, the state became one of the major providers of literacy work through its Department of Education and Training (hereafter cited as DET) run night schools. This can be seen as an attempt to undercut, or pre-empt, progressive work. From the 1980s the DET adopted a fairly benign attitude to non-governmental literacy projects, although inhibiting laws remained in the background. It was felt that the state's resources were too slender and anyone willing to help was welcome.⁹

A HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICAN LITERACY ORGANISATIONS

Literacy providers in South Africa fall into four main categories - non-aligned NGOs, NGOs with a commitment to liberation politics, commercial providers, and the state.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 54-57.

Non-aligned NGOs

When the United Party adopted the 1945 recommendations for support of adult education, a basis for action directed specifically at adult literacy was created. There was a need for basic literacy materials, methods and teacher training. A small group of literacy workers from the Institute of Race Relations was established by Maida Whyte. With some financial support from the government the project grew and was registered as an autonomous body - the Bureau of Literacy and Literature (hereafter cited as BLL), in 1964. By the end of the 1960s, economic growth in South Africa and the increasing international publicity for world literacy movements created more local demand for adult literacy work. The methods and materials of the BLL became more systematic. The BLL developed primers and basic readers, offered teacher-training, courses on management of literacy programmes and local writers' workshops. By the mid-1970s the BLL had nearly 30 permanent staff - multi-racial but with a predominantly white leadership. It was the main supplier of literacy services to mines and industries, a major contributor to missionary literacy work, and the support of official programmes in Lebowa and Gazankulu. It reached up to 60 000 learners.

By the 1980s, the permanent staff of the BLL had dropped to one. Reasons for the decline of the BLL include conservative trustees, diffusion of focus, inhibited local innovation owing to the authority of American models for materials and services, competition from other providers, political turbulence in the 1980s, and a lack of funding. Unsatisfactory management in the 1970s also contributed to a loss of momentum.¹⁰

Operation Upgrade was the second oldest literacy organisation in South Africa, established in 1966 by Louise and Sandy d'Oliviera. It adopted the methods and philosophy of the missionary, Dr Frank Laubach. Operation Upgrade offered teacher-training courses, courses in writing for neo-literates, and courses in managing literacy projects. Its texts dealt

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 58-60.

with practical skills, health and religion. Operation Upgrade was marked by an 'unquestioning zeal' which secured both American and local funding. It claims to have trained over 13 000 literacy teachers.

In the mid-1980s Operation Upgrade nearly ceased to operate. Apart from the underlying social and economic reasons that affected the BLL, a number of major clients dropped their support of Operation Upgrade. It was felt that the organisation made exaggerated claims for rapid and effective results, and for the impact of literacy as a key to human betterment. Its methods and materials were found inadequate, outdated and paternalistic. A high drop out rate of learners was evident. Operation Upgrade displayed a lack of teacher support and ability to cope with educational change. It ignored other organisations in the field. Dissension within its head-office led to a near breakdown in management. The organisation has recently taken on new life with a fresh team and is undergoing major evaluation, including methodology and materials. ¹¹

Two other non-aligned literacy providers worth mentioning are the Molteno project and Project Literacy (hereafter cited as Prolit). In the late 1970s, the Molteno Project, based at Rhodes University, set out to improve English instruction in black primary schools. It upgraded the teaching of reading in the vernacular and South Africanised the *Breakthrough* approach, which blended systematic phonics and language experience methods, and encouraged group instruction and individually paced progress. *Breakthrough* was adapted to adult literacy work and pioneered in the Genmin and Prolit projects. Prolit was established by Jenny Nesor in the 1970s and grew out of a series of night schools in Pretoria and Johannesburg. Prolit was marked by its attention to mother tongue literacy methods. ¹²

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 60-64.

¹² Ibid., pp. 64-65.

NGOs committed to liberation politics

Politically motivated, progressive literacy work was first evident in the Communist Party night schools in the 1930s. With heightened repression in the 1950s and 1960s, these efforts waned. Interest was renewed in the 1970s through the Black Consciousness Movement, industrial action, field work of the Christian Institute, and international literacy movements. The voice of Paulo Freire as the prophet of literacy for liberation became extremely influential.

The National Literacy Co-operation (hereafter cited as NLC) was formed in 1987 as a collective body representing some 35 'progressive' literacy organisations. Apart from enabling member organisations to work together, the NLC aimed to keep adult literacy on the agenda of the liberation movements. Traditionally, it shunned state and capital, although political developments in the 1990s modified this stance.

Learn and Teach was an influential member organisation of the NLC. Influenced by Freirean philosophy, it was the first 'alternative', 'learner centred' literacy organisation in South Africa. Learn and Teach advocated community and learner control over the learning process, and literacy for empowerment. Adult readers related to learners' contexts and were sometimes written by them. The *Learn and Teach* magazine was founded in 1979. However, there was a lack of new developments in its methodology in the 1980s. The facilitation of critical dialogue was replaced by textbooks, and effective, economical management was a problem. Learn and Teach officially disbanded in 1996 because of funding problems.

Use, Speak and Write English (hereafter cited as USWE) promoted improved and relevant teaching of English as a second language, especially to domestic and migrant workers in urban settings. Established by Basia Ledochowski, it espoused 'learner-centredness'. A

crisis in financial management led to its recent refocus on curriculum development and materials for teacher training.

The English Literacy Project (hereafter cited as ELP) set out to establish an experimental development programme of English courses for industrial workers. These books responded to the need for a structured approach which would support teachers, whilst relating closely to the contexts, needs and interests of workers. ELP trained facilitators and published learner writings. Initially a commercial agency, it soon moved into the alternative sector and became closely linked to COSATU.

At the end of the 1980s, the commitment of progressive literacy organisations to the struggle became increasingly explicit. This led to the criticism that the interests of learners were unduly subordinated to clichéd political rhetoric in classes. Organisations often lacked mobility, managerial skills and funding. The greatest limitation of progressive literacy work, however, was the smallness of its scale.¹³

Academic literacy work

From the late 1970s, the Human Sciences Research Council (hereafter cited as HSRC) did extensive work in adult literacy in terms of surveys, evaluations, resource development and conferences. In 1983, the University of Cape Town (hereafter cited as UCT) became the first university to involve itself in adult basic education. The Universities of Natal, the Witwatersrand, Unibo and Unitra, are now involved. The contribution of the academic world

¹³ Ibid., pp. 66-71.

to adult literacy has increasingly been in the field of developing and publishing resources and materials for learners and teachers, teacher training, and research and consultative work.¹⁴

Commercial providers

Independent, commercial literacy organisations catering for the industrial sector sprung up during the 1970s and 1980s. The earliest commercial literacy agency, Communication in Industry, was initiated in 1971. It offered thorough support and supervision of projects but rather mechanistic teaching methods. In the early 1980s, Consulting Educators and Trainers (hereafter cited as CET), headed by Dr K.L. Baucom, dominated the field. CET offered month-long training courses for instructors, context-specific adaptation of materials, and ongoing professional consultation. Discouraging results owing to the prevalence of structural methods, grammar and drill, a failure to train instructors to nurture learning, and the snags of running literacy programmes in industry, led to its closure in 1987.

The second half of the 1980s saw the growth of a number of consultancies providing literacy services to industry. One innovative and thorough-going programme grew out of the mining corporation Genmin, and was established by Bryan Philips. This was based on a rigorous analysis of the company's and workers' education and training needs. The project developed *English for Adults* (hereafter cited as EFA), a continuum of work books for different levels of English proficiency. Molteno's *Breakthrough* was used for mother tongue training. Genmin's initiatives were subsequently taken over and marketed by the commercial provider, Basic Education and Skills for Adults (hereafter cited as BESA).

Other consultancies with tailor-made literacy courses for industry were Interman, which offered a professionally structured and supported *Job Oriented Language Training* (hereafter

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

cited as JOLT); Hough and Horne, which had extensive experience in educational technology; Logos, which designed and implemented individual programmes; and Continuing Education Project (hereafter cited as CEP), a non-profit trust which helped industries organise educational programmes for workers. *Learning for Empowerment and Progress* (LEAP), was a programme formed by an industrial company to promote workplace democracy and worker participation in management decisions.¹⁵

State literacy programme

State literacy programmes started in the 1970s. A system of night schools was introduced under the DET. Reasons for this initiative revolved around an element of idealism spurred on by international and Operation Upgrade efforts, by economic pressure for a better trained work force, and by a suspicion of politically motivated literacy projects and a desire to gain the monopoly over the education of black people. The DET designed a literacy curriculum catering for mother tongue and second language literacy, and a preparatory course to initiate learners into the formal education system. Classes were run by practising teachers, with limited adult education training, for four nights a week. Teaching methods were systematic and prescriptive. Accredited certificates in adult basic education made the night school system appeal to learners seeking formal certification that would enhance employment opportunities.¹⁶

THE PRESENT POSITION

International Literacy Year in 1990, progressive political developments in the 1990s, the advent of the ANC government, and a frenzy of ABE policy making at a national level,¹⁷ led

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 72-75.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 75-76.

¹⁷ Important documents include: the 1992 National Education Policy Investigation reports; the 1993/1994 National Training Board documents, the 1993 ANC Policy Framework for Education written

to high expectations within the literacy world. These have not been met. Several reasons explain the lack of follow-through in implementing ABE policy at ground level. The overwhelming amount of policy is not backed by a capacity to deliver. Traditionally, literacy provision in South Africa comprised small, local initiatives - a weak material base for the creation of a national ABE system. Divisive factions existed within the field. Linked to this, the government's budget allocation for ABE was minimal. Nor was the capacity of previous expertise in the field adequately tapped. At a unified macro level, 'literacy waits ... and waits ... for something to happen.'¹⁸

THE PRESSURE ON INDUSTRY TO PROVIDE

The emergence of commercial, industry-focused ABE providers implied that there were industries out there running literacy programmes. The CAE's capacity building research indicated that by the 1990s, companies, municipalities and parastatals were the largest providers, collectively servicing 48.7% of all learners in classes.¹⁹

Industry experienced pressure to run literacy programmes for two main reasons. Firstly, the changing political context within South Africa placed a social responsibility on companies to educate illiterate workers in their employ. The new South Africa produced a population with high political and economic expectations, and a growing emphasis on equal opportunities, affirmative action and empowerment of the people. Yet an estimated 44% of the South African workforce was functionally illiterate.²⁰ Pressure was felt from the unions to address this inequality and provide ABE within company time. Paid time off for ABE was included in COSATU's renegotiated agreement with Volkswagen in 1995. The linking of education and

by the Centre for Education Policy Development, and the 1994 Implementation Plan for Education and Training written by the same body.

¹⁸ J.J.W. Aitchison, 'Literacy waits ... and waits ... for something to happen' (Pietermaritzburg, Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal, 1996), p. 1.

¹⁹ Harley *et al*, *A survey of ABE in South Africa for the 1990s*, p. 60.

²⁰ Pennington, *Literacy Training in South Africa*, p. viii

training through the proposed National Qualifications Framework (hereafter cited as NQF), moved education into the realm of industry.

Secondly, South African companies faced international pressure. World trends were for free trade. The superpower-dominated General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, renegotiated at the end of 1995, put increased pressure on countries to remove protective tariffs. South Africa had only a limited time span before faced with a totally competitive international environment. Yet productivity was comparatively low. In 1993, the World Competitiveness Report rated South Africa last out of fourteen comparable economies in the development of its human resources.²¹ Whilst Japan invested 10% of its payroll in education and training, and Europe 4-6%, South Africa invested no more than 1%.²² To compete internationally, South African companies needed to invest in their human resources. For flexibility, they needed a multi-skilled workforce. The gap between workplace demands and workforce skills was widening. Industry realised that before it could offer the skills training required to develop its workforce, and thus face the demands of an increasingly technological society and the pressure for world class performance, a basic education foundation needed to be in place.

This motivation encouraged companies to seek ABE programmes that went beyond reading and writing to incorporate work and life skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, planning and organisational ability, communicative ability, team work, and numerical and technological aptitude.²³

It is within this context that a study of the Umgeni Water ABE programme will be undertaken. Umgeni Water, a public sector industry involved in the provision of water, started a small

²¹ Ibid., p. vi.

²² Ibid., p. i.

²³ Ibid., p. 22.

scale, pilot literacy programme in 1989. This was aimed at its Peromnes grade 14-18 unskilled workforce. Some 32 learners participated in 1989, 42 in 1990, 42 in 1991, 50 in 1992, 61 in 1993, 229 in 1994 and 322 in 1995. By 1996, 342 learners were in class, company wide. Umgeni Water is an example of a typical parastatal under pressure to provide literacy to its workforce, in a country with an 18.5% illiteracy rate.

CHAPTER 1
UMGENI WATER IN CONTEXT

A HYPOTHESIS ON IMPLEMENTATION

Industry is currently the largest provider of ABE in South Africa. 48.7% of all learners attend classes provided by the company, municipality or parastatal for which they work. It is assumed that because of production demands, ABE programmes offered by the employer during work hours face unique pressures not applicable to NGO-run classes or state night schools.

Such is the context. This dissertation will look at the Umgeni Water ABE programme - an example of an apparently successful literacy programme operating within a typical parastatal, and facing the pressures inherent in a workplace operation. It is assumed that the Umgeni Water programme is predominantly successful for the following reasons. By the end of 1996, the programme had run in one form or another for eight years. The number of interested learners waiting for classes had been reduced to 13%. Positive feedback had been received from stakeholders. Umgeni Water enjoyed a sound reputation within the ABE world. Since 1993, the functional literacy rate within the target group had risen by 10%. Results in the national Independent Examinations Board (hereafter cited as IEB) examinations for 1996 indicated an 93% pass rate for English level three,¹ and a 63% pass rate for all levels.

¹ In the recommendations for a national qualifications framework for South Africa, there are eight levels. Level one (up to standard seven) has been broken into four sub levels, which are the levels referred to within the ABE field. Of these sub levels, level one is roughly equivalent to standard one, level two to standard three, level three to standard five, and level four to standard seven.

This dissertation will give a narrative account of the implementation of ABE within Umgeni Water from 1989-1996. It will divide the programme into four periods, according to the four co-ordinators who ran it - Stephen Camp, Rosemary Ward, Kim Weyer, and Sally Frost. Concurrent with the narrative, the implementation process followed will be extracted, highlighting both problems and successes. On conclusion of the narrative, generic lessons to be learnt from an Umgeni Water case study will be examined. Enabling factors needed to initiate a programme will be posited, guiding principles for implementation of a successful literacy programme in industry discussed, and independent, contextual influences on implementation highlighted. In conclusion, an ABE implementation model applicable to any workplace programme will be offered.

This study argues that the following enabling factors, which feed into each other, must be present before an ABE programme can be launched in industry:

- * reasons to implement
- * vision
- * funding

The following guiding principles are also posited as necessary for successful implementation of an industry-based ABE programme. These ingredients interact with each other and often occur simultaneously:

- * high calibre staff / leadership
- * directed, demand-driven approach
- * written policy
- * stakeholder consultation
- * management support
- * production environment catered for

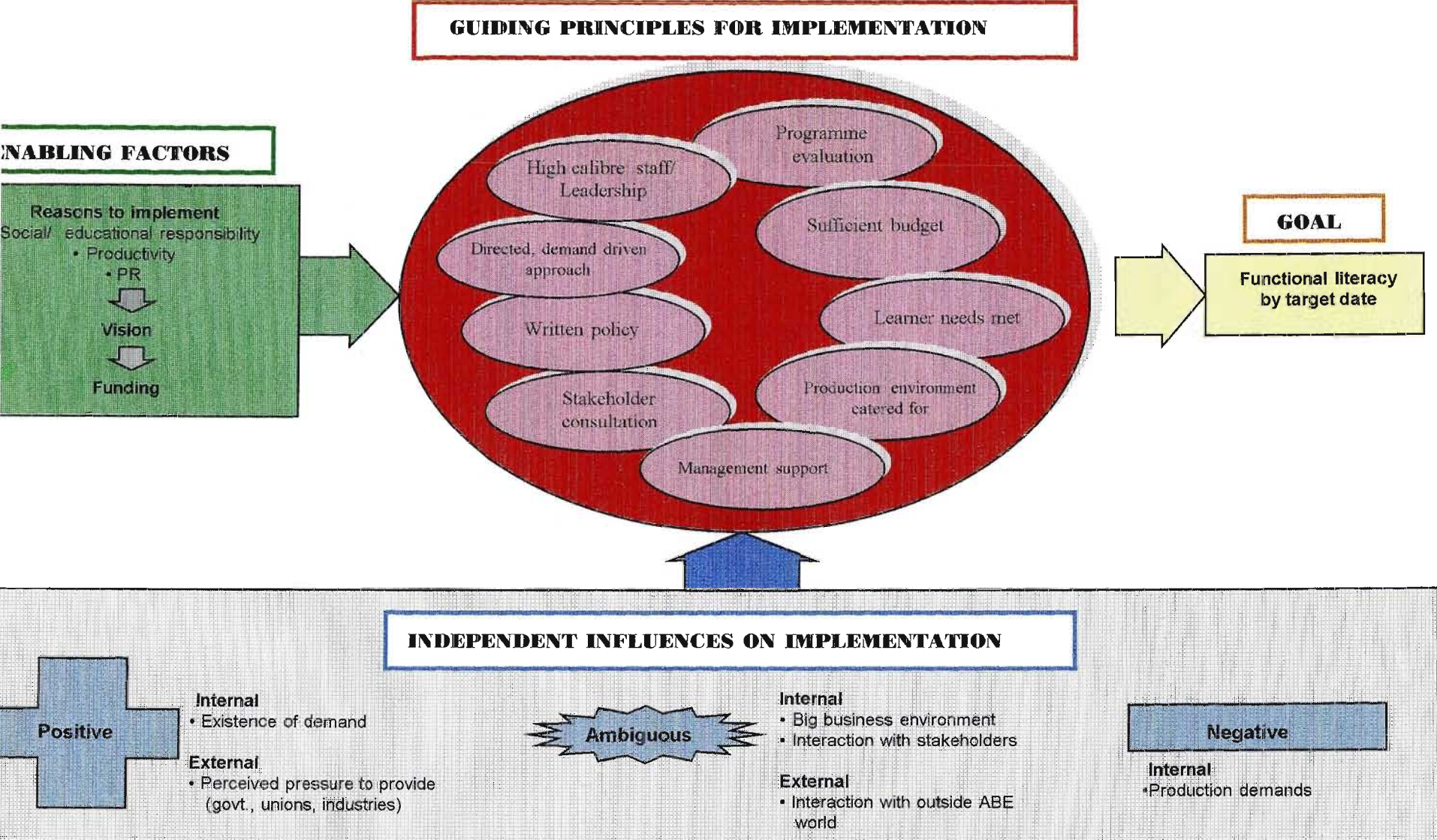
- * learner needs met
- * sufficient budget
- * programme evaluation

It is further posited that independent, contextual influences affect smooth programme implementation and goal acquisition. These are both internal and external to the organisation and include:

- * Positive: internal - existence of demand
external - perceived pressure to provide
(government, unions, industry)
- * Negative: internal - production demands
- * Ambiguous: internal - big business environment
- interaction with stakeholders
external - interaction with outside ABE world

Based on lessons learnt from the Umgeni Water experience, the following model of implementation for an ABE programme operating within a workplace context, is offered:

Figure 5: Model for ABE programme implementation in industry



AN ISSUE OF ACADEMIC RIGOUR

The issue of academic rigour is raised in that the author is the present co-ordinator of the Umgeni Water ABE programme. This dissertation acknowledges a fundamental investment in Umgeni Water literacy. However, this is all the more reason to pursue a position of stringent objectivity. Strict academic criticism has been followed to eliminate, as far as possible, bias and relativity in source interpretation.

Sources consulted include general secondary works on ABE; relevant Umgeni Water minutes, reports, publications and policy documents; questionnaires and interviews; and publications issued by BESA, the education consultants used by Umgeni Water.

Methodologies used in the study include descriptive reconstruction of the history of the project through reference to documents, figures and personal interviews; commentary on the achievements and problems of the project; and the drawing of generic conclusions with regard to a model for ABE programme implementation in industry, from the material extracted from a specific case study.

UMGENI WATER - THE ORGANISATION

Before a narrative of the implementation of ABE at Umgeni Water can be attempted, background on the organisation needs to be given. Water management in South Africa, prior to 1974, was under the jurisdiction of such diverse bodies as municipalities, water corporations, and the Department of Water Affairs. Such political arrangements went

against sound water catchment management. The need emerged for unified bodies to manage whole catchment areas.²

In 1974 the Umgeni Water Board was proclaimed by the Department of Water Affairs, according to the Water Act, as a statutory body. As a water authority, it acted as an agent of the Department of Water Affairs. A triangular catchment area of approximately 7 000 square kilometers was placed under its jurisdiction. Consumer bodies were invited to nominate Board members, from whom the Minister of Water Affairs selected eleven. The Board then appointed a staff of 22, who set up operations in the old Creamery building in Pietermaritzburg. The Umgeni Water Board was launched with a loan of R20 000 from the Department of Water Affairs, and a mandate to take over the water systems in its area of operation. Money to purchase the various waterworks, wastewater works, and their staff, in the Pietermaritzburg, Midlands and Durban areas, was borrowed from USA capital markets.

In the context of the privatisation of parastatals such as Telkom and Iscor, the question arose in 1987 as to what route the Umgeni Water Board should follow. It was decided to commercialise. Umgeni Water would operate as an independent body within the parameters set by the Water Act. The government remained the major shareholder. Umgeni Water would be self-financing, without grants or state subsidies for normal operational needs. Umgeni Water budgeted each year for revenue to cover estimated expenditure, plus a surplus which was deposited into an accumulated reserve fund. This fund was used to finance capital development, including major renewal expenditure, and reduced the need for external borrowing and the concomitant interest charges. Loan issues were consolidated into two 'megastocks' which were listed on the Gilts Board of the Johannesburg Stock

² Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, D. Van Deventer 'Umgeni Water' (Induction programme, Durban, 19 May 1995).

Exchange. Some 44% of Umgeni Water's annual operating cost went on interest and redemption of its loans. ³

Pim Golby consultants revised the organisational structure in 1987, and recommended that the Board fulfill a purely judicial, and not an executive, role. The Board met monthly under an elected chairman, with responsibilities to set broad policy, approve the annual budget, and monitor and exercise macro control. In keeping with this separation of the Board, the organisation's name was changed to Umgeni Water.

Full time management of Umgeni Water was provided by a Management Committee (hereafter cited as MANCO), consisting of six divisional directors and headed by the Chief Executive Officer (hereafter cited as CEO). MANCO met on a weekly basis and was responsible for the day-to-day executive management. Umgeni Water was thus an autonomous organisation which ran its own affairs and made its own decisions. Umgeni Water was divided into a coastal and inland region, and rearranged into six divisions. The backbone of the organisation became the Operations division, which functioned as the production unit, managing water and waste water. Scientific Services monitored quality control and research. Finance and Administration looked after money management, and Human Resources, people. New Works covered the creation of new infrastructure, and Corporate Services dealt with long term planning, public relations and information services. ⁴

By 1996, Umgeni Water employed some 1 300 people, with high-technology processes and equipment requiring increasingly skilled staff. Its assets were over R1.8 billion, with a

³ Umgeni Water, Public Relations Department, *Managing Water for Life* (In-house publication, 1996), p. 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

turnover of approximately R250 million per annum. It supplied potable water to more than three million consumers.

In January 1994 the previous area of supply of 7 000 square kilometers, centering around Pietermaritzburg and Durban, was expanded to approximately 24 000 square kilometers (a 36 000 square kilometer area is under current negotiation). The extended area spread from the Tugela and Mooi rivers in the north, the Mzimkhulu and Mkhomazi rivers in the south, the Indian ocean in the east, and the Lesotho border in the west. This made it the largest catchment-based water undertaking in southern Africa. Within that area Umgeni Water managed twelve storage dams, thirteen waterworks, ten waste water works, a number of pumpstations and an extensive network of tunnels, aqueducts and pipelines. ⁵

⁵ Ibid., preface

Umgeni Water as a bulk supplier of potable water, was not generally involved in final reticulation, except for involvement in some rural and semi-rural schemes. 296 106 million kiloliters of potable water were supplied during the 1995/1996 financial year.⁶ Large customers included the Durban City Council, the KwaZulu-Natal government and the Pietermaritzburg City Council. The tariff charged by Umgeni Water covered the technology, expertise, plant, power, equipment and chemicals required to protect, extract, store, transport, treat and distribute that water.

Whilst Umgeni Water supplied potable water to three million consumers, three and a half million people within the extended area of supply still had to make do with whatever water source was available to them. This left them open to possible water-borne diseases and pollution. Water Plan 2025, published in 1990, developed a strategy to supply potable water to all in established areas by 2005. This plan led to the development of the Rural Areas Water and Sanitation Plan (RAWSP).

Umgeni Water became involved in the installation of water schemes in rural and informal areas, which provided inhabitants with access to potable water via standpipes, water shops or individual connections. Capital was provided by Umgeni Water and the operating costs recovered from respective communities. Time was spent on marketing sanitation.

With effect from 1 March 1989, Umgeni Water was given the responsibility for monitoring, analysing and reporting on pollution within its supply area. The Scientific Services Division developed a water quality branch which constantly collected and analysed water samples from 550 sampling points in dams, rivers, water and wastewater works. Polluters were

⁶ Umgeni Water, Public Relations Department, *Umgeni Water Annual Report 1995-1996* (In-house publication, 1996), p. 26.

approached to discuss specific problems. If no solution was forthcoming, polluters were warned and the department of Water Affairs advised to prosecute.

The Umgeni Water Mission Statement spelt out the company's objective, namely, '... to manage water services in response to the socio-economic needs of the population in the organisation's region.' To satisfy that objective, the company's purpose was, '... to provide purified water cost-effectively to satisfy the needs of the community.' In doing this it would strive to be reliable, extend its provision, monitor and prevent pollution, develop its employees, manage its finance, take steps for the long term provision of water, foster relations with consumers, become leaders in the water industry, and maintain a standard of excellence.⁷

⁷ Umgeni Water, *Umgeni Water Mission Statement* (1988), p. 1.

CHAPTER 2

1989-1990: EARLY BEGINNINGS

REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Why did Umgeni Water implement ABE? Literacy training started on a small scale in 1989. What motivating factors were at play? Was ABE a public relations exercise? Was it socially motivated, general educational upliftment? Was an increase in company productivity the envisaged outcome? Can one separate these motives, or were they intermeshed? All three factors played a role in getting ABE off the ground and were not isolated from each other. Emphasis varied over time, yet each factor contributed to the general feeling that ABE was a constructive exercise to engage in.

Social/educational responsibility

Simple altruism played a significant role in initial implementation. For those involved hands-on, ABE was predominantly seen as a positive thing to do, of little immediate or tangible benefit to the company, but part of its social responsibility in a country with a high illiteracy rate.¹ The grade 14-18 workforce at Umgeni Water, which comprised 42% of all employees, was largely illiterate.² The organisation owed them an input in education. Its mission statement promised that Umgeni Water would endeavour to "... provide our employees in return for their efficient, productive and loyal service, with **opportunities for personal development**, stable employment and appropriate

¹ Personal interview with Stephen Camp, Pietermaritzburg, 26 May 1995.

² Peromnes grading system, grade 14-18 covering unskilled workers eg. general workers, shift attendants, security guards, maintenance assistants, drivers.

compensation, all on a non-discriminatory basis.”³ Finally, 1990 was International Literacy Year. Literacy was being promoted by the United Nations as an issue of import. The trend amongst large organisations such as Eskom and Umgeni Water, was to take note.

Productivity

Educational altruism was not the sole reason for ABE implementation. The move was also considered in the light of improved company productivity and international competitiveness (this argument increased in popularity as the 1990s progressed). A literate workforce would, hopefully, contribute towards improved safety, company loyalty, enhanced in-house communication and workforce promotability. Compared to international standards, productivity within South African companies was low. To improve productivity and meet the challenge of advancing technology, a multiskilled workforce was necessary. Before training was possible, an education foundation needed to be in place. A literate and trainable workforce could possibly make a company more productive and competitive. As a functioning business, with a product, water, to supply, it is unreasonable to assume that Umgeni Water implemented ABE for purely altruistic motives. The expected outcome of a more productive workforce was undoubtedly a motivating consideration.

Public relations

Whether conscious or not, the introduction of ABE was also a public relations exercise - an attempt by Umgeni Water to promote a favourable, progressive image both within

³ Umgeni Water, *Umgeni Water Mission Statement* (1988), p. 1.

and without the organisation. Union pressure on industry to provide ABE was increasing. NEHAWU (National Educational Health and Allied Worker Union), the recognised union within Umgeni Water, was affiliated to COSATU. At the first COSATU Education Conference in 1987, a resolution on literacy was passed, calling on COSATU and other progressive organisations to 'consider ways of addressing the huge illiteracy problem facing the working class in South Africa.' Amongst other demands, COSATU called for one national system of adult basic education, which would link with other educational and training opportunities and job creation projects. Workers should have the right to paid time off for education and training. Employers and the state must provide the resources for ABE programmes.⁴

The political climate was changing. The power of the unions was on the increase. It is doubtful that cold-blooded manoeuvring was consciously on the agenda of the CEO and other decision makers at Umgeni Water when the first literacy class was run. However, there was evidence of an underlying sensitivity to external trends. Other large parastatals such as Eskom were making moves towards literacy. Political currents and social pressure were felt. Umgeni Water introduced its Rural Areas Water and Sanitation Plan at this time, which directly focused on previously disadvantaged areas. Literacy was a similar scenario. It would be good for the public image of the organisation to be seen to be moving in the right direction.

⁴ 'A Summary of Cosatu's Guide to Adult Basic Education Programmes', in *Literacy Training in South Africa. A Critical Ingredient for World Class Performance*, ed. S. Pennington (Rivonia, S.P.A. Consultants, 1994), pp. 78-83.

A literacy programme introduced the possibility of black advancement. Lack of literacy and numeracy skills precluded the lower ranks from promotion. ABE directly addressed the needs of the largest sector of black employees within the organisation, namely, its unskilled workforce.⁵ By providing them with an education foundation, further skills training and internal promotion would become possible. Affirmative action was the political flavour of the month. It can be argued that ABE implementation represented a broad interpretation of 'affirmative action' by the Training and Development Department at Umgeni Water. As such, it could be used as a public relations tool.

Such were the underlying reasons for ABE implementation at Umgeni Water - an integration of educational altruism, productivity based skills training, and public relations. Implementation was a response to both internal and external pressure. Socio/educational responsibility was the most conscious motive, and was reinforced by the company's mission statement. Interwoven was an underlying belief that to enhance productivity, an education foundation was needed for further skills training; and a feeling that ABE would promote Umgeni Water's image, both within and without, as a progressive company.

LITERACY UNDER CAMP

Using Operation Upgrade

In 1988, Mr Stephen Camp joined Umgeni Water as a Training Officer under the Training and Development Manager, Mr David van Deventer. Before Camp's arrival,

⁵ Personal interview with David van Deventer, Pietermaritzburg, 30 May 1995.

contact had been made with Ms Cheryl Cameron of Operation Upgrade, the best known literacy programme in Natal at the time. It was Camp's job to get the programme going. Camp was new to the field, with no literacy experience or knowledge of what was available. He cited Operation Upgrade's reputation and popularity and his own literacy ignorance as his reasons for using their services. As an organisation he found them very supportive.⁶ It can be seen that external advice was sought when needed.

Initial classes

The initial idea was that Camp would do the teaching, but this proved to be not feasible because of his other job commitments and the geographical and numerical size of Umgeni Water. It was therefore decided to identify people who wanted to be teachers. For the outlying areas, Camp approached local schools in an attempt to recruit staff members as part time teachers. But he found headmasters suspicious, the political situation volatile, and people trained in active, learner-centred, adult education methods scarce.⁷ Two men were appointed as roving teachers, one of whom eventually had to be fired for poor job performance, absenteeism and drinking. Classes often suffered when teachers did not arrive for periods because of violence in the area. It can be concluded that finding reliable facilitators was a problem that beset the programme in its early days. Lack of competent facilitation hampered successful teaching.⁸

Classes were started at several venues throughout Umgeni Water in mother tongue (Zulu literacy for Zulu speakers) and beginner English (basic English literacy for English

⁶ Personal interview with Stephen Camp, Pietermaritzburg, 26 May 1995.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Literacy teachers at Umgeni Water were known as facilitators. This was taken to mean a 'catalyst' of learning, as opposed to a 'lecturer'.

second language speakers), with varying degrees of success. Approximately 32 learners attended literacy classes in 1989 and 42 in 1990. Learners attended four hours a week, two hours being company time and two, their own. The selection process followed was that van Deventer and Camp did extensive marketing first with management, and then with supervisors. If support was obtained, awareness raising was done with potential learners, who volunteered if they were interested. On the whole, classes worked better at the dams, waterworks and wastewater works, where learners remained on site, and this was where initial efforts were concentrated. Classes were started at Shongweni and Nagle dams, and at the Hammarsdale and Mpumalanga wastewater works. Efforts were extended the following year to Hazelmere dam and the Kwadabeka and Kwandengezi works. At the Pineside maintenance workshops, where teams of unskilled labour, or work gangs, went out for the day and needed their full complement of workers to get a job done, attempts to implement literacy classes proved 'disastrous'.⁹ The correlation between increased production demands and logistical constraints on the one hand, and decreased implementation success, is evident.

After about 18 months Grant Bruce, followed by Rosemary Ward, joined in 1990 on a part time basis to teach classes at the inland workshops at Mkondeni and at the HD Hill waterworks. Ward gradually assumed more responsibility. A class at Head Office was unsuccessful, an outcome attributed to the obstructionist attitude of the particular manager concerned. Without management co-operation classes did not run. With it, they succeeded. Management support was a factor that impacted on the success or otherwise of the literacy project.

⁹ Personal interview with Stephen Camp, Pietermaritzburg, 26 May 1995.

Management support

Camp found support from senior management (managers in charge of a department, eg. Water, Wastewater, Maintenance) to be generally strong in principle. They did not know the learners personally, however. The logistical impact of literacy classes was far removed from their day-to-day working lives. Their involvement remained at the level of handing out certificates and endorsing the concept. Some were more helpful than others, depending on their personal views on the value of literacy. Camp and van Deventer visited key individuals such as the inland regional manager, Bernard Chamberlin, to sell the concept.

Line management support

Amongst line management (supervisors and foremen in direct contact with learners) support appeared more erratic. It was Camp's impression that the climate amongst white employees at Umgeni Water in the late 1980s was one of ignorance of development needs and realities. An innovative idea to combat this was a three day cross cultural excursion, which exposed management to townships and African culture, and thereby broadened attitudes. On the whole, Camp felt that supervisors at the dams and plants were supportive, those at the maintenance workshops, obstructionist. It was supervisors who dealt with the real problems and inconveniences caused by literacy training, such as transport and loss of man hours. These were pronounced at the workshops. Camp pinpointed a lack of endorsement by line management as a problem that beset the programme when he was involved. This problem came with an industry-

based environment where line management, as supervisors of learners, controlled their movements.

Awareness raising / education method

In terms of awareness raising, Camp sent out circulars covering the concept of literacy classes, and talked about literacy to potential learners. This focus on awareness raising encouraged a bottom-up interest in the programme, as opposed to it being a purely top-down initiative, and contributed positively to programme acceptance and success. Advertisements for classes raised a fair amount of interest. Peer pressure between the different plants also played its part. In terms of pre-course screening of learners, no structured assessment method was followed, apart from a vague filtering into mother tongue and English along Operation Upgrade guidelines. Operation Upgrade followed the functional, Laubach approach to literacy. Literacy training should be 'useful', a means of uplifting people and communities and helping them to live and work better, and of enhancing citizenship and communication in the workplace.¹⁰ Laubach spoke of the 'disease' of illiteracy. Operation Upgrade stressed reading and writing, and the necessity of starting in the mother tongue.¹¹ It trained teachers in its methods, which emphasised letter formation using writing patterns, grammar, and rote repetition.¹² The programme did not cater for advanced learners, who often adopted the role of tutor-helper.

¹⁰ J.Aitchison, 'Adult Basic Education Policy', (Unpublished paper presented at NASA workshop, Pietermaritzburg, 19 October 1995).

¹¹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, C. Cameron, 'Addressing Illiteracy', (Unpublished paper presented at literacy conference, Durban, 26 September 1995).

¹² Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, letter from Operation Upgrade Executive Director to Umgeni Water Adult Education Co-ordinator, 21 December 1992.

Budget

That the Umgeni Water programme was seen as a small scale operation can be backed by the fact that no budget was set aside for ABE. Costs were kept to a minimum, namely, Operation Upgrade books, stationary, and salaries and transport of the part time teachers (actual figures were not available). This money came straight out of the Training and Development budget. This suggested that the programme was viewed as a short-term 'quick fix' that would not necessarily be a permanent part of Umgeni Water. Nevertheless, it was not an issue of no money. The programme did not stop because of lack of funds, as might have been the case in an NGO initiative reliant on fundraising. Freedom from financial worry can be seen as an inherent, positive factor of a workplace literacy programme.

1990 literacy seminar

Camp had embarked upon Operation Upgrade because it was the only programme he had been exposed to. When he attended a literacy conference in Johannesburg in 1990, organised by the Institute of Personnel Management, he was 'shattered and shocked at how naive [he had] been in [his] approach to literacy training.'¹³ He was amazed at the variety of literacy materials available, and began to suspect that the Operation Upgrade materials were 'paternalistic, condescending and dated.'¹⁴

It was this conference, and the influence of International Literacy Year in 1990, which inspired Camp to organise a similar literacy seminar in Natal. This was done in partnership with John Aitchison and the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) at the

¹³ Personal interview with Stephen Camp, Pietermaritzburg, 26 May 1995.

¹⁴ Ibid.

University of Natal, with whom he had had no previous contact, but whose expertise he now sought. The result was a one day literacy seminar, held at the Maharani hotel in Durban on the 26 September 1990. 120 delegates from both business and NGOs country wide, attended. The main focus of attention was problems faced by commerce and industry because of South Africa's level of illiteracy. The programme consisted of papers and workshops on subjects ranging from the identifying of literacy programmes to suit particular needs to the implementing of these programmes. Literacy organisations were invited to display their materials and outline their approaches.¹⁵ Umgeni Water sponsored the brochures and Graham Atkinson, the CEO, gave the opening address. Media coverage was substantial.

The 1990 literacy seminar revealed an intertwining of agendas in the world of Umgeni Water literacy. Because of its high-profile nature, it can be interpreted as an attempt by Camp to seek external literacy allies, as insight on his part into the importance of awareness raising in winning people over, and as an Umgeni Water public relations exercise in projecting a progressive image. The CEO's presence represented a public show of support for literacy from top management at Umgeni Water. It illustrated a relatively new trend within the company, namely, becoming involved in a public community project, and thus a response to a perceived external pressure to provide.

Redeployment of Camp - Project Water

With exposure to other programmes that this seminar offered, it was inevitable that Operation Upgrade lost some of its foothold within Umgeni Water. It was also this

¹⁵ The *Daily News*, 6 September 1990.

seminar which initiated the redeployment of Camp. At the seminar, contact was made with Robert O'Donaghue of the Natal Parks Board (hereafter cited as NPB), and Peter Esterhuysen of the Storyteller Group, which developed comic-form educational materials. These contacts sparked off an increasingly successful water education programme at Umgeni Water, which concentrated on developing water education materials and water test kits for communities and school children. Camp was officially released for a year to do water education.

Project Water (Water Awareness Through Educational Response) was a collaborative water education initiative developed by Umgeni Water, the NPB and the Wildlife Society. Through Project Water, a water series for adult learners was developed with the CAE. It appeared in 1992 in 'Learn with Echo', a weekly ABE supplement to the *Natal Witness* produced by the CAE. This series concentrated on aspects of water education useful to adult learners in their communities. Topics included how water gets to people's homes, the route of the Umgeni River, the water cycle, water pollution and pollution prevention, making water clean, water payment, and water conservation.¹⁶ This involvement with water education eventually grew into the establishment of the Umgeni Water External Education Services.

ANALYSIS

Impact

Literacy started at Umgeni Water because the Training and Development Department saw it as their social responsibility. It was viewed as a pro-active activity that would

¹⁶ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Project Water' (Water education literacy booklet, Pietermaritzburg, 1992).

primarily benefit the workers educationally. Spin-offs would be worker trainability and company public image. Were these expectations met?

Productivity

No formal quantitative or qualitative evaluation was undertaken during Camp's coordination. This proved a weakness in terms of measuring the impact of the programme. In terms of productivity, it was difficult to quantify the impact of literacy. No pre- and post-programme tests were done. Camp believed, however, that classes had a positive effect on company ethos, as this was the first time Umgeni Water had shown an interest in its unskilled staff. Such commitment was appreciated by learners, as was expressed by spokespeople at awards ceremonies.¹⁷

Public relations

In terms of the public relations benefit, Camp maintained that the literacy programme was the first social community investment programme at Umgeni Water, and as such was significant in marking the start of a new trend. Media coverage generated by events such as the literacy seminar, helped Umgeni Water project an image of a progressive large corporate organisation. Interaction with communities through contact with schools, also helped Umgeni Water's public image. Positive interaction occurred with other industries. At Hammarsdale, Umgeni Water hosted a workshop for local industries which led to classes being started at certain textile companies, which shared a literacy facilitator with Umgeni Water.¹⁸

¹⁷ Personal interview with Stephen Camp, Pietermaritzburg, 26 May 1995.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Educational upliftment

In terms of meeting the educational outcome, incompetent facilitation and disrupted classes impeded learning. Learner progress could presumably be measured to some extent by Operation Upgrade test results. No record of test results remain however. These tests would have given an indication of the educational benefit of the programme, one of the expected outcomes. Being new in a field monopolised by Operation Upgrade, Umgeni Water had little recourse to independent evaluation.

Inherent positive and negative influences

Positive

An analysis of the early beginnings of adult basic education at Umgeni Water reveals that the inherent positive influence of the **external pressure** to provide literacy, felt by industry, was used by Camp to his advantage. The hosting of the 1990 literacy seminar was an attempt to play on such pressure and gain external allies.

Camp's programme was essentially *ad hoc* in nature. Yet as a small-scale pilot, it was successful. This was because it revolved around another inherent benefit of a workplace programme, namely, **demand**. Classes were demand driven. They occurred in areas where there were many illiterates. Where learners expressed interest efforts were made to accommodate them, within the limitations of line management support. A demand focus compensated for the lack of long term planning. No long term budget provision suggested a 'wait and see' attitude regarding the future. So, too, did the fact that Camp was not a full time co-ordinator, but had literacy as only one component of his job description. However, as a pilot, a long term programme was not precluded.

Negative

Camp's programme suffered from two inherent negative influences in a workplace programme: **production demands**, and **ambivalent management support**. Classes were unsuccessful in those areas where production demands and logistical constraints were greatest, namely, the Pineside workshops. They did not run where management was unsupportive, as in the case of the Head Office initiative.

Implementation ingredients

Present

A **demand focus** has been mentioned as a necessary ingredient for implementation success. A **strong driving personality** emerges as a second significant factor. The personalities of van Deventer and Camp were essential in ensuring development. Van Deventer and Camp were energetic and innovative, with the ability to see where opportunity and need lay, and take action. Without enthusiastic personalities like theirs, ABE would have stayed on the back-burner, a pleasant but low priority. The Director of Human Resources at the time was, in fact, neutral if not obstructionist towards the whole process. He was resistant to Umgeni Water hosting a literacy seminar for International Literacy Year.¹⁹ Without the personality of Camp, with the supportive weight of van Deventer behind him, a literacy programme would not have been put in place.

Management support emerges as the third essential ingredient for implementation success, especially if a programme is implemented from the top down, as was initially

¹⁹ Ibid.

the case at Umgeni Water. The attitude of line management was a crucial factor in which classes worked and which did not. Where supervisors were supportive, obstacles such as transport, venues, shift workers, and co-ordinating gangs, were overcome. Where supervisors were obstructionist, such problems proved insurmountable and classes battled to get off the ground. Awareness raising and consultation can be linked to management support. They were essential ingredients in Camp's programme when it came to winning over reluctant individuals.

Absent

Implementation ingredients that were missing from Camp's programme were competent facilitators, a guiding policy and the meeting of learner needs. The **lack of competent facilitators** proved a particular hindrance to effective learning. Where calibre was low, and teaching methods prescriptive, classes failed. Where facilitators were reliable and creative, classes succeeded. Towards the end of Camp's period competent facilitators were employed with increased learning success.

The **absence of a guiding policy** and directed goal planning prevented the programme from expanding. There was no in-depth needs analysis or cohesive plan for implementation, apart from general awareness raising and the basic screening suggested by Operation Upgrade. The extent of illiteracy at Umgeni Water was not measured, nor were targets set. There was no organisational policy decision. No formal proposal was submitted to MANCO. Instead a report was lodged once classes had commenced. Unions were not consulted, nor was there any steering committee to

represent the interests of all stakeholders. Initial impetus came from the top. These factors precluded the programme from expanding at this stage.

Finally, **Operation Upgrade materials did not meet learner needs.** They were content based, and little attention was paid to numeracy, life or work skills. As Camp gained more exposure to literacy, he and facilitators such as Ward seem to have moved away from this beginning towards an attempt at developing their own materials and broadening the focus. It was in moving in this direction away from a content approach to a more process and needs orientated one, that the programme was influenced by the new co-ordinator, Rosemary Ward. A foundation had been established which could be built on. The extension of these early beginnings needs now to be examined.

CHAPTER 3

1991 - 1992: A PILOT PROJECT

Rosemary Ward co-ordinated Umgeni Water literacy during 1991 and 1992. The outstanding feature of her programme was its pilot nature. Literacy under Ward revealed strong, directed planning in the form of a pilot proposal, the meeting of learner and management needs through assessment and questionnaires, ABE awareness raising via a literacy seminar, and an education method focused around in-house, process orientated life and work skills. 1992 was treated as an extension of 1991. The end of 1992 saw Ward submit a proposal to MANCO for programme expansion, based on the success of the 1991-1992 pilot project.

Ward had been hired initially on a part time basis to take on one class, and reported to Camp. Once he was seconded to Project Water she reported directly to van Deventer and took over the reins of literacy. When Ward joined Umgeni Water in 1990, mother tongue classes were held at Hammarsdale, and Grant Bruce ran English classes at Mkondeni. Ward's impression was of a localized programme that was not particularly coherent. Literacy was seen as a 'nice thing to do' that met a need, but in no ways available to the whole workforce. No educational model was being followed.

LITERACY UNDER WARD

Reasons for implementation

In 1991 Ward submitted a proposal to MANCO for a coherent pilot literacy project. Ward directed her efforts at Umgeni Water's management committee as the highest

level of authority at Umgeni Water, and therefore the body most likely to make literacy happen. The pilot project proposal listed several reasons why Umgeni Water had become involved in literacy. Firstly, it had responded to the challenge issued by the United Nations during International Literacy Year in 1990, namely, to have every adult able to read and write before the year 2000. Secondly, it had responded to the need for literacy in KwaZulu-Natal. The CEO, Graham Atkinson, had challenged the Natal business community to help eradicate illiteracy at the Durban literacy seminar in September 1990. Ward argued, furthermore, that as the major international language and the language of the future in South Africa, it was important for people to have communication skills in English. She mentioned that requests had been received from workers themselves for English classes. Finally, Ward focused on the growing pressure from the unions for literacy in the workplace, and mentioned a nationwide literacy campaign to be launched by COSATU.¹ Reasons given by Ward for the implementation of ABE, primarily reflected social responsibility, then workplace demand and external pressure. In this they were similar to Camp's.

Directed planning

The 1991 pilot project proposal revealed the impact of a new guiding personality on programme direction. Ward's idea was to start small with a fresh pilot project, gain experience, and when a firm foundation had been laid, extend the programme to all the plants.² She proposed that she be employed as co-ordinator. Her job description, written by herself, covered the co-ordination of a needs analysis, evaluation and

¹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward, 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A proposal for research, development and implementation' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 1991), p.1. See appendix 1, p. 201.

² Personal interview with Rosemary Fortheringham (nee Ward), Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

screening of learners, structuring of classes, consultative and regular meetings with management, presentations and reports, establishment of mini-libraries, evaluation of the programme, academic and educational research, practical research in the plants, and the creation and development of a literacy course designed specifically for Umgeni Water.³ This suggested a vision of a professionally established and consultative literacy programme in which stakeholders were encouraged to take ownership, and an awareness that to get there, it would be best to start small. It implied that Ward had learnt from experience that planning was an ingredient absent from Camp's programme which had prevented it from expanding. If she intended to expand in future, directed goal setting was necessary.

An in-house programme

What is noteworthy about Ward's 1991 pilot project proposal, is that she recommended the development of an 'English literacy and numeracy programme'.⁴ There was a need to develop in-house numeracy materials as 'a prerequisite for further skills training.'⁵ This represented a broader interpretation of ABE than previously exhibited at Umgeni Water. In proposing a programme 'unique' to Umgeni Water, Ward adopted a 'go-it-alone' approach. Essentially, Ward aimed to develop modular, Umgeni Water specific materials, for example, modules on safety at Umgeni Water, Umgeni Water forms, and tools. Specific modules could be included or excluded according to the needs of the group. Thus ingredients of Ward's implementation approach were flexibility and meeting learner needs. She felt an in-house programme moulded around learner and work

³ Ward, 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A proposal', p. 6.

⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

demands was more likely to meet company needs, and so moved away from Operation Upgrade.

Ward elaborated on the reasons for, and advantages of, a course developed specifically for Umgeni Water. 'Existing courses are orientated to the Transvaal or Cape workforce and conditions,' she argued, and 'have been outdated by recent developments in South Africa.' She believed that teaching was more effective when the material related directly to the learner's own work and daily life. 'It is far more relevant for the learner to practise filling in Umgeni Water forms than standardised forms,' she argued. A home grown literacy programme could 'include company forms, signs, notices, procedures and the newsletter as an important component.' Literacy provided workers with an overview of the company and its role in the wider community.⁶ Ward's emphasis on the benefits of literacy in the workplace indicated a sensitivity to workplace pressure. A literacy programme run during company time won support if it demonstrated the ability to provide participants with useful work skills and information.

1991 and 1992: pilot consolidation

Some 42 learners participated in the pilot project during 1991, ten from Mkondeni workshops, ten from HD Hill waterworks, eighteen from the Hammarsdale and Mpumalanga wastewater works, and four from the Kwadabeka wastewater works. Mother tongue instruction at Hammarsdale, Mpumalanga and Kwadabeka was a carry over from the past, and was run by part time DET teachers using Operation Upgrade.

⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

Ward started two English classes at Mkondeni and one at HD Hill.⁷ Learners were recommended by their managers - the same selection process followed by Camp. At Mkondeni, only learners from the same work gang attended literacy classes because gangs travelled away from site to work. At other plants, learners were chosen from different gangs because the gangs remained on site. This was decided in consultation with management, and represented an attempt to cause as little disruption to the workplace as possible.

1991 was predominantly successful as a pilot project. Ward argued for high learner motivation, commitment and support of regional management and foremen, clarity on selection criteria, a work orientated syllabus set in consultation with those involved, and the successful completion of the Mkondeni and HD Hill English classes. Problems had arisen, namely, poor attendance on Friday afternoons, mixed literacy levels, only one session per week hampering learning, and older learners not taking responsibility for their own learning.⁸ Accordingly, Ward recommended that 1992 be treated as 'an extension of the Pilot Programme,' so as to monitor effectiveness.⁹ Ward proposed that she teach only one class and train local teachers. This indicated that she anticipated the growth of the programme, and her own role to change to that of co-ordinator. Accordingly in 1992, English classes continued at Mkondeni, and the mother tongue at Hammarsdale. One beginner, intermediate and advanced English class each, were started at Emergency and Construction Services (hereafter cited as E&C). A part

⁷ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward, 'Background on Literacy in South Africa' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 1992), p. 3.

⁸ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, November 1991, p. 1.

⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

time facilitator, Louise Mensing, taught these. Approximately 50 learners went through the programme in 1992. Classes still focused on the inland region and were localised. Plans to start classes at Darvill wastewater works and at Mill Falls pump station at the request of management, did not materialise. Screening did occur at the outlying plants and in the coastal area as the year progressed. This indicated that Ward intended the pilot to expand.

Assessment

Ward realised the need for learner assessment. This, however, was rudimentary and only done on programme participants. Ward used the Learn and Teach English placement test. This tested skills such as recognition of words by sight, understanding of common words, sentence recognition, knowledge of simple English structures, comprehension, and writing for communication. It started simply and increased in difficulty. Learners began by reading common signs and labels, and matched pictures and words. The test ended with simple comprehension and creative writing.¹⁰ Ward believed its methods to be sound. However, the test could only serve to divide learners into three very broad categories. Its use represented a realisation by Ward that professional placement of learners according to literacy ability helped meet learner needs.

Ward used the Learn and Teach placement test to stream her classes. 'Basic' covered illiteracy to standard three. 'Intermediate' catered for people with four to five years of schooling, with limited confidence and communication skills in English. 'Advanced' was

¹⁰ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'English Assessment Test' (Learn and Teach, 1991), pp. 1-17. See appendix 2, p. 209.

for 'promising candidates selected for their potential,' and was seen as a foundation for further practical and technical skills training. It would enable the 'advanced learner to turn a job into a career,'¹¹ evidence of the notion of career pathing. Classes ran for three hours a week for 120 hours, or approximately one year. Owing to the small nature of the pilot, learners at different levels were grouped into one class at Mkondeni and at HD Hill. This was not the ideal learning situation. The negative impact it had on the programme was reflected in that some learners dropped out. An ingredient for success was correct learner placement.

Education method

In terms of educational philosophy, Ward argued for 'functional literacy', defined as 'practical education which provides communication and life skills, giving the individual the ability and confidence to cope, perform and contribute in daily life.'¹² Ward believed adult education to be quite different from primary and high school education. 'There is a need for the course to be practical and to give immediate benefits and skills, for example the filling in of forms, to ensure learners' motivation.'¹³ In the in-house magazine, *Flowmeter*, she highlighted features of the programme. Recognition of prior learning was the foundation for teaching. Emphasis on communication skills improved understanding and avoided conflict. Live tuition and participatory role play also featured.¹⁴ Visual tuition, for example flashcards and literacy 'comic' books, were an 'ideal bridging medium between an oral and a written culture.' As a post-literacy follow-

¹¹ Ward, 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A proposal', p. 3.

¹² Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, July 1991, p. 1.

¹³ Ward, 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A proposal', p. 4.

¹⁴ Umgeni Water, Public Relations Department, R. Ward, 'English Literacy and Development Classes', in *Flowmeter* (In-house magazine, August 1991).

up, Ward mentioned the establishment of mini-libraries, run by the learners themselves.¹⁵ These suggestions indicated a learner-centred, communicative, needs-based philosophy of education, and a realisation that post literacy follow-up would be necessary to maintain and consolidate learning. 'I am trying to inculcate a shared responsibility for learning,' Ward said, 'which is so important.'¹⁶

Despite Ward's educational beliefs, learners themselves placed stock in a traditional language based method of teaching, most likely because they were used to it. 'At the request of the students, the focus of the [Mkondeni advanced] class is strictly language based, as opposed to life skills,' she reported.¹⁷ For her advanced class Ward spoke of comprehension and grammar lessons to 'promote a greater degree of articulacy.'¹⁸ Dealing with learners who had a smattering of a traditional DET education as their benchmark brought its own challenges for a progressive facilitator.

With regard to resource material available on the market, Ward proved eclectic rather than dismissive. The literacy comic strip, *99 Sharp St: The River of our Dreams*, from the Storyteller Group, proved very successful with mixed literacy classes because of its visual emphasis. Learn and Teach magazine publications, English Resource Unit workbooks (hereafter cited as ERU), English Literacy Project publications (hereafter cited as ELP), English Language Association publications, and the Survival English course from the Genmin English For Adults series (EFA), were also used. These market materials were adapted freely for the Umgeni Water environment. Contact with

¹⁵ Ward, 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A proposal', p. 4.

¹⁶ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, June 1992, p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., July 1992, p. 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., July 1991, p. 1.

Genmin indicated a sensitivity within Umgeni Water to what other industries were doing regarding ABE, and a susceptibility to perceived external company peer pressure.

Awareness raising

Ward displayed a keen understanding of the importance of awareness raising in ensuring stakeholder co-operation and interest. The Public Relations Department proved helpful and published regular articles on the programme in *Flowmeter*. Displays were put in the library. Ward made a scrapbook of the literacy programme and gave it to the CEO and directors in order to keep them informed. Award ceremonies were held at the end of the year, and *Learn with Echo* ran a twelve week series on Project Water.

In 1992 Ward ran a literacy seminar in Pietermaritzburg in conjunction with the Centre for Adult Education. This was billed as an information and resource sharing seminar. Topics covered the issue of literacy, research, development and implementation. A literacy fair allowed consultants to display their materials. Over 50 delegates attended from companies and NGOs.¹⁹ As with the earlier seminar in 1990, the Chief Executive Officer demonstrated his support by giving the opening address. 'That I am here today and that this seminar has been convened bears witness to the fact that the issue of literacy has not, and will not, disappear overnight, and that it remains a priority for all of us who wish to shape and create a future South Africa,' he said.²⁰ The literacy seminar gave Umgeni Water ABE important external publicity and ensured that it remained on the agenda internally. Such awareness raising often served to convince

¹⁹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Literacy Seminar: 4 June 1992' (seminar programme).

²⁰ Ibid., (Opening address by Umgeni Water Chief Executive Officer, Mr Graham Atkinson).

ambivalent supervisors. One such foreman took the trouble to compliment Ward on the conference and the literacy programme.²¹

A very positive influence was the attitude of the Chief Executive Officer, Graham Atkinson. Atkinson took a great interest in the programme and gave it his support, to the extent of sending Ward to New York for an international literacy conference in 1992. That she was sent suggested that the programme was seen to be successful, worth investing in, and Ward herself doing a good job. Atkinson created the right attitude and context for a good programme. Graham Ward, Director of Operations (the division from which most learners came), likewise endorsed the programme fully.²² In industry, the support of senior staff was extremely beneficial in raising awareness and lending credibility to literacy.

Meeting management needs

In terms of implementation procedure, how consultative was the pilot project initiated by Ward? There was no joint management in terms of a body such as a stakeholder steering committee. The programme was driven by the Department of Training and Development. As far as senior management and line management were concerned, Ward tried to be as consultative as possible. She realised that this was a necessary ingredient for programme success. Ward and van Deventer held regular meetings with inland regional management, 'in order to ensure commitment and support to the programme.'²³ This input bore fruit in terms of co-operation and positive feedback from

²¹ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, June 1992, p. 2.

²² Personal interview with Rosemary Fotheringham (nee Ward), Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995..

²³ Ibid.

certain key players. Bernard Chamberlin, Inland Regional Manager, was 'interested and supportive'. Emergency and Construction (E&C) management and line management expressed the wish for further literacy training at E&C and expansion into the coastal region.²⁴ Some managers and supervisors tended to see ABE within the confines of work related skills, however, and their enthusiasm was qualified against production needs and time constraints.

1991 management needs analysis

In September 1991 Ward sent out a needs questionnaire to all managers and supervisors involved (six managers, twelve supervisors).²⁵ In this needs analysis, Ward elicited perceptions of literacy, what the disadvantages of a functionally illiterate workforce were, what the major benefits of a literacy programme would be, what language supervisors spoke to their subordinates in, what work modules managers and supervisors wanted covered in classes, input on hours, practical problems experienced with classes and suggestions for improvement, means of measuring and certifying learner progress, degree of consultation and feedback wanted, and input on the positive impact or otherwise of the programme to date.²⁶ At the completion of the needs analysis Ward commented, 'I feel that the needs and expectations of Regional Management with regard to the literacy programme have been clarified, and everyone is satisfied with the way the programme is proceeding.'²⁷ This needs analysis represented

²⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁵ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward, 'English Literacy Programme Questionnaire' (Unpublished management needs analysis, Pietermaritzburg, 30 September 1991). See appendix 3, p. 210.

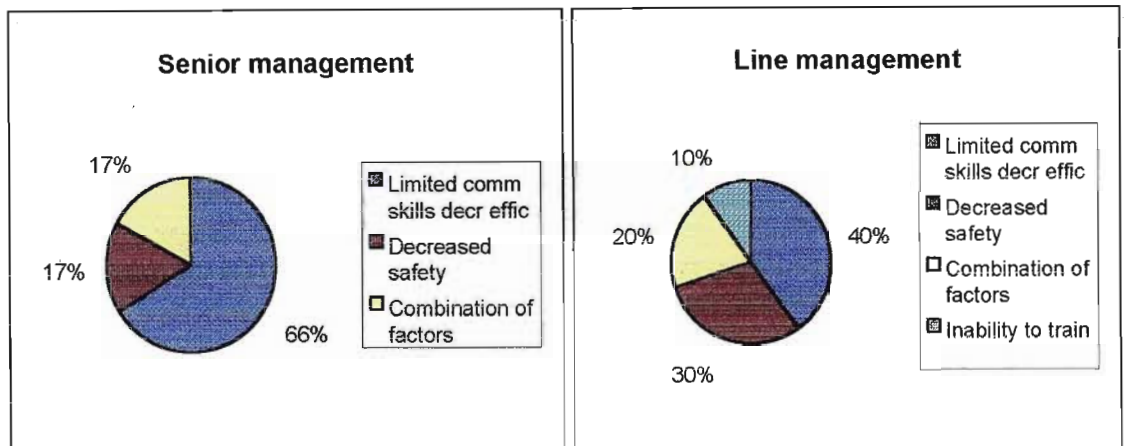
²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, November 1991, p.1.

an effort at management consultation and involvement in order to ensure their support, and therefore the success of the programme.

In their responses, the majority of both management and line management saw limited communication skills leading to decreased workplace efficiency, as the major disadvantage of illiteracy.

Figure 7: Management perceptions - major disadvantage of illiteracy²⁸

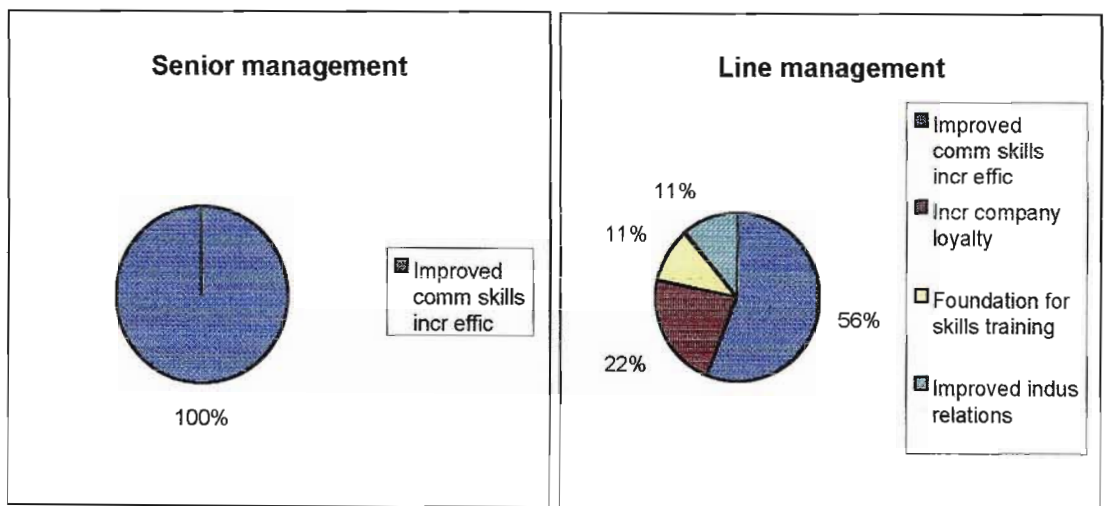


Conversely, respondents agreed that improved communication skills leading to increased work performance was the major benefit of a literacy programme. In eliciting these responses, Ward gave several suggestions to choose from. Interestingly, most related to literacy in the workplace. Suggestions focused around safety, trainability, company loyalty, industrial relations and productivity. The implication was that Ward saw work skills as the best route to follow if she wished to convince suspicious people

²⁸ Data for figures 7-10 comes from feedback received from Ward, 'English Literacy Programme Questionnaire', pp. 1-4.

with work demands on their minds, that a literacy programme was in their best interests. It indicated that she was aware of the negative impact of production pressure on successful implementation. The fact that 'improved self esteem' was not ranked by any of the respondents as a benefit, reinforced the argument that supervisors and managers were more interested in how literacy could directly help job performance.

Figure 8: Management perceptions - major benefit of literacy



Benefits perceived by management correlated with those put forward by Ward in her pilot project proposal. She mentioned a 'better understanding amongst members of the workforce and, therefore, improved work performance and efficiency.' She argued that 'industrial relations will be enhanced leading to a sense of belonging and loyalty to the company.' Literacy laid the foundation for further skills training, economic expansion and international competition. Perhaps what Ward was really doing, was catering to the expectations of her audience, namely, Umgeni Water senior management. She displayed an understanding that an industrial environment produced an inherent

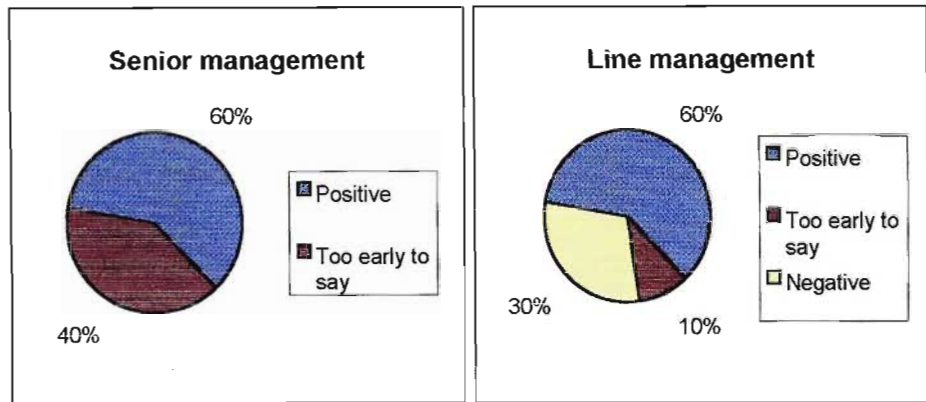
demand for a trainable workforce. This need she used to her advantage in defending literacy. When she argued that literacy enhanced the 'self-respect, confidence and quality of life' of illiterate people,²⁹ she was playing on the social responsibility expectation of Umgeni Water.

Analysis of the management and line management September 1991 needs questionnaire revealed that 60% of respondents reported the positive impact of literacy classes on the workplace. This figure suggested qualified support. Certain managers mentioned specific discussions they had had with individuals in English, and the fact that 'in general the staff that have taken the course appear to be very much more motivated.'³⁰ Supervisors also pinpointed specific people who had improved their communication skills, as well as more confidence displayed at group meetings, and the ability to fill in leave forms. Whilst no managers were explicitly negative, 30% of supervisors were. A possible explanation for the difference in management and line management attitudes was that line management was more directly involved in the day to day inconveniences, and might therefore have been more negative. They were essentially told what to do by their managers. In addition, some supervisors might have felt intimidated by the thought of their immediate subordinates receiving training and development. However, not all supervisors were negative. The majority seemed positive. Supervisors who were negative represented a problem inherent in industry which needed to be accommodated.

²⁹ Ward, 'English Literacy Programme Questionnaire', p. 2.

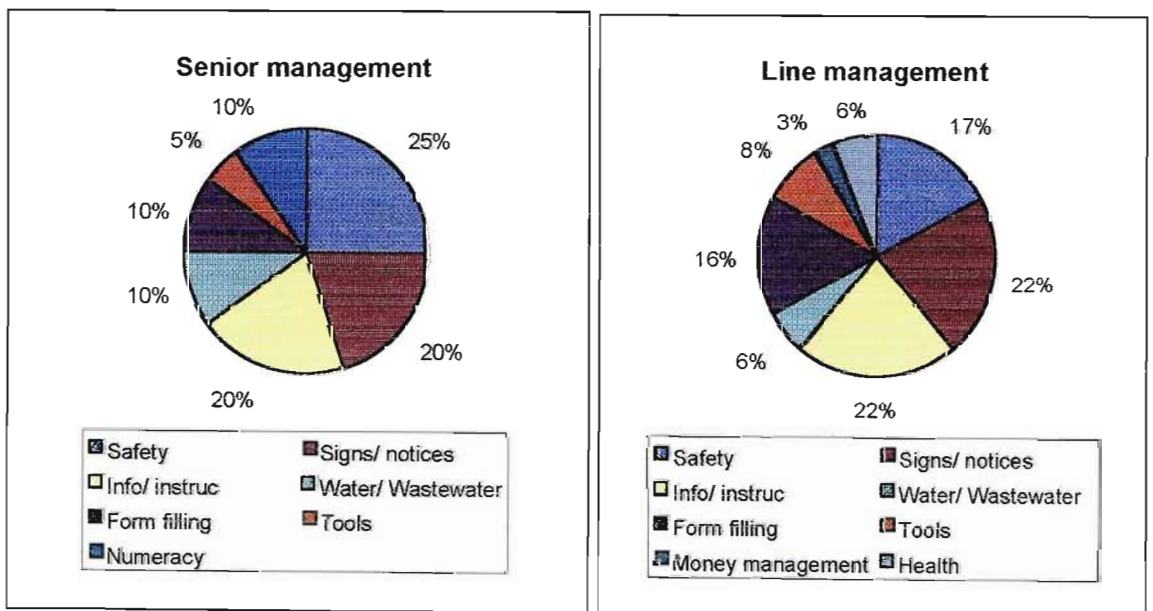
³⁰ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, L. Munger, Manager Emergency and Construction Services, response to 'English Literacy Programme Questionnaire'.

Figure 9: Management perceptions - ABE impact on the workplace



In the management needs questionnaire, Ward requested, and received, significant input with regard to programme details. Respondents requested work modules on information and instruction, form filling in, signs and notices, and safety. Such requests indicated the influence of a workplace environment. Modules covering life skills such as money management received very little support. Health, the environment, and civic and community life received none - again, a reflection that the focus of industry lay with workplace skills.

Figure 10: Management perceptions - lesson content wanted



All respondents were in favour of a formal evaluation of the programme, and felt that certification of learners was worthwhile and should be recognised as further training. In terms of hours, the proposal of three hours per week for 40 weeks was accepted, and the alternative proposal of six hours a week for 20 weeks, strongly rejected. This suggested that both management and line management were concerned about the impact of classes on production time, and saw three hours a week for a longer period, as more manageable and the lesser of two evils. The majority of respondents requested regular report back meetings with the co-ordinator, which indicated a level of interest and desire to be involved in the programme.

When it came to experiencing practical problems, responses did not vary significantly between management and line management. Approximately one third mentioned experiencing problems, and two thirds, not. Suggestions for improvement were not abundantly forthcoming. One manager suggested a special vote to pay for lost time, another that management select the applicants. One supervisor suggested classes be held in learners' own time. These suggestions indicated that the predominant concern from this group was a loss of man hours. They indicated to Ward that production pressures needed to be accommodated.

Meeting learner needs

A significant stakeholder in any literacy programme is the learners. Were they consulted at Umgeni Water? Evidence suggests that implementation was top down. That the programme still ran without significant learner input as to whether they wanted literacy, whose time it should occur in, or who should go, suggested that management,

rather than learner support, was the crucial ingredient in initiating literacy. Learners sat on no democratic forum. Unions, as representatives of the learner body, received no mention in any correspondence. Some shop-stewards attended classes and could voice their opinions through that route, and Ward worked closely with the Industrial Relations Officer, Hendrick Zulu. Class representatives were elected, 'to ensure participation at all levels,' and 'to anticipate any union interest in the Literacy Programme.'³¹ Thus Ward was aware of the necessity of consulting learners and the possible increase in union power. But for the meantime, such people were not involved in the level of broader decision making.

Having said this, Ward was nevertheless extremely aware of the importance of meeting learner needs. At lesson content level, learner input increased. Ward saw the value of canvassing learners on their expectations of literacy training. Each student had their own record card showing their particular needs, job designation and literacy level. Assessing learner literacy needs, however, proved problematic. Ward found that learners battled to articulate their needs beyond a broad sense of what would be nice. Learners were not aware of what skills they were lacking because of illiteracy.³² As a teacher she had a feeling of what their needs were, and combined these with what she felt learners needed to know. To bring focus to the learning experience, Ward encouraged learners to write down specific goals of what they wanted to achieve in classes, which she then attempted to meet.³³

³¹ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, July 1991, p. 2.

³² Personal interview with Rosemary Fotheringham (nee Ward), Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

³³ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, November 1991, p. 2.

1992 learner needs analysis

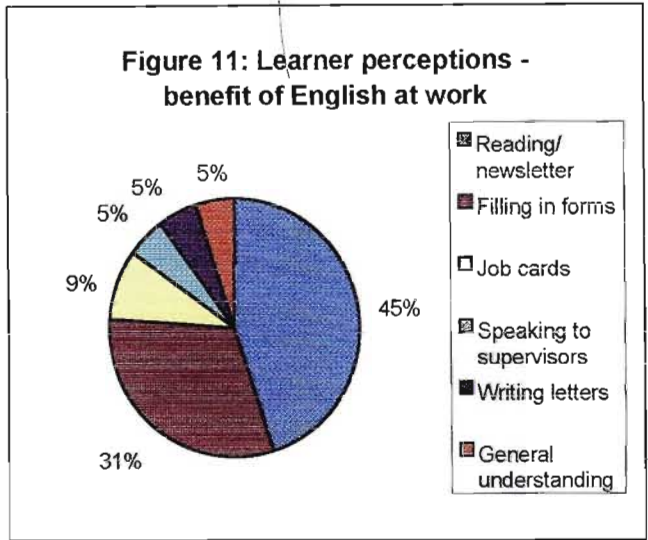
When the new programme commenced at the beginning of 1992 (Ward's second year as co-ordinator) she led all her classes, both beginner and advanced, through a thorough needs questionnaire.³⁴ This was 'to prioritise what should be taught.'³⁵ Ward worded the questionnaire in such a way that she suggested alternative answers to a posed question, which learners ticked. This method had been used with the management questionnaire as well, and was potentially problematic. Participants were being fed information, which caused potential misrepresentation in results. However, Ward's motive for providing suggestions was to stimulate thought amongst respondents.

Ward focused on how learners perceived English to help them at work, at home, and in the community. This suggested that she aimed to develop a life skills orientated ABE programme, that would benefit learners in all three areas of their lives, not just at work. In response to a question on their predominant use of English, learners at all levels replied that they used English to read, write and speak, both at home and at work. At work, learners pinpointed the ability to fill in forms and read the newsletter. Other suggestions by Ward such as filling in job cards, speaking to superintendents, writing letters and general understanding, were not remarked on specifically.³⁶

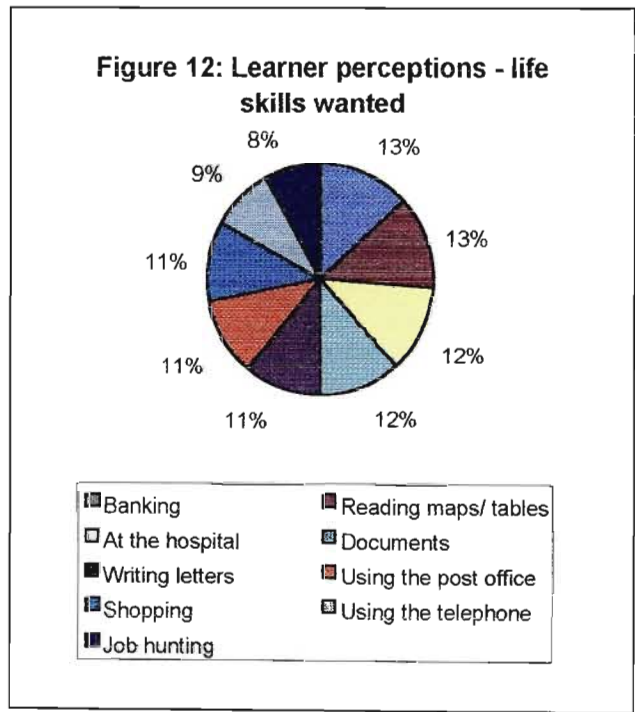
³⁴ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward, 'English Literacy Classes' (Unpublished learner needs analysis, Pietermaritzburg, 1992). See appendix 4, p. 214.

³⁵ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, report for 1991, p. 1.

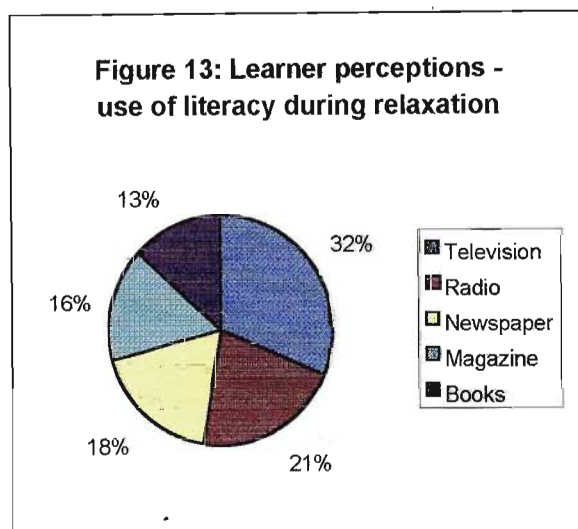
³⁶ Data for figures 11-14 comes from feedback received from Ward, 'English Literacy Classes', pp. 1-4.



In terms of life skills learners hoped to gain, participants placed equal emphasis on writing letters, coping with hospital visits, reading tables and maps, going to the bank and to the post office, using the telephone, going shopping, reading documents and job hunting. This wide range of suggestions given by Ward in effect led to indecisiveness. Respondents ticked everything, and caused inconclusive results.



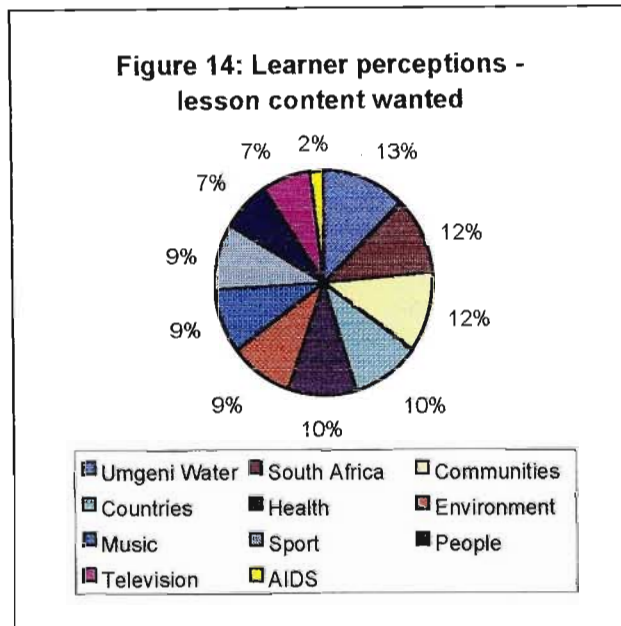
For use of literacy during relaxation, learners rated watching television over listening to the radio. This reflected the fact that it was easier to understand English visually than solely through listening. In addition, the survey was done with an urban based group of learners, who had access to television. A rural survey might have produced different results. Whilst the more advanced learners mentioned reading the paper, beginner learners did not, most likely because they had no literacy skills at all.³⁷



Ward attempted to discover what reading material learners enjoyed. *Bona* and *Learn with Echo* were the most read. However, Ward cued responses by providing a list of alternative publications, which would have influenced results. Ward elicited what information learners wanted in class, which was evenly distributed between television, sport, music, people, health, environment, communities, South Africa and Umgeni Water. Thus learner expectations went wider than simple work skills, which was the dominant expectation of management. Learners seemed more interested in how

³⁷ Ward, 'English Literacy Classes'.

literacy would help them in the broadest sense and in all their interactions in their lives, whether at home or at work.



Expected learning outcomes emerged from the needs questionnaire. Learners expected to be able to read newspapers and magazines and understand the television. They expected to be able to talk to and understand English people. They wanted to be able to give directions, ask for prices when shopping, and read measurements. They wanted to read accounts and fill in forms. They felt English could help them in 'dangerous situations', in that they could talk to policeman and read road signs. They also felt it would enable them to find a job.³⁸ These comments revealed the expectation that English would help the individual in terms of broad life skills. Such an expectation

³⁸ Ward, 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A proposal', appendix 2, 'The learners speak'.

contradicted the predominantly workplace focus of management. It indicated the necessity of canvassing the expectations of all stakeholder groups.

One problem Ward encountered was unrealistic expectations whereby learners expected to become literate overnight. This led to drop outs. Ward learnt from experience that unrealistic expectations from stakeholders were an inherent problem that beset literacy programmes. To avoid disappointment and negative attitudes, she tried to specify what progress learners could realistically expect.³⁹

ANALYSIS

Impact

What impact did Ward's programme have on the various stakeholders? Although mooted, no formal evaluation took place. As with Camp, quantitative measurement was difficult. Apart from the needs analyses conducted by Ward, evaluation was of a general qualitative nature, and took the form of comments and anecdotes from learners and line managers. These, however, Ward found helpful in giving insight into prevalent attitudes and expectations. The fact that learner and management comments were generally complimentary, indicated that the programme's impact within Umgeni Water was positive, expected outcomes were being met, and stakeholders approved.

Umgeni Water literacy was strong in terms of its practical focus which gave immediate benefits and skills. It was needs orientated, both in terms of learners and the

³⁹ Personal interview with Rosemary Fotheringham (nee Ward), Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

organisation. It had work modules, as well as a broader life skills component. Ward argued for the successful impact of literacy on the Umgeni Water workplace. She claimed that worker confidence had increased. 'Foremen have reported a marked increase in the learners' use of English.' She said that literacy classes had sparked a broader interest in Umgeni Water amongst learners. For example, learners had requested and received an induction session from the company's Industrial Relations Officer.⁴⁰ This involved an explanation of Umgeni Water's core business, organisational structure, conditions of employment and benefits offered. Company-orientated motives for implementation were being fulfilled.

In terms of the educational impact of classes, Ward believed that learners reacted very positively and valued the opportunity to learn. Ward tried to make communication and life skills the cornerstones to increase individual self confidence. The programme was learner centred and respected and used learner knowledge as the foundation for teaching. Learner feedback suggested needs fulfillment. One learner attributed his promotion to his progress in English.⁴¹ Such a perception, whether warranted or not, improved the programme's image. Another learner said that now he could 'give people directions and tell them how to get to Johannesburg.' Yet another said that at work, 'I can speak to the operator.' Someone mentioned that now he could 'talk English to people in the road. English can be a status symbol. English helps me understand the TV.' One learner said that he could understand better what English people said. Another said classes had helped him to read and write in English, fill in forms, go to the

⁴⁰ Ward. 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A Proposal', pp. 4-5.

⁴¹ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, July 1992, p. 1.

bank, speak to his boss, fill in his accounts, talk on the telephone, and speak.⁴² Such feedback suggested that learning was occurring and the educational outcome of the programme was being met.

Inherent positive and negative influences

Positive

Ward harnessed positive influences inherent in a workplace environment and used them to her advantage. She hosted the 1992 literacy seminar. Such public exposure played on the **external pressure felt by Umgeni Water to appear progressive**. She increasingly focused her programme around work skills, which tapped into the **demand** for such training in an industrial environment. This approach won support for literacy.

Negative

What problems did Ward face during her time as co-ordinator that were inherent to an industrial programme? Those encountered were similar to those faced by Camp. Ward mentioned the **negative influence of a small group of obstructionist managers and supervisors**. Owing to selection at manager discretion, an unfortunate incident occurred at Hammarsdale. A manager refused a group of learners re-entry into classes because, 'they are only brushcutter operators, and literacy will not help them in their work.'⁴³ Such treatment inevitably effected learner attitudes negatively. 95% of managers and supervisors supported the programme. The 5% who did not wielded disproportionate power. From this context the realisation grew for Ward that a

⁴² Ward, 'The Umgeni Water English Literacy and Numeracy Programme: A proposal', appendix 2, 'The learners speak'.

⁴³ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, April 1992, p. 1.

formalised ABE policy as a blueprint for the programme, was a necessary ingredient to deal with antagonism. With no policy, everything would continue to rely upon management's discretion.

The second inherent problem faced by Ward was **lack of continuity**. Handover of a programme brought problems. Momentum slowed. Ward found it difficult to make a fresh start, with inherited tendencies and attitudes. She gave the example of two part time DET school teachers at Hammarsdale. It was her belief that their success with adult learners was limited by a very narrow, traditional, teacher centred, paternalistic outlook to education. As she said about one of the men in question, '[he] is very thorough, but his DET school teaching background is very apparent. He is not an adult educator in the facilitator / trainer sense.'⁴⁴ Yet she had to make do with him because she had inherited him.

Like Camp, Ward experienced the inherent problem of **workplace pressures**. Attendance and punctuality were poor. Many learners worked shifts. To come to class after a night of work required extra commitment. Classes occurred on a Friday afternoon at management's request. Whilst the least productive time for work, the same applied for literacy. 'The difference between teaching a class first thing on a Monday morning and last thing on a Friday afternoon is very apparent,' Ward said.⁴⁵ Learners were tired, meetings were often scheduled for this time, and payday often fell on a Friday. 'While I am aware that Friday is an ideal day for English classes in terms of company time, I think it should be noted that it does often clash with meetings and other

⁴⁴ Ibid., September 1991, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, June 1992, p. 1.

activities,' wrote Ward. 'In one four week period at Mkondeni I have only managed to hold one class and then only five out of ten learners attended.'⁴⁶ Such inconsistency was bound to have a negative impact on learning. Because classes were only held once a week, the situation was exacerbated. What was evident was a tension between company needs in terms of production hours, and literacy needs in terms of learning time.

Ingredients for success

In spite of problems, much was achieved by Ward. What implementation ingredients were responsible for this? Firstly, Ward pinpointed **stakeholder consultation**. This was not formal in terms of a steering committee, but took the form of canvassing opinion through personal contact and questionnaires. Consultation regarding policy focused more on management and line management. Implementation was therefore still top down. But learners were consulted with regard to lesson content. Consultation and canvassing of needs was one of the most notable features of Ward's period.

'**Commitment and support of regional management and foremen** for the programme,'⁴⁷ was pinpointed as a second ingredient for success by Ward. Meaningful consultation was responsible for this. Selection criteria and programme focus were established in discussions with management. Work specific modules were accordingly developed.

⁴⁶ Ibid., October 1991, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Thirdly, **learner needs were met**. At the request of learners the nurse at Umgeni Water spoke on Aids. An induction was carried out by the Industrial Relations Officer, a representative from the in-house magazine explained its production, and learners learnt about the rural water and sanitation scheme. A basic computer literacy class was held for advanced learners, and a trip was taken along the route of the Umgeni River to cover water education.⁴⁸ Two learner booklets were published, *Lifestories from Umgeni Water*,⁴⁹ and *Happy Days at Christmas: Feasts, Braais and Plans for the New Year*.⁵⁰ These encouraged motivation and pride in learning.

Fourthly, Ward **planned and directed her programme around demand** and was flexible in her approach. Learning from Camp's experience with Operation Upgrade, Ward opted for the 'go it alone' route. With increased experience, knowledge of needs, and confidence, Ward took Umgeni Water towards an in-house programme with uniquely developed work modules. A change was evident in educational philosophy, away from a content based approach, towards a needs based, process orientation. At Umgeni Water, literacy was broadening into numeracy, lifeskills and adult basic education.

In keeping with a planned approach, Ward's programme was **pilot** in nature. At the end of 1992, the Umgeni Water literacy project consisted of three part time teachers and

⁴⁸ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, November 1991, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward (ed.), *Lifestories from Umgeni Water* (Umgeni Water, Pietermaritzburg, 1992).

⁵⁰ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward (ed.), *Happy Days at Christmas: Feasts, Braais and Plans for the New Year* (Umgeni Water, Pietermaritzburg, 1991).

one part time co-ordinator. It was 'small, low key and low budget.'⁵¹ Ward aimed to establish a small programme and make sure that that worked successfully and was respected. With a firm foundation, steps could then be implemented to expand. The fact that Ward successfully motivated for herself to become a full time co-ordinator, revealed that the programme had gained more permanence than in Camp's day, when literacy was only one of his duties.

Finally, as in Camp's period, a **driving individual** profoundly affected implementation. Ward was far-sighted, dedicated, logical and thorough in her approach, and thus laid a firm foundation for her programme. She was sincere in her efforts to consult managers and supervisors, which won them to her cause. Like Camp, she had the **backing of a supportive manager** in van Deventer. He was the best channel to follow when she needed to get things done.

In sum, Ward's period of co-ordination revealed a gradual professionalisation of the programme, and a change in goals and perceptions of literacy. From being a 'nice thing to do', literacy training moved into the realm of meeting learner and company needs. Literacy was no longer seen as a charity, but rather as a definite field of education to be done by professionals. This trend was directly attributable to the influence of Ward. Ward's influence extended further when she proposed the expansion of Umgeni Water literacy in a document submitted to MANCO in September 1992. This proposal, and the growth of ABE into a company-wide programme, need now to be discussed.

⁵¹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward, 'Recommendations for the Direction of the Umgeni Water Literacy Programme' (Unpublished typescript submitted to MANCO, Pietermaritzburg, September 1992), p. 1.

CHAPTER 4

1993-1994: EXPANSION

At the end of 1992, Ward completed her second successful year of the pilot project. Publicity had been achieved from the 1992 Pietermaritzburg literacy seminar and Ward's attendance at the world literacy conference in New York. The three new classes at Emergency and Construction (E&C) had run smoothly. Consultation and custom-designed work modules had paid off in terms of winning the co-operation of reluctant supervisors. With only 50 learners in 1992 the programme had remained small. However, there was an indication of increased demand for classes. The Coastal Manager, Dave Nozaic, was enthusiastic about implementing classes in that region.¹ Large scale expansion of the programme was required. Groundwork for expansion was laid by Ward. In September 1992 she submitted a proposal to MANCO recommending a literacy needs analysis, an ABE policy and forum, and the use of the external ABE consultants, Basic Education and Skills for Adults (BESA). The new co-ordinator, Kim Weyer, implemented this process. She screened learners and established a data base, implemented an ABE forum and policy, and used BESA's advice. The result was a successful company-wide literacy programme.

WARD'S GROUNDWORK FOR EXPANSION

Directed planning - the 1992 MANCO document

In September 1992 Ward submitted a recommendation to the Umgeni Water management committee (MANCO) about the future direction of the literacy programme.

¹ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, January 1993, p. 1.

This indicated her understanding of the importance in industry of harnessing senior support. She explained the current position of the programme as being small, effective and a boon to internal and external public relations. However, it had gone as far as it could with available resources. 'There are clear indications that the demand for more classes and a large scale expansion of the Programme will be required in the near future,' she continued, and cited the example of the new Darvill works, which had recently been acquired from the Pietermaritzburg municipality and which had a substantial number of illiterate workers.² Ward's argument made use of positive influences inherent in industry, namely, demand and sensitivity to public image.

Recommendation - needs analysis

Ward made three proposals to MANCO. Firstly, she proposed that a thorough needs analysis be conducted throughout Umgeni Water to determine 'the Zulu and English literacy levels of our grade 13 -18 employees.' This, she argued, would enable planning and 'quantify the current status and the scope of the total training need.' Literacy evaluation tests and needs analyses had in the past concentrated only on employees enrolled in classes. By motivating to test all employees, it was evident that Ward hoped to expand and realised the importance of having a thorough literacy data base as a foundation for a good literacy programme. A proposal for universal screening indicated that Ward placed no faith in company records of employees' educational levels. As she said, 'people who were at school twenty years ago may

² Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward, 'Recommendations for the Direction of the Umgeni Water Literacy Programme' (Unpublished typescript submitted to Manco, Pietermaritzburg, September 1992), p. 1. See appendix 5, p. 218.

have a certain standard of education but may not have retained many literacy or numeracy skills.’³

Recommendation - adult education forum and policy

Ward’s second proposal was for the establishment of a representative adult education forum, to formulate a guiding policy for the programme. Neither a steering committee nor a formal policy for the adult education programme existed. One can conclude that experience pointed Ward in this direction. Ward had always practised consultation. The difference was that she now proposed that stakeholder input have equal weight, and that the programme no longer be top down. The proposed working group for adult education ‘would represent the full spectrum of the Umgeni Water departments and personnel who would be affected by the Programme.’⁴ Ward mentioned managerial and supervisory staff, potential learners, union representatives, the Training Department, Information Services, Industrial Relations and Public Relations as potential candidates. The forum would be chaired by the Manager of Training and Development. Ward realised that for a large scale programme to have legitimacy and support, equal input was needed from managers and learners. An effective steering committee would pass ownership of the programme onto all stakeholders. It was imperative, however, that this body be fully representative.

Ward recommended that the forum be mandated to draw up a proposal for an adult education policy which would be submitted to MANCO for approval, and that the forum monitor the literacy programme closely to ensure that it met company needs. Thus she

³ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

envisaged it as a body with real powers, and not simply cosmetic. This represented a change from previous practice whereby the co-ordinator did everything. 'By creating such a Forum we would be following the example of companies such as Genmin and Eskom who are two of the leading companies in the field of Workplace Literacy,' argued Ward.⁵ Thus Ward appealed to MANCO's image of Umgeni Water as a progressive company, and their susceptibility to pressure from external trends and to what other parastatals were doing.

Ward had realised that with expansion a formalised, negotiated policy would be necessary to deal with contentious issues such as criteria for selection of candidates, duration of the programme, venue and time of classes, the programme's budget, evaluation to determine whether the needs of Umgeni Water were being met, and the content of the programme being taught. These were issues Ward had had problems with in the past. Ward's strength lay in learning from past frustrations and adapting accordingly. A policy was an attempt to have universally accepted guidelines which could be referred to if problems in implementation arose.

Recommendation - appointment of BESA

Ward's final recommendation to MANCO covered the appointment of a literacy consultant. She recommended the appointment of BESA, an ABE consultancy aimed primarily at industry who offered implementation advice, facilitator training and materials. Her reasons were as follows. She cited a 1990 HSRC survey which recommended *Breakthrough* and English For Adults (EFA) as good learner centred materials. These

⁵ Ibid.

were marketed by BESA. She argued that BESA's client list was extensive and using them would help standardise ABE in South Africa. These arguments played on MANCO's susceptibility to external trends. BESA claimed that *Breakthrough* and the EFA series were competency based. An output focused, industrial environment such as Umgeni Water would have been susceptible to such an argument. *Breakthrough* and EFA were touted as communicative, active, experiential materials that provided a continuum from mother tongue into English. This concurred with Umgeni Water's criteria for good adult education practice. BESA claimed that the EFA series taught work-related and functional English for general life skills, and could be customised for the water industry. By mentioning this, Ward played to the demand at Umgeni Water for work skills. BESA offered a numeracy course as an adjunct, and claimed high credibility with the unions and experience in the implementation of large scale literacy programmes.⁶

Using outside advice

When Ward took over the reigns of literacy, her original idea had been to research what was available and develop an ABE programme specific to Umgeni Water. This represented a 'go-it-alone approach' and a reaction to her negative experience with Operation Upgrade. As time went on, however, she had realised the cost of re-inventing the wheel and of being totally dismissive of outside providers. Self sufficiency was fine for small numbers, but for a bigger programme, structure and outside support was needed. Her recommendation to MANCO to use BESA illustrated this realisation. In terms of implementation models, Ward's proposal indicated a return to outside advice,

⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

but with a difference. In future Umgeni Water literacy would be implemented as an in-house programme with external materials, training and support, tailored to Umgeni Water's specific needs.

How had Ward come into contact with BESA? When she realised that the Umgeni Water literacy programme was ready to move forward and expand, she researched the market to see what was on offer. She rejected Operation Upgrade as 'unsatisfactory' and having no orientation around needs. JOLT, a commercial programme developed by INTERMAN, she rejected as too expensive and because it did not offer mother tongue.⁷ Ward first came into contact with BESA at a literacy seminar in Johannesburg. At that time BESA was the biggest commercial ABE consultant. Kevin Janssens and Jenny Rodriguez of BESA presented their approach to Ward. She was impressed with the materials they marketed, their experience in industry and their model for implementation. She quickly decided to go the BESA route, as being the best support service available.⁸

Ward's recommendation to MANCO represented an interesting combination of lessons she had learnt from experience, and the influence of BESA ideas. In its implementation model BESA strongly pushed learner screening, a formalised policy and a representative forum. It was exactly these ideas that Ward proposed. Thus BESA's influence was evident. However, such issues had long been on Ward's mind, and were lessons she had learnt and conclusions she had come to on her own through

⁷ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, May 1992, p. 1.

⁸ Personal interview with Rosemary Fotheringham (nee Ward), Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

trial and error. BESA's appeal for Ward was that it corroborated her own insights and gut feeling about ABE implementation.

Importance of the co-ordinator

Umgeni Water adult basic education was set irrevocably along the path of expansion. Yet the process was slow. From the time that Ward submitted her proposal to use BESA to MANCO in September 1992, to the first forum meeting in July 1993, ten months passed. Why such a time lapse? Ward attributed much of the delay to management inertia. To pin people down to dates and times proved an uphill battle. Ward scheduled 20 January 1993 as the first meeting of the ABE forum, but this date passed unmarked owing to MANCO procrastination.⁹ It seemed that amongst senior management, ABE was viewed as a positive thing to do, but a side priority for an industry whose prime business was water.

A major cause for the delay in progress can be attributed to the resignation of Ward. Ward left Umgeni Water in March 1993. Reasons for her departure can be attributed to frustration at the difficulty in getting the forum and policy off the ground, an insecure contract status, and the lure of jobs in the external ABE world (she started working at the CAE). She herself stated that she felt she had laid a good foundation, the programme was at a point where a new person could take over, and that she needed the challenge 'of dealing with other groups with less resources.'¹⁰ Her departure meant that immediate impetus was lost. Classes stopped.

⁹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, letter from Umgeni Water Adult Education Co-ordinator to Director of BESA, 11 November 1992.

¹⁰ Personal interview with Rosemary Fotheringham (nee Ward), Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

Loss of impetus indicated the extent of Ward's influence. In a literacy programme, a competent co-ordinator was the vital component for success. One full time individual had to drive the process forward and put other ingredients in motion. Moreover, loss of impetus pointed to the negative effect of co-ordinator turnover. Continuity was broken. Yet so long as a co-ordinator was on a low status contract position, turnover occurred. For a successful programme in industry, a secure and well-remunerated position needed to be offered to the co-ordinator. Ironically, the position Ward filled at the CAE was a contract one. This suggested that in her departure other frustrations and motives were at play. Nevertheless, a securely employed co-ordinator would be less susceptible to negative pressures inherent in industry such as management indifference, production pressure and bureaucracy, as well as to poaching by the external ABE world.

LITERACY UNDER WEYER

Ward's replacement, Kim Weyer, took over co-ordination of the Umgeni Water ABE programme in March 1993 with a one month period of overlap with her predecessor. In September 1992 MANCO had passed Ward's recommendation to do a literacy needs analysis of grade 13 - 18 employees (the unskilled workforce), to set up a forum to draw up a policy, and to adopt the BESA guidelines. But not much else had happened. In January 1993 Ward had drafted an ABE policy for Umgeni Water. BESA, who serviced Eskom, had lent her the Eskom policy document as a resource.¹¹ Ward had also begun the process of assessing literacy levels throughout Umgeni

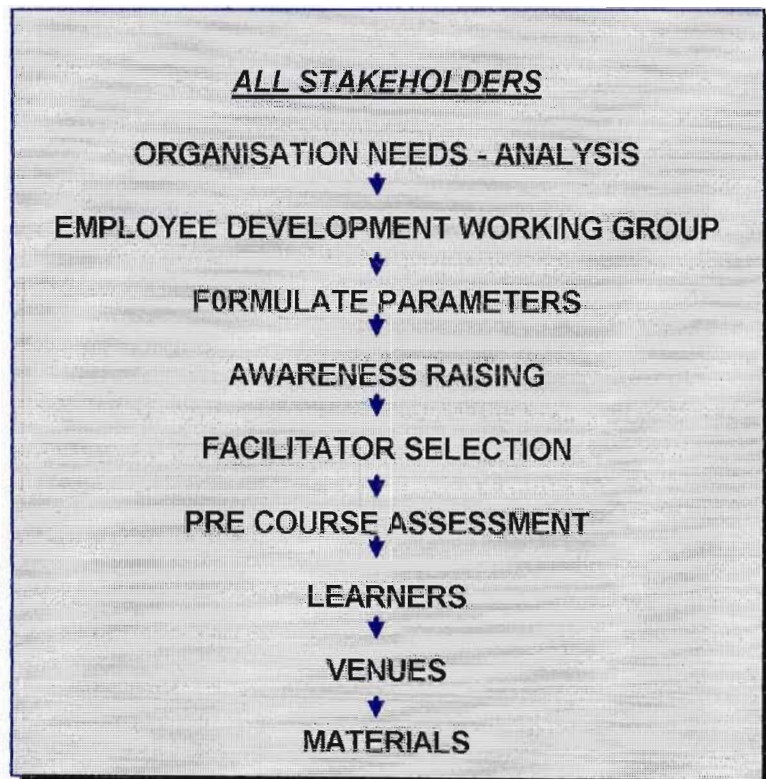
¹¹ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, January 1993, p. 2.

Water. Thus Weyer arrived at the very early stages of BESA implementation. Weyer was new and enthusiastic. Once she had found her feet, she built on Ward's foundation and carried the programme forward into a new era of expansion.

The BESA influence

How exactly did BESA recommend a company implement ABE? BESA used the following diagram to explain its strategy: ¹²

Figure 15: BESA guidelines - the implementation process



BESA's approach revolved around consultation. Management, union representatives, line management and the workforce were all equally involved throughout the whole

¹² Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'BESA' (Published marketing brochure, BESA, Johannesburg, 1994), p. 4.

process. As a first step, BESA recommended an organisational ABE needs analysis. This involved discussions with all parties. Following this a steering committee that represented stakeholders equally should be elected to guide the programme. The steering committee would draw up an ABE policy so as to formulate parameters. Issues to be addressed were the reason for introducing ABE at the company, programme aims, course levels, targets to be reached, hours and access to classes.

Once a policy was in place, BESA recommended large scale awareness-raising amongst all stakeholders, in the form of presentations, posters and brochures. Facilitators should then be selected using BESA guidelines, and be sent on a BESA training course. This involved approximately ten days' training in either mother tongue or English second language teaching methods, using the *Breakthrough* and EFA materials, and included class visits and refresher workshops by BESA staff.

The next step recommended by BESA was pre-course assessment of learner applicants using BESA screening tests. These would place learners on a continuum of language learning, from *Breakthrough* (mother tongue literacy), to three levels of EFA - Survival English (standard three / ABE level two), Conversational English (standard five/ ABE level three) and Operational English (standard seven / ABE level four). During assessment issues such as progression, programme commitment, personal goals and career pathing would be discussed. Learners should be given the results of screening and be allowed to enrol voluntarily. Once screening was complete, the logistics of classes, times, venues and stationery could be finalised. Materials should be ordered

through BESA. The programme could then be implemented. The role of the steering committee would be to monitor it closely.¹³

BESA stressed consultation, stakeholder co-operation, needs assessment, a continuum of language learning, and directed planning. Umgeni Water experience had shown these to be the vital ingredients for successful implementation. Hence the choice of BESA. Weyer followed the BESA implementation model closely. As a novice in ABE she accepted BESA's advice and guidelines. She worked closely with BESA's director, Kevin Janssens, throughout her period at Umgeni Water. Weyer herself believed in the importance of consultation and stakeholder ownership.

Awareness raising and data capture

Upon arrival, Weyer set herself three goals. Her first was to complete awareness raising and assessment of all potential learners in the inland and coastal regions and collate this information into a literacy data base. She realised the necessity of correct screening and data capture for directed planning. This was an extensive task and kept Weyer busy for much of 1993. The target group at Umgeni Water were the approximately 530 unskilled grade 14-18 employees, who were spread over a large geographical area. For the most part, Weyer worked alone. These employees needed to be visited, spoken to, and assessed.

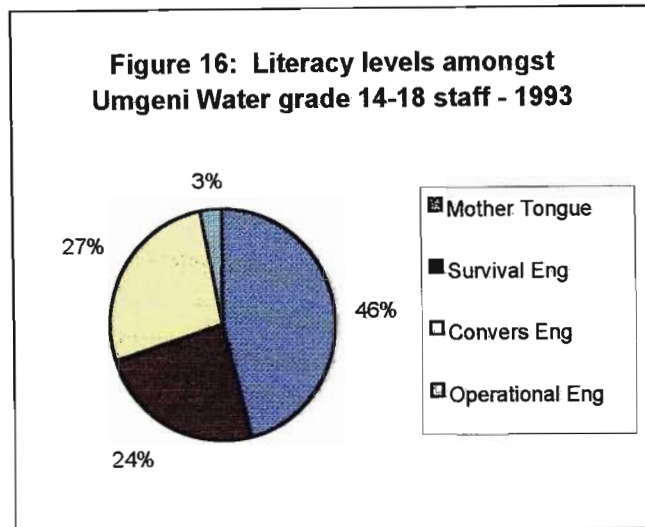
¹³ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'BESA: Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET): Information and Guidelines' (Published marketing brochure, BESA, Johannesburg, 1995), pp. 17-19.

Weyer used the BESA screening tests. In these mother tongue learners were assessed for basic word recognition, reading and writing. To speed up the process, only learners with less than a standard one qualification were assessed for mother tongue literacy. The rest were screened for English, with the option of being screened for mother tongue if need be. English assessment involved speaking, listening, reading, understanding and writing components. Test content focused around everyday English usage, and increased in difficulty. Learners were screened for minimum competence at a particular level, and placed into courses accordingly.¹⁴ Awareness raising in which Weyer explained the programme and language continuum, dispelled unrealistic expectations and answered questions, had a positive impact on learner long term commitment.

By the beginning of 1994 a literacy data base for Umgeni Water was largely complete. The programme gained a professional foundation from which to function. Literacy statistics were available to pilot and target learner progress. Statistics showed that in May 1993, of the 530 grade 14 - 18 employees (42% of all Umgeni Water employees), 97% (514) were functionally illiterate or below ABE level three (standard five). Of the grade 14 - 18 group, 46% required mother tongue literacy, 24% required Survival English (ABE level two), 27% required Conversational English (ABE level three), and only 3% were beyond the level of functional literacy and required Operational English.¹⁵ An intensive, company-wide ABE programme was necessary to tackle the problem revealed by these statistics.

¹⁴ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Assessment' (Copyright ABE assessment tests, BESA, Johannesburg, 1992).

¹⁵ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, K. Weyer, 'Statistics on grade 14-18 Umgeni Water Employees - May 1993' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, May 1993), p. 1.



When asked of her chief impression of her period of co-ordination, Weyer remarked upon the amount of awareness raising she had had to do to educate management and line management about the literacy need at Umgeni Water and the benefits to be achieved.¹⁶ This comment pointed to the fact that awareness raising was a constant and on-going process. Both Camp and Ward had channelled their energies into convincing managers and supervisors about literacy. Yet Weyer had to start all over again. Umgeni Water literacy co-ordinators displayed a sensitivity to a problem inherent to workplace programmes - ambivalent management interest; and an understanding that the best way to keep ABE on the map was to promote its image actively. Weyer found face to face contact worked best. Enthusiasm for literacy did not develop automatically. It had to be nurtured. Motivation had to be continually stimulated. The co-ordinator could not afford to become complacent, otherwise recurring complaints such as work hours lost and transportation were bound to reappear.

¹⁶ Personal interview with Kim Weyer, Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

Stakeholder involvement - an ABE forum

The second goal Weyer set herself was to establish an ABE forum. This goal represented an attempt to create representative stakeholder involvement and therefore co-operation. To convene a forum proved a challenging task, bogged down by bureaucracy. MANCO had accepted Ward's proposal to establish a forum in September 1992, but kept stalling when it came to setting a date to get all stakeholders together. Weyer inherited this problem. Both Ward and Weyer found Charles Crooks, the Human Resources Director, indifferent.¹⁷ Progress was bound to be slow if one's divisional representative on MANCO liked the idea of ABE in theory, but was not committed to the fight. Weyer eventually turned to the Director of Operations, Graham Ward, and presented him with all the data. He proved extremely helpful and got the ball rolling.¹⁸ It was Weyer's experience that some form of senior support was vital for success.

Promotional launch - 27 July 1993

The first Umgeni Water adult education forum meeting was held on 27 July 1993. This can be seen as an awareness raising exercise and the official launch of the new company-wide, consultative process. Approximately 100 guests were invited by Human Resources of whom 50 attended. From the delegates a smaller working forum was to be elected. Delegates included divisional directors, managers, regional managers, superintendents and foremen in the Operations Division (where most learners came from), Training and Development and Industrial Relations personnel, shop stewards and union representatives, potential learners, and BESA staff. These groups

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

represented the major stakeholders. The forum marked the first official acknowledgment of union involvement by Umgeni Water.

The forum was opened by Charles Crooks, Director of Human Resources. He was followed by a presentation of the draft policy by the Director of Operations, Graham Ward. This represented MANCO's ratification of the process. Rosemary Fotheringham (nee Ward), was invited to give background information on the Umgeni Water ABE programme, and Weyer spoke on current developments within the programme. This represented general awareness raising. Kevin Janssens of BESA was called upon to share his experience with other industries, which can be interpreted as an attempt to win people over by external pressure. Training and Development Manager, David van Deventer, then got down to the business of the day and chaired the final session on negotiating an ABE policy.¹⁹ The decision was taken to constitute a smaller working forum which was mandated to finalise the policy document.

A working forum

Following the success of the large forum, it was Weyer's task to call for nominations for the smaller working forum and convene its first meeting. Accordingly, nominations were received, and the official Umgeni Water Adult Education Forum met on 24 August 1993. This was a milestone considering the year long battle against workplace bureaucracy and indifference. The forum consisted of twelve members - Bernard Chamberlin, Regional Manager, Inland; Peter Bahrs, Water Manager, Coastal; Ravine Gareeb, Administration and Contracts Controller, E&C; Louis Pienaar, Technical Clerk, Mill

¹⁹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Agenda for the Umgeni Water Adult Education Forum' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 27 July 1993), p. 1.

Falls; Zama Ngcobo, Superintendent, Nagle Dam; Petros Magubane, learner, E&C; Paulos Mkhize, learner, inland; George Phakathi, learner, coastal; Stanley Ngema, shop steward, inland; Patrick Langa, shop steward, E&C; David van Deventer, Manager, Training and Development; and Kim Weyer, Adult Education Co-ordinator.²⁰ All interest groups from both the inland and coastal regions were evenly represented.

A representative forum indicated an attempt to counter the inherent tendency for top down implementation in a management dominated industrial environment. It was an attempt to involve learners and unions at broader decision-making level. Weyer noted, however, that in discussion, Chamberlin dominated. Management was still the strong voice, owing to the habit of assertiveness and the handicap placed on shop stewards and learners in an English language environment. Supervisors followed management's lead.

A guiding policy

The agenda of the first meeting of the ABE forum centred around formulation of an ABE policy. The chairman, van Deventer, explained that the policy was necessary to clarify the objectives, purpose and mission of the expanding ABE programme and ensure that it met the needs of Umgeni Water.²¹ It needed to articulate reasons why Umgeni Water was offering ABE, what the programme's aims, goals and targets were, what was the long term plan, and issues such as times, venues, funding and facilitators. Problems experienced in running classes in the past included too few learners at the same level at

²⁰ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Adult Education Forum' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, September 1995).

²¹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Creating an Adult Education Policy' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 1993), p. 1.

plants, transportation, and learners not being allowed to attend class because there was nobody to substitute for them during class times.²² These issues needed to be clarified in the light of a guiding policy document.

ABE mission statement

The 'Umgeni Water Adult Education Policy (Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills)' was a comprehensive document. It started with the ABE mission statement:

'The Umgeni Water Adult Education Programme shall be part of the wider mission of Umgeni Water:

"We shall endeavour to ... provide our employees in return for their efficient, productive and loyal service, **with opportunities for personal development**, stable employment and appropriate compensation, all on a non-discriminatory basis."

The Adult Education Programme shall form an integral part of Umgeni Water's General Training Policy and will link in with existing education and training programmes at Umgeni Water.

The **purpose** of the Adult Education Programme is to provide literacy and numeracy development courses to meet the training and development needs of Umgeni Water and ultimately the needs of all our employees.

The **objective** of the programme is to ultimately make literacy and numeracy courses available to all employees irrespective of grade or job classification, and to develop all interested employees to a level of functional literacy competency by the end of 1998.²³

The ABE policy document included that part of Umgeni Water's overall mission statement that referred to employee 'personal development'. It did this to ensure ABE

²² Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Problems' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 1993), p. 1.

²³ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'The Umgeni Water Adult Education Policy (Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills)' (Unpublished policy document, Pietermaritzburg, 1993), p. 1. See appendix 6, p. 223.

was placed firmly on the corporate social responsibility agenda and was not side-lined. It revealed directed goal setting and a gearing of the programme around demand, namely, to meet the training and development needs of employees. It placed ABE in line with existing training policy. It ensured ABE was available to all relevant employees and thus gave the programme ammunition to expand. The policy spelt out a specific level of literacy employees were to be brought to, namely, 'functional literacy'. This was defined as follows:

'... the ability to read, write and speak with understanding at a level that enables one to cope, perform and contribute confidently in daily life. The basic skills required include literacy, numeracy and life skills that are of immediate benefit to the learner.

A person is regarded functionally literate once they have successfully completed level three, on the Basic Education and Skills for Adults continuum of language development, of the Conversational English course.' ²⁴

An holistic philosophy of adult education that interpreted literacy in terms of its use and purpose was apparent. BESA was the benchmark chosen to measure progress by. A given time frame in which this should take place, namely, the end of 1998, indicated a goal orientated approach. Such target setting catered for the output orientated environment of Umgeni Water.

Guidelines for contentious issues

The policy document went on to outline principles to guide the ABE programme. These focused around issues that had been contentious in the past and indicated an attempt to neutralise potential problems before they arose. This was essential for the programme to be implemented throughout the company.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

In terms of courses offered, the policy mentioned mother tongue, English for Adults, numeracy and Zulu as a second language. These courses were all bought from BESA, an indication of BESA's influence and acceptance within Umgeni Water. Selection criteria indicated that the programme was voluntary. However, employees who needed job related literacy, numeracy or language development, would be required to attend as part of in-service training. The forum would select learners. Priority would be given to employees who needed literacy for their jobs, then to mother tongue learners, then to learners with potential for promotion. Nominations would be accepted from employees, supervisors and managers, and managers and supervisors would be required to comment on their worker's nominations.²⁵ Isolated management or line management opposition was effectively disarmed. Literacy was couched in the language of meeting company needs by helping employees fulfil job requirements.

The policy made learner attendance compulsory. Supervisors would be obliged to release learners from work to attend classes. Shift workers who worked at night should come in their own time. These measures were an attempt to solve problems previously experienced. Classes would be held in Umgeni Water time, for four hours per week. Previously, the literacy programme had tried two hours per week, and split worker / company time. The policy guidelines represented a concession from management. Company time would be used. In return, the policy stated that an effort would be made to accommodate work demands. Learners could be taken out of class in the case of a job related emergency or non-routine circumstance. Thus both learner and company

²⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

needs were weighed and balanced.²⁶ Experience had taught that learner needs should not be ignored, but should be met within the context of production demands.

Promotion to the next literacy level would depend on attendance, performance and work requirements. If a learner attended 80% of classes, passed the relevant class tests and needed further literacy for his job, he would be admitted to the next level. Monthly reports of the progress of courses would be submitted to managers for distribution. Results of screening and end-of-course testing would be reported to the forum. In terms of recognition, attendance certificates would be issued to learners with an 80% attendance record. This was intended to give the certificate legitimacy. Classes would be held at Umgeni Water venues at stations where the majority of learners came from. Learners from other stations would be transported by Umgeni Water. A minimum of five learners would be required to implement a course. This was an attempt to work around logistics. Costs for facilitator training, salaries and literacy materials would be met by Umgeni Water. Learners would pay for course workbooks if they wished to retain them, otherwise workbooks would be returned at the end of a course. The ABE policy was built on a spirit of give and take from learners and the company, arguably the best way to run a successful programme.²⁷

Forum role

The ABE policy document ended with a definition of the role of the forum:

'The Adult Education Forum is representative of all levels of personnel involved in the Adult education programme. It will meet as required, to select learners;

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

resolve problems and monitor the Programme to ensure that it meets the needs of the learners and Umgeni Water in accordance with the needs of production.’²⁸

Thus the intention of the ABE policy was to make a literacy programme work within the confines of a production environment. To win ambivalent manager support, and make ABE as consultative as possible, it placed responsibility for the programme firmly in the hands of the stakeholders. As a representative body, the forum was intended to ensure all needs were met, both learner and production. It would be the final arbiter of disputes. It gave needed clarity on controversial issues.

Impact

The ABE policy was officially submitted to MANCO by the ABE forum in September 1993. After a further delay of two months, it was approved.²⁹ This represented a major achievement for ABE at Umgeni Water. It was the decisive factor in allowing the programme to expand. Seven classes had started in June 1993 using BESA materials, but Weyer was reluctant to expand without a policy to back her. Once this was achieved, classes were implemented quickly, efficiently and with majority co-operation. ‘With this policy in place the programme has gained great momentum and wide support,’ reported Weyer.³⁰ By the beginning of 1994, four full time ABE facilitators were employed, and 22 classes implemented in the inland and coastal regions. These included six mother tongue, twelve EFA and four Zulu second language classes. A total of 240 learners was enrolled at all levels.³¹ Plans were in place to accommodate further learners in an ABE continuum the following year. Like Ward, Weyer consulted

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Personal interview with Kim Weyer, Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

³⁰ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, January / February 1994, p. 1.

³¹ Ibid., p. 3.

closely with supervisors with regard to implementation times and logistics.³² It was her view that their co-operation was what made the programme work. Continual awareness raising was gradually paying off.

It is important to note, however, that the policy was in fact originally drafted by Rosemary Ward in January 1993, based on the Eskom policy.³³ Ward's influence was significant. Her draft was simply submitted by Weyer and van Deventer to the ABE forum for approval. It was passed with virtually no changes. Was the forum, then, simply playing a cosmetic role with regard to consultation? It was inevitable that the co-ordinator drafted the document as the person with the necessary expertise and knowledge. But the fact that the forum discussed and passed it, transferred ownership from the ABE department onto them, the stakeholders. This involvement and feeling of responsibility gave the programme legitimacy and ensured stakeholder co-operation.³⁴

ANALYSIS

Ingredients for success

An analysis of the period under discussion brings four outstanding features to light. It marked the advent of BESA. It saw the establishment of an adult education forum. An ABE policy document was compiled and accepted. A data base was established. These ingredients enabled the programme to expand.

³² Personal interview with Kim Weyer, Pietermaritzburg, 22 May 1995.

³³ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, January 1993, p. 2.

³⁴ In Frost's period (Weyer's successor), the forum was not utilized and the policy not publicised. This nullified their positive impact.

Using external advice when needed - BESA

The advent of BESA represented the use of external advice when needed - in this case, to facilitate programme expansion. For the first time a detailed implementation model was followed. According to BESA, certain 'inputs' - learner screening, stakeholder consultation, a steering committee, an ABE policy, and *Breakthrough* and EFA materials - 'guaranteed' a particular output, namely, a literate and competent workforce. This product-orientated model represented a change from the loosely needs-based, process orientation of the pilot project. It was appealing in a product orientated, industrial environment. As opposed to the 'go-it-alone' approach, the advent of BESA indicated an implementation model of an external consultant that helped guide an internal programme. Weyer followed these guidelines closely. Thus the influence of BESA was strong. However, consultation, needs analyses and awareness raising were not new at Umgeni Water. The difference was that these were now formalised and applied equally to all stakeholders. The relatively smooth expansion of the programme under Weyer can be attributed to sound guidelines from BESA, combined with an internal climate increasingly conducive to receiving ABE. The efforts of Camp and Ward cumulatively had prepared the soil.

Stakeholder consultation - the ABE forum

The establishment of the ABE forum was an achievement for Weyer. It represented formal stakeholder consultation. It was the first time union shop stewards and learners were represented on a decision making body. In theory it was a decisive step towards democratisation of the programme and a handing over of ownership. In practice, however, one can question how democratic and responsible the forum really was.

Management dominated. It ratified a policy essentially written by Ward - a co-ordinator. The programme remained co-ordinator driven owing to the fact that the forum met infrequently. However, the very fact that there was a democratically constituted body such as the forum which had the power to make policy and arbitrate disputes, represented an achievement for ABE. The forum was an example of a representative and consultative body, a rare creature in the management dominated environment of Umgeni Water.

ABE policy

The most notable achievement of this period was the ratification of an ABE policy. The policy brought clarity, direction, professionalisation and commitment to ABE. It provided a tool to neutralise opposition. Combined with input from BESA and the establishment of the forum, it was decisive in enabling ABE to expand into all areas of Umgeni Water. The success of the policy lay in its recognition and accommodation of an industrial environment. Clarity was given on issues of time and worker release. Entry of learners into classes was prioritised around the need for literacy in their jobs. Weyer's arrangement of classes around work schedules in consultation with supervisors, further indicated the meeting of workplace demands.

Directed planning - a literacy data base

The establishment of a comprehensive literacy data base was the implementation ingredient that allowed for directed planning and goal setting. It showed the extent of illiteracy amongst grade 14 - 18 staff, and therefore was a useful tool in promoting the need for literacy within the company. It took Weyer time to collect data, which led to a

hiatus in the actual provision of literacy classes. Once they resumed, however, it was with learners correctly screened and placed, and target dates for functional literacy set.

Meeting stakeholder needs

Learner and management needs were met, which neutralised potential opposition and ensured implementation support. Learner needs were met through representation on the forum, company wide awareness raising and assessment, discussion of expectations, and the provision of learner-centred materials through BESA. *Breakthrough* replaced Operation Upgrade in mother tongue teaching. The work and life skills focus of EFA was not new, nor was the concept of learner centred, communicative language teaching. What was new was a set, generic, continuum based course structure of workbooks and levels, with expected competencies to be gained at each level. This met managements need for results. Management needs were likewise met through ongoing personal consultation and forum representation, which neutralised potential opposition. CEO and MANCO support was necessary to ratify the ABE policy, and hence, expansion.

Expansion grounded in demand

It was the expansion of the programme that effectively changed the character of ABE at Umgeni Water. Groundwork for expansion took a year, but such thoroughness ensured that the process was irreversible. Expansion took place because it was bedded in demand. No longer was ABE small, localised and a 'nice thing to do'. It now had focus and direction - to eliminate illiteracy amongst **all** employees. An extensive literacy data base existed from which plans could be made and targets set. Expansion brought

greater public exposure and impact on the company. Reaction was increasingly positive. The internal climate was changing. Expectations were being met. ABE received a higher profile, fulfilling its public relations potential. BESA materials facilitated education progression.

Leadership

Co-ordinator leadership was again the vital ingredient. The ABE policy and forum were the inspiration of Ward. Their fruition, and a company wide data base of literacy information, was the work of Weyer. Weyer worked hard. She believed in employee development and won people over by her enthusiasm and sincere commitment to her cause, and her willingness to accommodate concerns. Despite expansion, however, co-ordinator and facilitators remained on contract. No permanent positions were offered. The potential negative impact of co-ordinator turnover was not removed. Amongst MANCO, ABE was still seen as a short term exercise at Umgeni Water. Vision did not extend beyond 1998, the target set by the forum to stamp out functional illiteracy.

CHAPTER 5

1994 - 1996: CONSOLIDATION

Co-ordinator turnover

In June 1994 Kim Weyer left Umgeni Water and took up a job offer as regional manager for BESA. She felt that the programme was secure enough to leave. A forum and policy were in place; classes had been implemented throughout the company; a literacy data base had been set up; accumulated awareness raising ensured that ABE was well accepted by learners, supervisors, and managers. A positive atmosphere prevailed. That BESA approached her indicated that they were impressed with the work she had done at Umgeni Water and with how their model was implemented.

Weyer was drawn by the challenge of a new job. The decisive factor in her departure, however, was the lack of security and benefits of a contract position.¹ Her contract at Umgeni Water was on an insecure renewable yearly basis and offered none of the permanent employee perks such as pension, increased leave, maternity leave, car subsidy and low housing interest rates. Insecurity and implications of dispensability that a contract position connoted contributed to co-ordinator turnover.

Weyer was replaced by Sally Frost. Frost was the fourth co-ordinator of the ABE programme in six years. Frost had originally joined on a part time basis to provide administrative help in July 1993, and had worked as a full time ABE facilitator since

¹ Personal interview with Kim Weyer, 22 May 1995.

January 1994. She worked under Weyer for a year. This period of overlap ensured continuity in the programme and with the work Weyer had been doing.

Ironically, it was Frost who benefitted from both her predecessors' successes and misfortunes. In March 1995 the position of adult education co-ordinator became a permanent post. This was largely owing to the efforts of van Deventer, who had motivated for such a move several years running. The loss of Weyer made MANCO realise that good people could not be kept on contract. Furthermore, the creation of a permanent position indicated that the programme was a success with an increasingly high profile. MANCO was beginning to see ABE as a more permanent fixture at Umgeni Water. It was this motivation that van Deventer used in his proposal, namely, that there would always be a need for a post in personnel development.² Nevertheless, ABE facilitators still remained on contract. This implied that whilst MANCO felt Umgeni Water could absorb one person, a permanent team was not envisaged. The programme was still seen in the light of producing measurable outputs within a specific time frame, and then being concluded accordingly. The influence of a product orientated industrial environment and unrealistic expectations amongst management with regard to the speed of literacy acquisition were evident.

Facilitator turnover

The contract status of facilitators ensured that the problem of facilitator turnover continued. It was Frost's experience that facilitators were recruited, trained at

² Personal interview with David van Deventer, 30 May 1995.

considerable expense, gained good experience, and moved on. This impacted negatively on programme continuity.

An attempt was made to improve existing contracts. Frost argued that, 'the ultimate success of Umgeni Water's literacy programme rests squarely on the calibre and commitment of the facilitators. It makes sense to keep them happy.' She warned that facilitators were paid less than their counterparts in other industries, and that two facilitators were 'dissatisfied with their contracts and are looking elsewhere. Both are excellent facilitators whose loss would impact extremely negatively on the continuity and success of Umgeni Water's Literacy Programme.'³ Salaries were raised and contracts extended from one year to eighteen months, so as to gain access to the benefits of medical aid and a housing subsidy. However, this did not prove enough. A facilitator noted in her performance appraisal that being on contract was 'extremely demotivating and on off days contributes to a general feeling of worthlessness.' It implied that 'the ABE department is not really treated as part of Umgeni Water and that we are just being accommodated.'⁴ One facilitator, Lulama Mbatha, followed Weyer to BESA after a year at Umgeni Water. Two others, Philani Sibiyi and Nkosinathi Mncwabe, both moved to permanent positions in other sections of Umgeni Water, and cited the lack of security of a contract position as their main reason for leaving.

The contract position of facilitators was detrimental to Umgeni Water literacy. It bred an atmosphere of dissatisfaction and insecurity. Turnover was expensive for the ABE

³ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, S. Frost 'New Contracts for Adult Education Facilitators' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, December 1994), p. 1.

⁴ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator report, April 1995, p. 3.

department in terms of retraining new facilitators, and detrimental to learners who no sooner got used to one facilitator, than he or she was replaced by another. Secure facilitators was a vital ingredient in a healthy ABE programme. That facilitators came to Umgeni Water on contract, suggested that it was nevertheless viewed as a good programme from which to gain experience and training.

Facilitator management

Camp, Ward and Weyer all had problems with the management of particular facilitators. Frost experienced a similar situation with one individual in terms of 'absenteeism, lateness, unreliability and at times, disinterest, as well as complaints from learners around financial issues.'⁵ Disciplinary action did not improve the situation. A supervisor contacted Frost to report that his 'staff were having problems in class and did not know if they wanted to continue, because the teacher seemed very demotivated, often was late or did not teach them. Class numbers had dropped and they were feeling demotivated.' Frost reported that it was 'a serious concern for the ABE programme if learners are dropping out because of the attitude of the teacher.'⁶ 'It is vital that the facilitators are trusted and respected by their learners,' she said. 'For the programme to gain legitimacy and support amongst Umgeni Water employees, it is the responsibility of the facilitator to act as a role model.'⁷ What was evident was that competent facilitators were crucial to the success of the programme.

⁵ Ibid., report for 1995, p.3.

⁶ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, S. Frost 'Report on S'bu Ngcobo' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 25 May 1995), p. 1.

⁷ Ibid., S. Frost 'Statement by Sally Frost, Adult Education Co-ordinator, against Sibusiso Ngcobo' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, May 1995), p. 1.

Awareness raising

Like earlier co-ordinators, Frost found that she had to motivate and raise awareness amongst stakeholders continually. A presentation was made to the Board of Umgeni Water to win senior support. At the end of each year, parties and award ceremonies were held for classes, at which certificates and progress reports were handed to learners. Supervisors and managers were invited. A large annual celebration was introduced on 8 September, International Literacy Day. This motivated and encouraged learners and was seen as 'an opportunity to publicise the programme, and show learners / supervisors / managers what happens in classes.'⁸ General information on ABE as well as work done throughout the year was displayed. Classes at different levels demonstrated language skills they had acquired. Thus an overview of the whole learning continuum was provided.

Efforts were made to publicise learner writings. A writing competition was held and winning stories published in *Flowmeter*, the in-house magazine, in addition to ongoing articles on literacy.⁹ Two booklets of learner stories, *Literacy Alive* and *South Coast Stories*, were compiled and distributed in 1994 and 1996 respectively.¹⁰ *Siyathuthuka*, a quarterly learner magazine written by learners and distributed throughout the company, was launched in August 1996.¹¹ It portrayed Umgeni Water through the eyes of grade 14-18 employees and gave learners the opportunity to appear in print. *Siyathuthuka* enabled staff not involved in the world of literacy to gain exposure to the issues and

⁸ Umgeni Water, Public Relations Department, *Flowmeter* (In-house magazine, Summer 1995), p. 7.

⁹ Umgeni Water, Public Relations Department, *Flowmeter* (In-house magazine, Winter 1995), pp. 6-7.

¹⁰ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, *Literacy Alive* (Pietermaritzburg, 1994); *South Coast Stories* (Pietermaritzburg, 1996).

¹¹ See appendix 7, p. 227.

concerns of their fellow employees. This promoted communication and solidarity within the organisation.

An ABE logo was developed in 1996,¹² and a pamphlet and ten minute promotional video on the ABE programme were made. Further visual coverage was achieved via the quarterly video newsletter put out by the Public Relations Department. Such steps indicated an understanding of the importance of ongoing ABE publicity at all levels within the company. Awareness raising ensured a high profile and positive perception of ABE throughout Umgeni Water. It nurtured an atmosphere conducive to programme success.

Consultation - stakeholder workshops

In June 1994, Frost and van Deventer ran a series of workshops for managers, supervisors and learners respectively. This indicated an attempt to involve all groups of stakeholders. The purpose was 'information sharing, both in informing stakeholders about ABE, and getting their feedback.' In addition, the purpose 'was to encourage stakeholders to take responsibility for the programme.'¹³ Thus the workshops were both an awareness raising and consultative exercise. Consultation and stakeholder ownership were recognised as crucial. Attendance at the workshops was excellent with regard to learners, and moderate with regard to supervisors and managers.¹⁴ This suggested that motivation and interest in the programme was highest amongst learners, an understandable phenomenon considering that they were the ones who benefited

¹² See appendix 8, p. 228.

¹³ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, literacy co-ordinator report, July 1994, p. 1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

directly and who were most personally affected by learning. Moderate attendance also suggested that Frost and van Deventer were preaching to the converted. Supervisors and managers with little interest in ABE did not accept the invitation, did not receive exposure, and therefore remained indifferent and potentially problematic.

The workshops demonstrated a desire to provide input by stakeholders, and an attempt to meet requests by the ABE department. As in previous years, managers and supervisors requested the incorporation of work skills, an indication of the influence of the workplace environment on programme content. This request was followed through. A safety module specific to Umgeni Water was compiled and implemented, which was acknowledged by the inland regional manager, Bernard Chamberlin.¹⁵ At the request of coastal management, customised work modules around record keeping, use of notice boards, safety and security, conditions of service and basic water education, were developed in consultation with supervisors.¹⁶ The request from learners for reading books led to the establishment of mini-libraries with books loaned by the Natal Society Library. A request for numeracy led to facilitators being trained in this regard. Supervisors requested the continuation of monthly reports and individual learner progress reports, which suggested an interest in the progress of their staff and in the programme as a whole.¹⁷

¹⁵ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, memorandum from the regional manager, inland, to the adult education co-ordinator, 5 July 1994, p. 1.

¹⁶ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, S. Frost 'Suggested work skills to include in literacy classes' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, December 1995), pp. 1-4.

¹⁷ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, July 1994, p. 1.

Issues that emerged from the workshops provided further evidence that certain problems were inherent, and thus recurrent, in an industry based literacy programme. When production demands were balanced against learning needs, opposing interests and pressures came into play. Learners reported being held back on the job as a reason for absenteeism and lateness.¹⁸ Managers and supervisors 'were unhappy about certain issues related to classes, namely, transport, decreased productivity, times, poor attendance, and clashes with other training.' Accordingly, each supervisor was visited in person 'to sort out individual problems, as well as to discuss scheduling of classes until 1998.'¹⁹ That classes and learner progress were scheduled up to 1998 suggested planning and goal setting around policy targets and the influence of a product orientated workplace environment. Whilst acceptable within industry, whether such precise planning was possible for something as individual as adult learning, is questionable.

Process / product approach

One feature of Frost's period was a gradual move away from BESA. Facilitators were still sent on BESA training courses, but this was supplemented by in-house training and training through the Natal ABE Support Agency (hereafter cited as NASA). Consultation with BESA lessened. The forum and policy were in place, and classes running relatively smoothly. With experience gained the need for implementation advice decreased.

In the field of literacy materials, the move away from BESA was gradual yet pronounced. *Breakthrough* continued to be used for mother tongue teaching.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., November / December 1994, p. 1.

However, the EFA materials were supplemented with another literacy material range produced by the English Literacy Project (ELP), as well as with *Bona* magazine and *Learn with Echo*. Facilitators felt that the EFA materials were more grammatical than communicative in their approach, focused on the urban, industrial learner, and did not cater for beginner English learners.²⁰ Inexperienced facilitators found the EFA series useful in providing a framework to follow. As facilitators gained confidence and experience, they increasingly developed their own materials based around EFA lesson themes. Work modules were being developed at the request of management.

The Umgeni Water ABE programme had come full circle. From using an external consultant with a fixed product, it had moved back to a needs based, internal process approach, which was what had been adopted by Ward. However, the ABE policy document ensured that the programme still maintained a competency based, outcomes ethos, and was not exclusively process orientated. The programme was flexible and adapted to changing needs, which contributed towards its success.

Independent Examinations Board

A strong influence in maintaining a competency approach, as well as in moving away from strict adherence to EFA materials, was the advent of the Independent Examinations Board (hereafter cited as IEB) examinations. In 1994 the IEB piloted the first national examinations in adult basic education in South Africa. Level three English was piloted in 1994, roughly equivalent to standard five. Level one (standard one), and level two (standard three), were piloted in all eleven official languages in 1995. The

²⁰ Umgeni Water, G. Witthaus 'Creative Options' (In-house facilitator workshop, Pietermaritzburg, 26-27 October 1995), general discussion.

advent of the IEB was the most decisive factor in changing the direction of the Umgeni Water ABE programme. It illustrated the effect of external ABE developments within the company. Learners were entered for IEB examinations and the success of the programme measured against results achieved in this external benchmark.

The IEB awarded certificates to successful candidates. As the IEB pointed out, 'there are decided benefits in being able to lay claim to a clearly demonstrated and properly accredited set of skills.'²¹ IEB levels one to four slotted into the recently developed National Qualifications Framework (hereafter cited as NQF), a proposed system of standardising formal and non-formal education, training and development accreditation within South Africa. Entering candidates into these examinations and replacing previous BESA competency certificates with IEB ones, was an attempt by the Umgeni Water ABE programme to keep up to date with national trends, apply external standards to measure Umgeni Water ABE progress, and enable learners to acquire nationally accredited certificates of learning.

The hallmark of the IEB approach was that it emphasised 'competencies'. The IEB stipulated no syllabus, but set outcomes or standards of competence for a continuum of learning. The achievement reached at the end of one level was the entry point for the next level. As the IEB spelt out in its general handbook for 1994:

'The IEB examinations are designed to test a range of competencies and skills that should be the outcomes of any satisfactory programmes of learning, regardless of the specific method or content. Thus there is not a strictly prescribed teaching syllabus...The examinations are organised around the

²¹ Independent Examinations Board, *Adult Basic Education Level 3: User Guide 1: General Handbook 1994* (Independent Examinations Board, Johannesburg, 1994), pp. 4; 9.

idea of key competencies...Key competencies are powerful in helping educators and trainers to clarify what are the really important achievements of their work.²²

The IEB aimed to develop thinking processes and abilities which were applicable to all training or learning programmes, and situations in everyday life. Key competencies involved finding, reading, analysing, critically evaluating and using written information for various purposes; communicating ideas and information to other people, orally and in writing; planning, carrying out and evaluating activities; working with other people; and solving problems and making decisions. These all focused around the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Reading and writing competencies involved responding to narrative, factual, persuasive and everyday information texts. Speaking and listening competencies focused on successful social interaction, giving and getting information, expressing and understanding ideas, opinions, feelings and emotions, and making and responding to suggestions, offers and requests.²³

The IEB emphasised that it did not tell teachers what to teach. There was no teaching syllabus with a list of topics, subject matter and issues to be covered in the course of learning. IEB induction workshops were arranged for teachers. User guides were compiled which gave exemplars of work and 'performance outcomes', namely, what candidates were expected to do at each level. The IEB outlined 'the more general skills and knowledge' which would be expected at a certain level. It gave little attention to 'issues such as spelling and punctuation, and much more attention to communicative

²² Ibid., *Adult Basic Education Level 3: User Guide 1: General Handbook 1994* (Independent Examinations Board, Johannesburg, 1994), p.2.

²³ Ibid., *Adult Basic Education Level 3: User Guide 2: Communications in English Examination Syllabus 1994* (Independent Examinations Board, Johannesburg, 1994), pp. 2-5.

and thinking skills.’²⁴ The advent of the IEB encouraged Umgeni Water facilitators to prepare their lesson materials specifically around IEB outcomes. This was done individually, and at weekly meetings. A pool of lessons focused around IEB competencies was built up in English and Zulu.²⁵ Although process run, ABE at Umgeni Water became increasingly competency based and outcome focused. Again because of the business environment, this was favourably received by the ABE forum of stakeholders.²⁶

Programme evaluation

In March 1996, a formal evaluation of the Umgeni Water ABE programme was commissioned. This indicated an awareness of the need for programme critique and adaptation as a necessary ingredient for successful implementation. Ward and Weyer had both attempted informal evaluations of the programme through questionnaires. These were piecemeal, however, and did not provide an external, objective, overall critique. By 1996 the programme was securely established company wide. A pattern of recurrent successes and challenges had emerged. It was time to investigate and highlight programme strengths and weaknesses, measure impact, and adapt accordingly.

Frost had specific objectives in mind when she commissioned the evaluation of the ABE programme. She wished to measure the extent of progress towards achieving functional literacy for all by the end of 1998, the target set in the ABE policy. She

²⁴ Ibid., p.2.

²⁵ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, report for 1995, p. 3.

²⁶ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, minutes of forum meeting, Pietermaritzburg, 7 September 1995, p. 1.

wanted to measure the impact of the programme on individual learners and on the organisation. She hoped to quantify the real benefits of ABE, and the costs of the programme against its outcomes. She wanted strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the programme identified. The evaluation should provide practical recommendations for the future.²⁷ These objectives indicated an understanding that for ABE to remain relevant and effective at Umgeni Water, self-evaluation and flexible adaptation were necessary. Impact needed to be measured.

Frost received two quotes for an independent evaluation of the ABE programme. One was from Kim Weyer, a former co-ordinator who now ran her own ABE consultancy, Adult Education and Development (hereafter cited as AED). The other was a combined quote from the CAE and NASA. The ABE forum chose Weyer's on Frost's recommendation. This decision can be questioned in that Weyer was a former co-ordinator who had invested in the programme, and whose objectivity might therefore be influenced. However, Weyer's quote was cheaper and she could work on the evaluation full-time and thus complete it quicker. Whilst some subjectivity was inevitable, Frost felt that Weyer's intimate knowledge of Umgeni Water ABE would in fact be an advantage in conducting an evaluation, as she would be aware of the pressures at play within industry. Weyer was thought to be sufficiently removed from the programme to be predominantly objective and critical.

²⁷ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, K. Weyer 'Umgeni Water Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programme Evaluation' (Adult Education and Development, Pietermaritzburg, February - March 1996), 1.2

Weyer consulted the ABE co-ordinator and facilitators, programme participants and drop outs, Operations line management and management, Training and Development management, the Directors of Human Resources and Operations, the Chief Executive Officer, shop stewards and union officials, and the ABE forum. This represented an attempt to gauge the opinion of all stakeholders. Her methods included document surveys, questionnaires, individual interviews and focus groups. This ensured both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis.

Weyer conducted a thorough evaluation which covered all aspects of the programme. She looked at planning and implementation, programme management and administration, ABE facilitators, participation and feedback from stakeholders, progress, benefits and results, costs, and areas requiring attention. She concluded with recommendations for future programme direction.²⁸ In terms of planning and implementation, Weyer saw MANCO's approval of the ABE policy as the turning point for ABE at Umgeni Water. It gave the programme senior ratification and enabled it to expand. She highlighted the importance of initial input from BESA in facilitating company-wide implementation. Weyer concluded that co-ordinators were instrumental in driving the programme. This pointed to the importance of effective co-ordination for a successful ABE programme.

Weyer made two comments with regard to programme management and administration. Firstly, she noted the weakness of the ABE forum. This body had not fulfilled its role. It was not actively involved in the implementation process and met too infrequently to

²⁸ The following information comes from the Executive Summary in Weyer, 'Umgeni Water Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programme Evaluation'.

monitor and support. Members had failed to liaise with the stakeholders they represented and as a result many employees were unaware of the forum's existence. That the programme nevertheless functioned effectively suggested that an ABE forum was not an essential ingredient for successful implementation if ABE was driven by a dominant co-ordinator. A correctly used forum, however, was a useful tool to enhance stakeholder involvement.

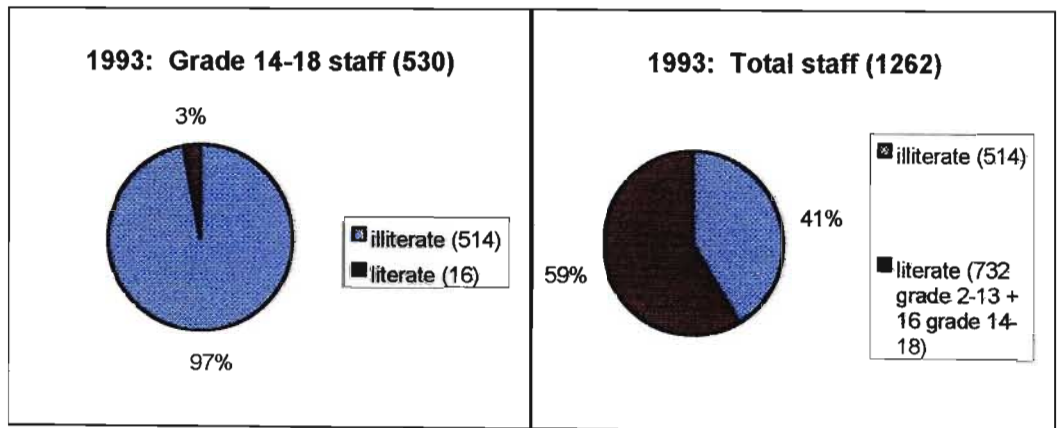
Weyer commented on the high standard of ABE facilitators. This ensured successful learning, and thus, programme success. Facilitators, however, did not interact enough with line managers and the rest of the Training Department. Their contract status was extremely detrimental as it led to high turn-over and increased costs in terms of recruitment, training and discontinuity. Weyer's evaluation reinforced the view that facilitators needed to be looked after.

In terms of participation and feedback from stakeholders, Weyer noted a range of opinion. Senior management were supportive but not actively involved. Amongst line management support varied from active to passive. Expectations as to what ABE could achieve were unrealistic amongst some. Line management experienced major frustrations as a result of ABE, related to loss of productivity time, disruption in the workplace, the inconvenience and cost of transporting learners, poor attendance, and slow progress of some participants. These frustrations illustrated the inherently negative influence of production demands on workplace literacy programmes. Shop stewards were satisfied with the programme, but dissatisfied with lateness and alcohol abuse amongst some learners. Learners liked their facilitators and the teaching methods used,

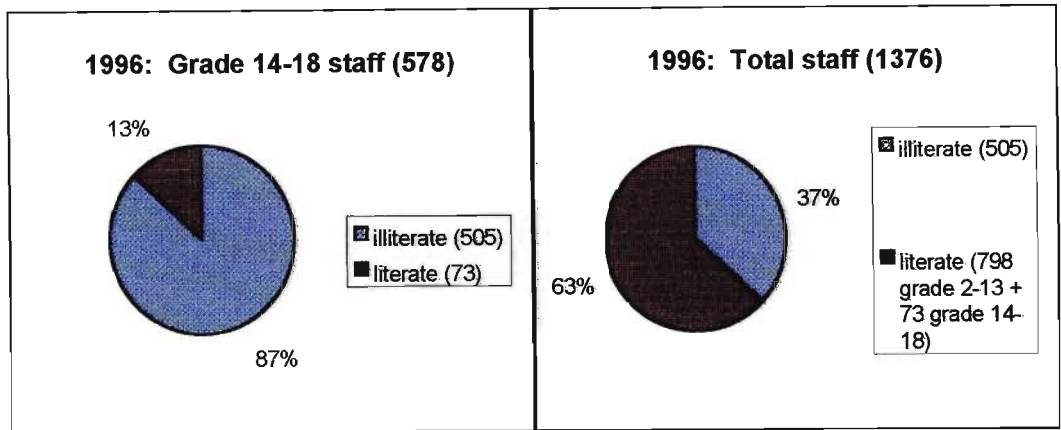
but wanted more time for classes and felt that progress was slow. All stakeholders wanted more work skills. This comment suggested that the ABE department was perceived not to be meeting workplace needs, and that such needs had to be met.

Weyer noted that progress was slower than anticipated between levels. The 1998 target of a functionally literate workforce would not be met. There was a correlation between learner attendance, commitment and progress. Approximately 45% of learners attended less than 80% of their classes. This disrupted progress. But functional literacy amongst grade 14-18 staff was increasing. From 3% at the start of the company wide programme in 1994, in 1996 it stood at 13% (ie: 13% of the 578 grade 14 - 18 employees had either passed the IEB level three examination, were enrolled in the Operational English course, or had been screened to be at an Operational English level already).

Figure 17: Umgeni Water functional literacy rate - 1993-1996 ²⁹



²⁹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, literacy data base on Q&A Version 3.0 computer software.



Mother tongue illiteracy was decreasing. Immediate benefits commented on by stakeholders included improved English communication, improved self esteem (although some learners cited a decline in self esteem when incorrectly placed at a too difficult level), life skills such as money management, improved safety, improved literacy levels, improved effectiveness of in-house training courses, and improved teamwork. Tangible ABE impact on the organisation as a whole, however, was small. Major benefits would only be fully realised in the long term once more employees were functionally literate in English and able to utilise these skills in their jobs. This pointed to the long term nature of ABE and the need to educate stakeholders in this regard. Weyer estimated ABE cost Umgeni Water R900 000 in 1995, or R2 800 per participant. This was less than one sixth of the total Training and Development budget.

Weyer's overall estimation of the Umgeni Water ABE programme was positive. She concluded that 'Umgeni Water is one of the few organisations in the country that have an ABE programme as well implemented, developed, and sustained as it has.'³⁰ Certain areas required attention, however. There was no culture of life long learning for

³⁰ Ibid.

all employees at Umgeni Water. This suggested the negative influence of an industrial environment. Stakeholders did not fully understand the concept of developing an education foundation for further skills formation and learning, and thus ABE was not a high priority. ABE was not linked to career pathing or multi-skilling. The problems of poor attendance, punctuality, alcohol abuse and the abuse of ABE time by some participants were not being monitored and addressed strictly enough. Line management and ABE facilitators were not communicating closely enough and thus workplace needs were not being met.

Weyer made several recommendations. Workshops were needed for the forum, to educate members on national ABE developments and on their roles and responsibilities. The ABE policy needed to be rewritten and publicised, with aims, objectives and problem areas revisited. A more sophisticated administration system was necessary. All education and training for grade 14 - 18 employees needed to be integrated and orientated around competency acquisition. An Adult Basic Education and Training Manager needed to be appointed under the Umgeni Training Centre, with regional co-ordinators to draw up and implement development plans for learners. ABE facilitators should be trained in broader adult basic education and training, and be inducted into Umgeni Water. Closer work needed to be done with line management and shop stewards to meet all the education, development and training needs of grade 14 - 18 staff.

The ABE evaluation was significant in that it indicated an attempt at reflective, flexible and adaptable implementation of ABE at Umgeni Water, that took into account changing

organisational needs. The evaluation contributed to successful implementation. It corroborated problem areas already experienced, such as productivity pressure within an industrial context. It reinforced successful implementation methods such as consultation and awareness raising.

The 1996 evaluation revealed that as a simple ABE / literacy project, Umgeni Water's programme was predominantly successful for the 342 learners it reached. Learners were progressing, if slowly, towards literacy. ABE was well implemented and favourably received. The programme, however, was at a turning point. It could remain focused on straightforward ABE. If it wanted to incorporate the broader training and development needs of its participants and thus increase its relevance to the individual and the organisation, significant focus, structural and managerial changes were needed.

CHAPTER 6

LEARNER RESULTS

The goal of a literacy programme is to improve literacy levels amongst learners. Was this taking place at Umgeni Water? Were learners progressing? Was progression occurring at the predicted rate? What results were being achieved? Were policy targets being met?

Literacy test results and records of learner progression through levels cast light on the educational upliftment of the Umgeni Water unskilled workforce. No statistical records were available to measure learning progression during Camp and Ward's time, when the programme was run on a small scale. Statistics were available from the advent of BESA and the introduction of the ABE data base. Prior to company-wide implementation in 1994, all learners were screened in 1993 using BESA tests, and from then on their data kept on file.

Rate of progression

BESA provided a language continuum and laid down guidelines for the amount of time it would take a learner to progress through the levels, namely, 200 hours for mother tongue (level one), 120 hours for Survival English (level two), 240 hours for Conversational English (level three), and 280 hours for Operational English (level four).¹ Thus if a learner attended classes for four hours a week, ten months of the year, for five years, he or she could, in theory, move from illiteracy to English level four, equivalent to standard seven.

The Umgeni Water ABE policy document had set the end of 1998 as the target date to raise all interested employees to a level of functional literacy (level three). Since it was written at

¹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'BESA: Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET): Information and Guidelines' (BESA, Johannesburg, 1995), p. 6.

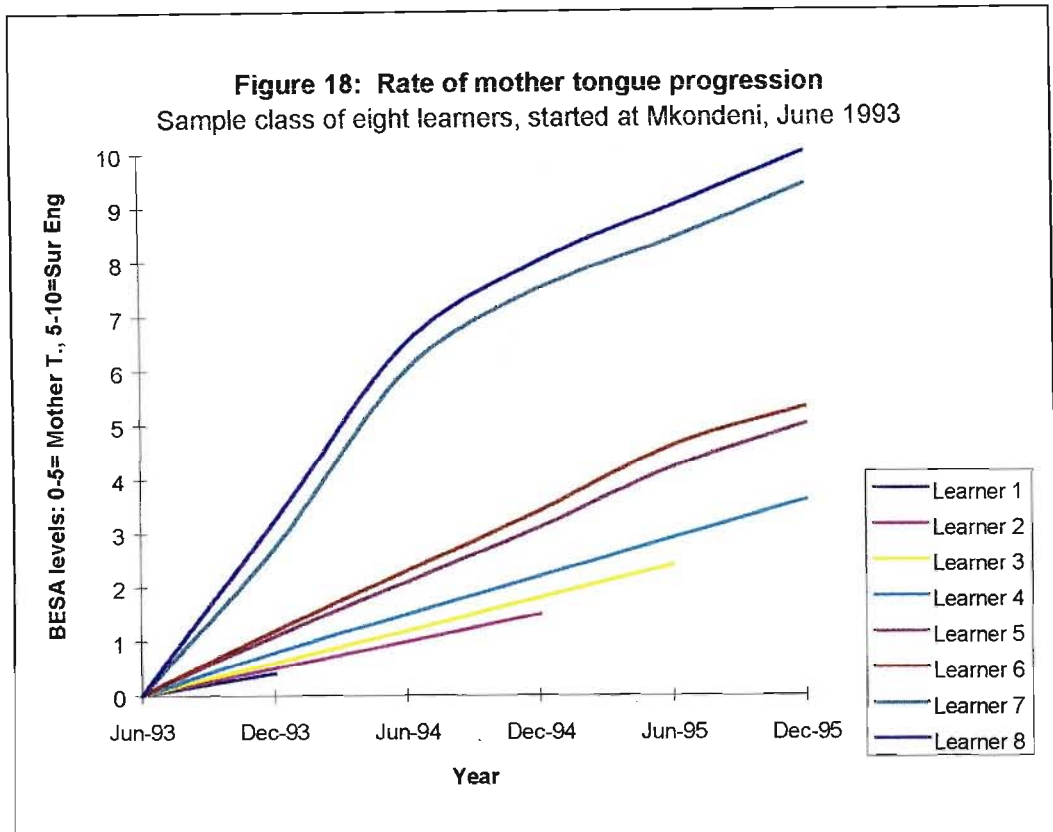
the end of 1993, this in effect allowed a period of five years for a learner to progress from mother tongue to English level three, or the EFA Conversational English. BESA guidelines estimated that it would take 560 hours to reach this level, that is, three and a half years of classes for ten months a year, four hours per week. In theory, the target date of 1998 allowed ample time, and accommodated the need to stagger the entry of learners into the programme over several years.

The 1996 programme evaluation concluded that progress was slower than initially anticipated.² An analysis of statistics from June 1993 - December 1995 corroborated the finding that learning occurred at a slower pace than predicted. Secondly, individual learners progressed at vastly differing rates.

The following three case studies, of a mother tongue, Survival English and Conversational English class respectively, illustrate the claim that learning progression amongst learners was slow and erratic. These classes were chosen because they had been running the longest and because a complete set of data was available for them. Progress was plotted from June 1993 - December 1995. It is assumed that they represent the broader trend of learner progression at Umgeni Water.

² Weyer, 'Umgeni Water Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programme Evaluation', 4.1.

Rate of mother tongue progression - sample class of eight learners, started at Mkondeni, June 1993

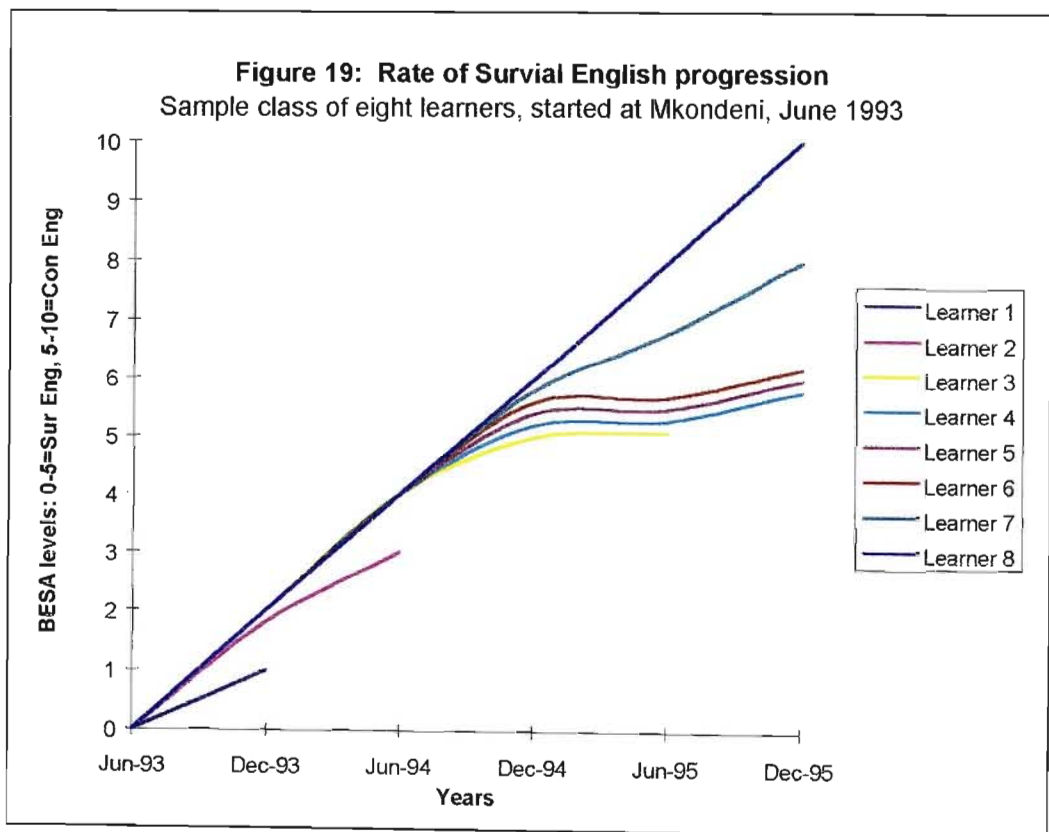


A mother tongue class of 8 learners was started at Mkondeni in June 1993. By December 1995, three people from this class had dropped out of the programme, one because of eye problems, another for no given reason and the third because of shift work. Of the original class one learner was still in mother tongue by December 1995, and two learners had just completed mother tongue. The two remaining learners had progressed to Survival English in February 1994, and Conversational English in July 1995. This class was taught by P. Mkhasibe for the first six months, and S. Ngcobo for the remaining two years.³

³ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, literacy data base on Q&A Version 3.0 computer software.

One class of learners therefore took between 100 and 400 hours to become literate in their mother tongue. In the main, mother tongue learning was slower than the 200 hours predicted by BESA. To isolate a specific reason for this was difficult. A combination of factors, including a complete lack of previous exposure to education, the methodology used, facilitation and age were the most likely considerations. A further conclusion to draw from the case study of mother tongue learning was that strictly targeted outcomes and dates set across the board for learning achievement, were not applicable to a human endeavour such as literacy. Unlike machines, people did not behave predictably and progress at identical speeds. With learning, a recipe of inputs did not guarantee an expected output.

Rate of Survival English progression - sample class of eight learners, started at Mkondeni, June 1993



In June 1993, a Survival English class of 8 learners was started at Mkondeni. Two learners dropped out, one for no reason, the other because he was dismissed. Six progressed to Conversational English in August 1994, which was roughly in line with BESA guidelines. This time frame can be explained because a set course of lessons was being followed. Completion of a course, however, did not necessarily guarantee universal and equal competency amongst learners. In July 1995 a third dropped out because of work commitments. In November 1995 three learners wrote the IEB English level one examination, one wrote English level two, and one wrote English level three. Thus individuals had again progressed at different rates. A possible explanation was that all three level one candidates had a high record of absenteeism from classes,⁴ which impacted adversely on their learning progress. During the two and a half years the class experienced a high turnover of facilitators. They were taught by K. Weyer for six months, L. Mbatha for one year, N. Mncwabe for six months, and L. Zondi for six months.⁵ This too might have affected some learners adversely.

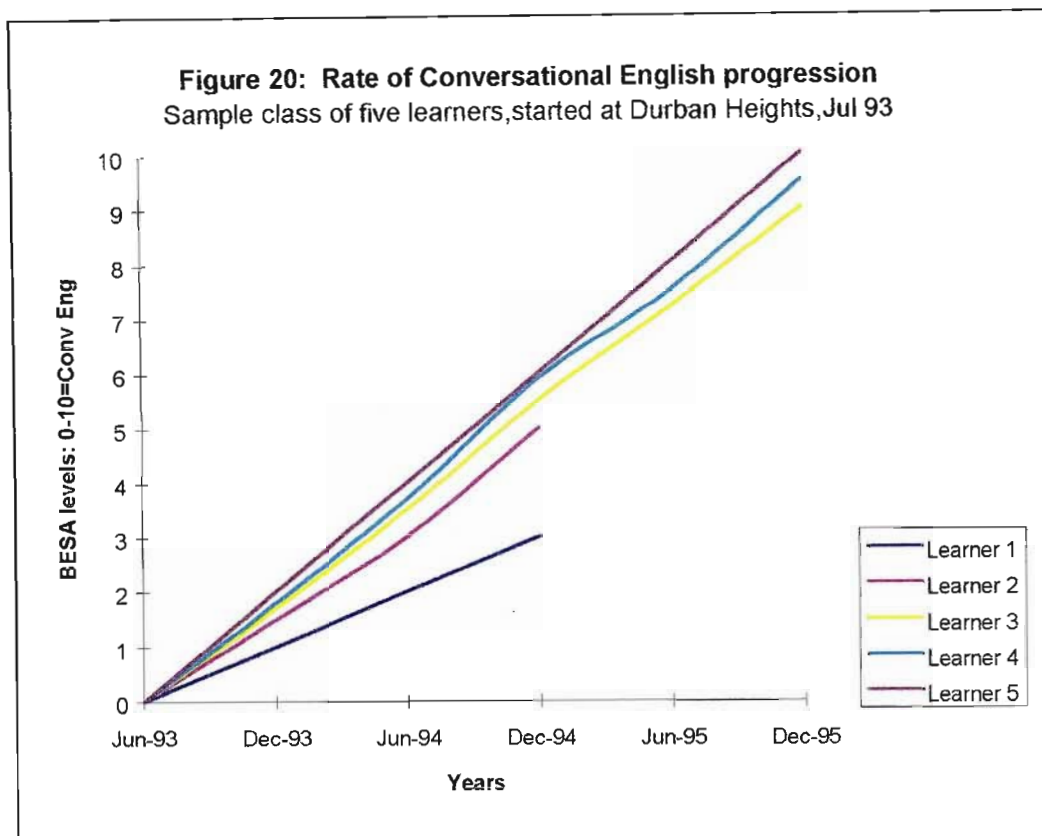
Rate of Conversational English progression - sample class of five learners, started at Durban Heights, July 1993

Of the five learners who started Conversational English at Durban Heights in July 1993, three wrote the IEB English level three examination in November 1995, and progressed to Operational English at this time. Two dropped out of the programme after about eighteen months of irregular attendance. One was a driver and the other a maintenance assistant. Neither worked shift. This class was taught by P. Sibiya for one year and S. Vernon for eighteen months.⁶

⁴ Umgeni Water, Training and Development, L. Mbatha, N. Mncwabe and L. Zondi, 'Monthly report: Conversational English: Mkondeni: 07H00-11H00' (January 1994 - December 1995).

⁵ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, literacy data base on Q&A Version 3.0 computer software.

⁶ Ibid.



Thus the class took 400 hours to progress through Conversational English, longer than BESA's estimate of 240 hours. Those who did complete the course were competent enough to write the IEB English level three examination, and were thus at the targeted level of functional literacy. Learning was therefore occurring, but at a slower rate than predicted.

Accommodation of learners / progression through levels

The ABE policy document stipulated that literacy training was open to all employees. Was this being met? Were learners passing through levels? Was the functional literacy rate increasing? The following table provides statistics for classes from 1993-1996:

Figure 21: Umgeni Water class statistics - 1993-1996

Year	Total staff	Total gr 14-18 staff	Already literate gr 14-18	Target group: Illiterate gr 14-18	Target group not interested	Target group interested & waiting	Target group in class	No in mother tongue	No in Survival English	No in Conver English	No in Opera English	No in inland region	No in coastal region
1993	1262	530	16 (3%)	514 (97%)	0 (0%)	453 (88%)	61 (12%)	33 (54%)	13 (21%)	15 (25%)	0 (0%)	35 (57%)	26 (43%)
1994	1262	530	16 (3%)	514 (97%)	0 (0%)	285 (55%)	229 (45%)	76 (33%)	113 (49%)	40 (18%)	0 (0%)	130 (57%)	99 (43%)
1995	1317	553	43 (8%)	510 (92%)	57 (11%)	131 (26%)	322 (63%)	117 (36%)	97 (30%)	83 (26%)	25 (8%)	181 (56%)	141 (44%)
1996	1376	578	73 (13%)	505 (87%)	96 (19%)	67 (13%)	342 (68%)	75 (22%)	130 (38%)	84 (25%)	53 (15%)	170 (50%)	172 (50%)

In 1993 61 learners of the 514 illiterate grade 14 - 18 employees (the target group) entered classes - 33 mother tongue, thirteen Survival English and fifteen Conversational English.⁷ Therefore in 1993, 12% of the target group were in classes. Of these, 54% were in mother tongue, 21% in Survival English, 25% in Conversational English, and 0% in Operational English. Some 35 learners (57%) were in the inland region and 26 learners (43%) were in the coastal region. 453 learners, or 88% of the target group, were waiting for classes.

In 1994 229 learners joined classes, 45% of illiterate grade 14-18 employees, a 33% increase on the previous year. Of these 76 were mother tongue (33%), 113 were Survival English (49%), and 40 were Conversational English (18%). 130 learners were inland (57%), and 99 were coastal (43%). This was the same ratio of inland to coastal as the previous year.⁸ Between 1993 and 1994, mother tongue learners had decreased by 21%, Survival English learners had increased by 28%, and Conversational learners had decreased by 7%. No one had moved through functional literacy to Operational English. Some 285 learners, or 55% of the target group, were waiting for classes, a decrease of 33% from 1993.

In 1995, 322 learners entered classes, or 63% of the 510 illiterate grade 14-18 employees. This was a 18% increase on 1994, and a 51% increase on 1993. Of the 322 learners in class, 117 learners (36%) were mother tongue, 97 learners (30%) were Survival English, 83 learners (26%) were Conversational English, and 25 learners (8%) were Operational English. Some 181 learners were inland (56%), and 141 were coastal (44%). This was roughly the same ratio as the previous two years. Between 1994 and 1995, mother tongue learners had increased by 3%, Survival English learners had decreased by 19%, Conversational English learners had increased by 8%, and Operational English learners had

⁷ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, K. Weyer 'Courses implemented to date' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 1993), p. 1.

⁸ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, K. Weyer 'Literacy classes implemented in February 1994' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 1994), p. 1.

increased by 8%. Thus after a year and a half the first group of learners had reached a level of functional literacy and were being developed further, beyond the policy document target, at English level four. Some 131 learners, or 26% of the target group, were still interested and waiting for classes, a decrease of 29% from 1994 and 52% from 1993. Some 57 of the target group of illiterate grade 14-18 employees (11%) were not interested in classes.⁹

In 1996, 342 learners joined classes, 68% of a target group of 505. This was a 5% increase on 1995, a 23% increase on 1994, and a 56% increase on 1993. Of the 342 learners in class, 75 learners (22%) were mother tongue, 130 learners (38%) were Survival English, 84 learners (25%) were Conversational English, and 53 learners (15%) were Operational English. Some 170 learners were inland (50%) and 172 were coastal (50%). Thus provision of literacy to the inland and coastal region had evened out by the beginning of 1996. Between 1995 and 1996, mother tongue learners had decreased by 14%, Survival English learners had increased by 8%, Conversational English learners had decreased by 1%, and Operational English learners had increased by 7% on 1995, and 15% on 1994. Thus learners were slowly but steadily moving through mother tongue into Survival English, and through Conversational English into Operational English. By 1996, only 67 learners, or 13% of the target group of illiterate grade 14-18 employees were interested and waiting, a decrease of 13% from 1995, 42% from 1994 and 75% from 1993. Some 96 employees (19%) were illiterate but not interested.

⁹ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, report for 1995, pp. 1-2.

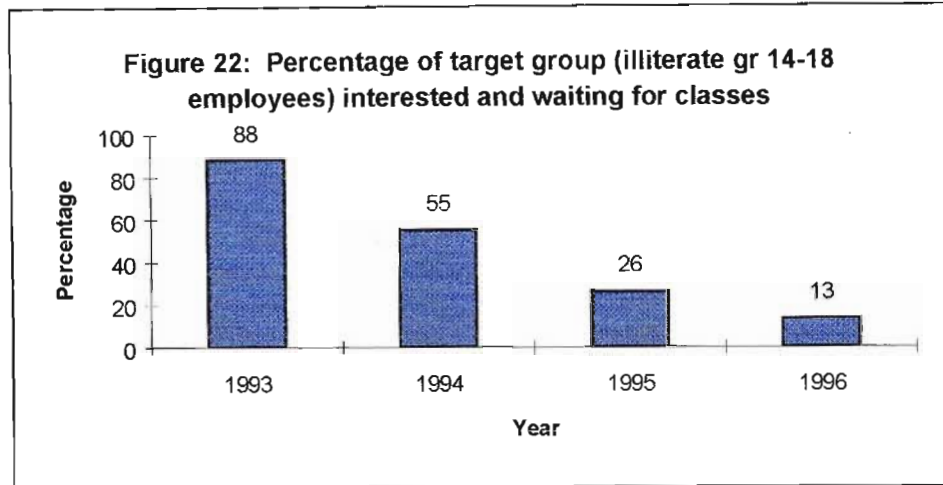
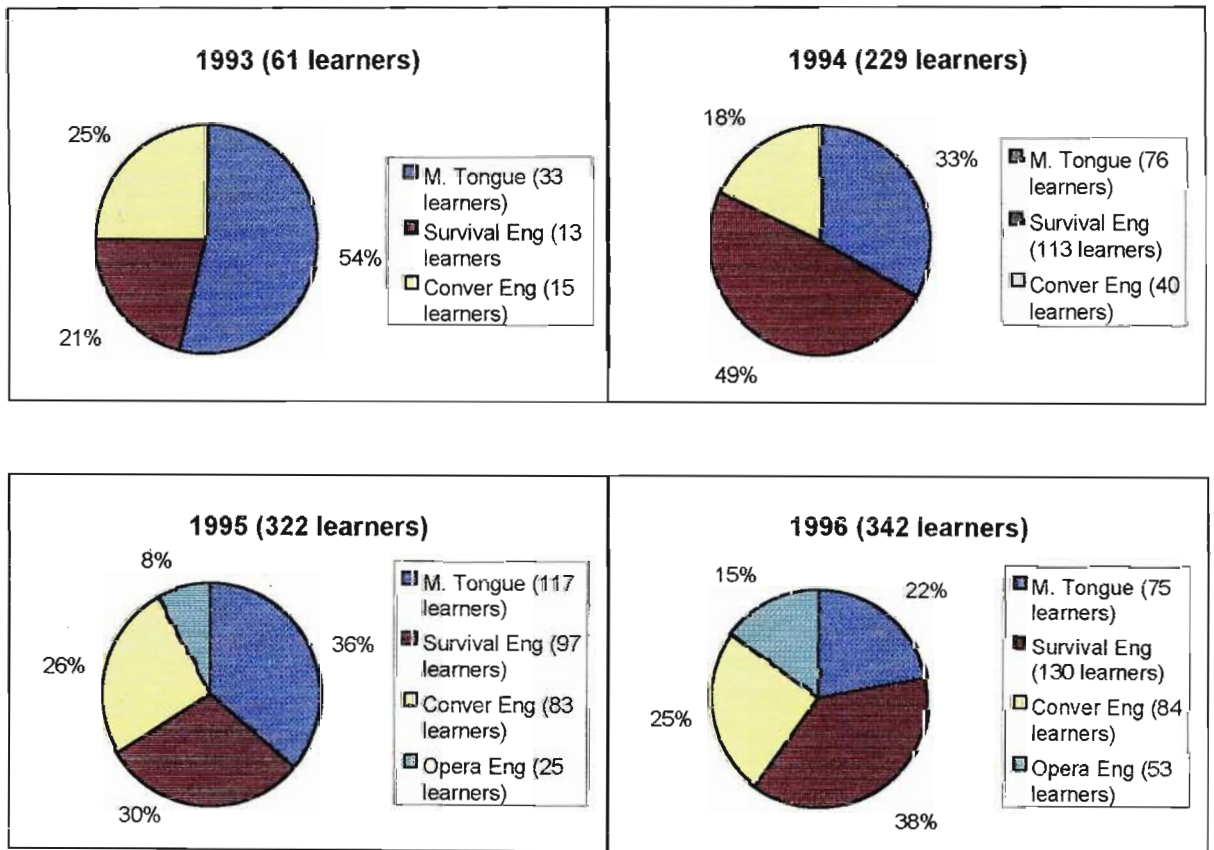
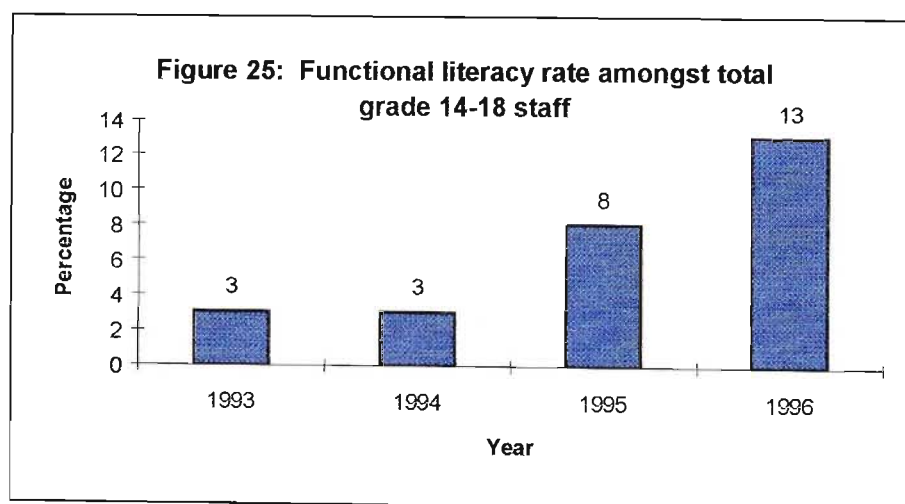
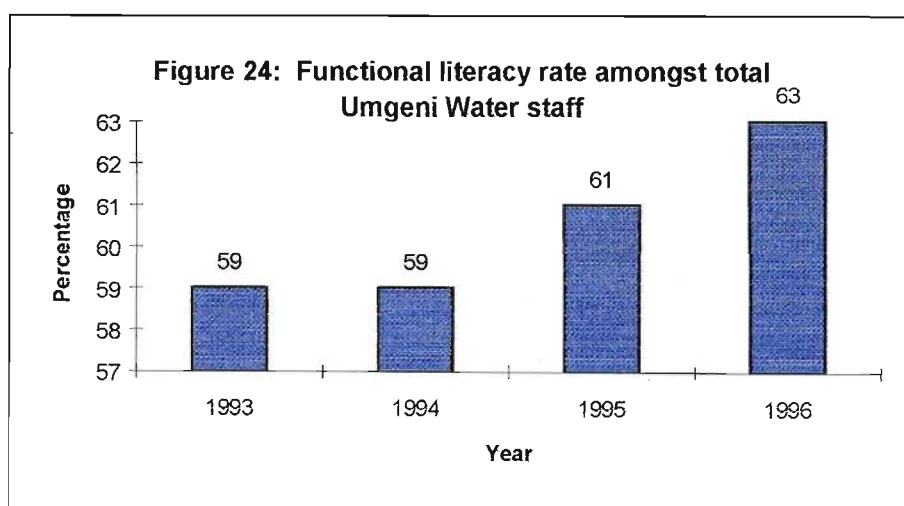


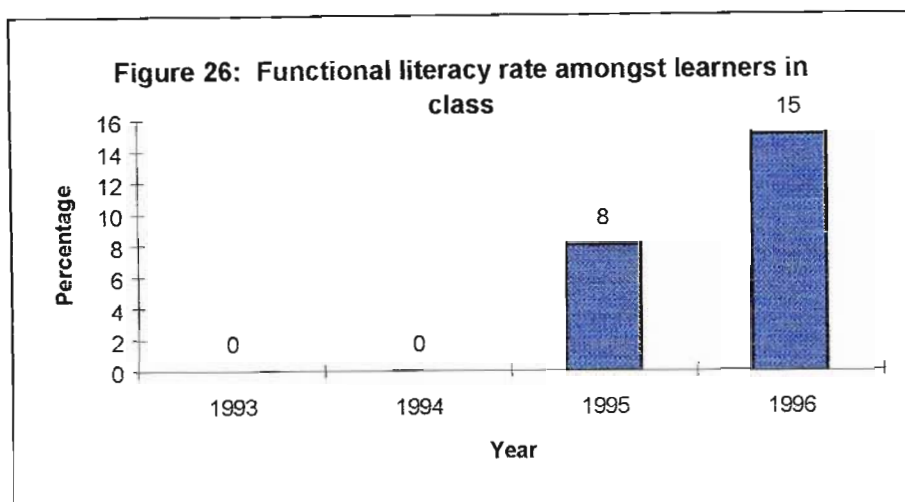
Figure 23: Distribution of learners in levels: 1993-1996



Learners were taking longer than expected to pass through levels, but progress was occurring and the number of learners waiting, steadily decreasing. One can conclude that in terms of meeting ABE functional literacy targets, the programme was moving in the right direction, but at a much slower rate than anticipated. This was confirmed by the gradually increasing overall functional literacy rate for all grade 14-18 employees. In June 1993 it stood at 3%, in June 1994 at 3%, in June 1995 at 8%, and in June 1996 at 13%.¹⁰



¹⁰ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, memorandum to the public relations manager from the adult education co-ordinator, 23 November 1995.



Independent Examinations Board results

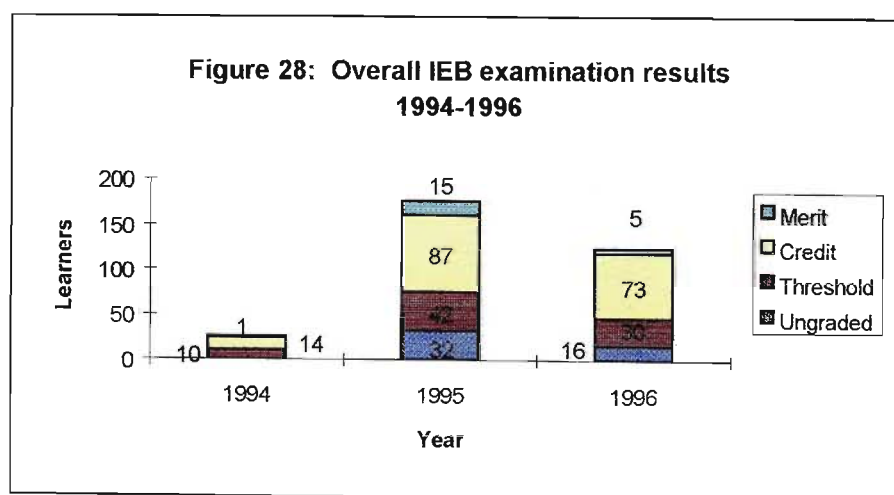
The IEB results provided an external benchmark against which to measure educational achievement. The examinations were piloted in 1994. The following table shows Umgeni Water IEB results from 1994-1996:

Figure 27: Umgeni Water Independent Examination Board pass rates : 1994-1996

LEVEL	1994		1995		1996	
	Pass	Wrote	Pass	Wrote	Pass	Wrote
1 ZULU	-	-	57% (18)	100% (32)	55% (11)	100% (20)
2 ZULU	-	-	50% (16)	100% (32)	47% (8)	100% (17)
1 ENG	-	-	48% (16)	100% (33)	71% (37)	100% (52)
2 ENG	-	-	62% (33)	100% (53)	43% (9)	100% (21)
3 ENG	58% (15)	100% (26)	73% (19)	100% (26)	93% (13)	100% (14)
OVERALL	58% (15)	100% (26)	58% (102)	100% (176)	63% (78)	100% (124)

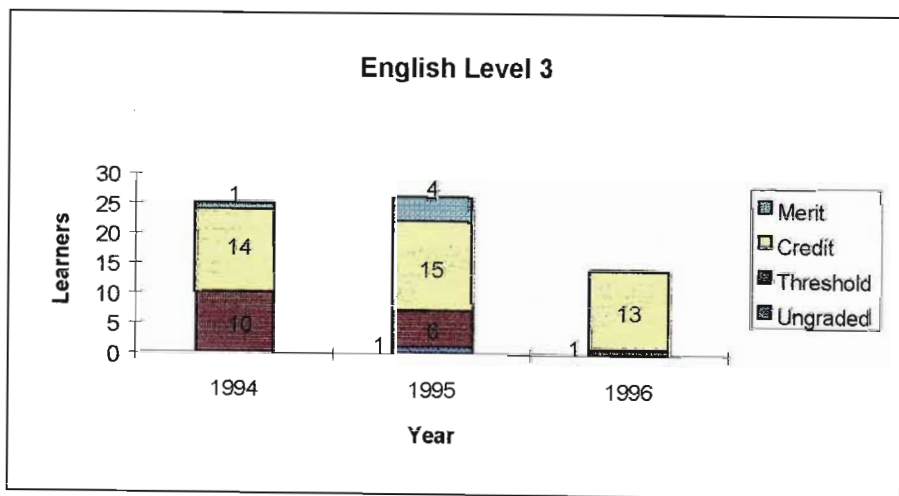
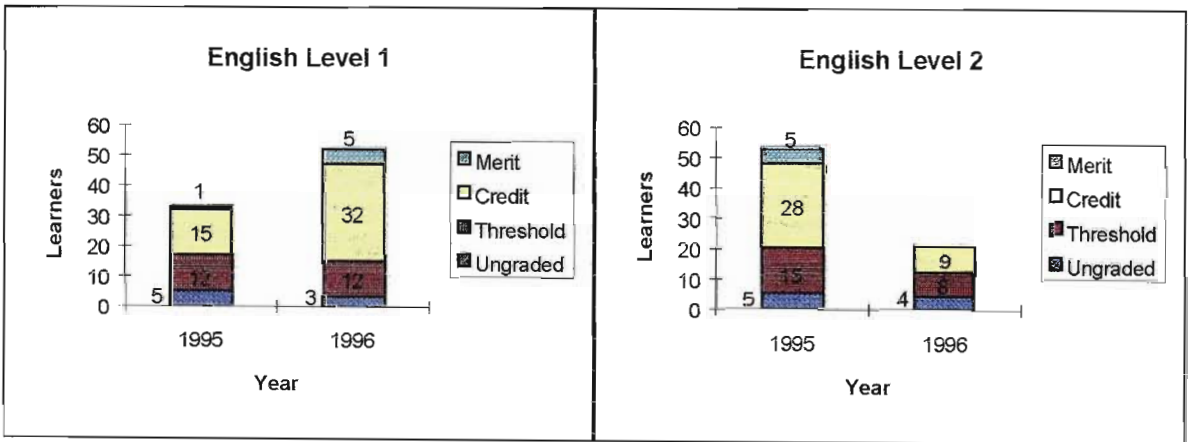
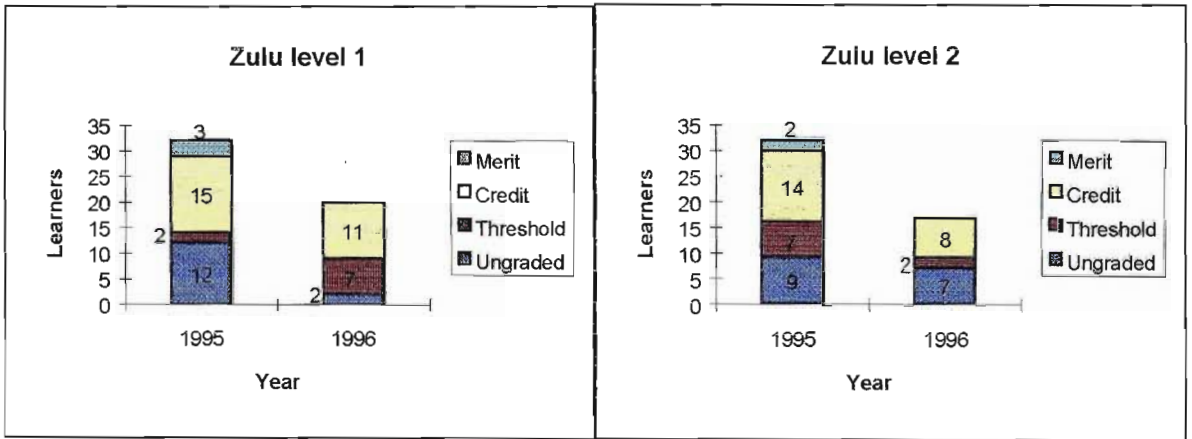
In the pilot English level three examination in 1994, a 58% pass rate was achieved for the 26 candidates entered (11% of all learners in classes). Of those, 4% passed with merit. In 1995, a 73% pass rate was achieved for the 26 level three candidates. Some 53 learners were entered for English level two, with a 62% pass rate. A further 33 learners entered English level one, with a 48% pass rate. Some 32 candidates wrote Zulu level two, with a 50% pass rate. A further 32 entrants wrote Zulu level one, with a 57% pass rate. Of the 176 candidates for 1995 (55% of all learners in class), the overall pass rate was 58%. Of those 9% passed with merit.

Combined statistics for the July and October 1996 examinations revealed that 93% of the fourteen English level three candidates passed, 43% of the 21 English level two candidates, 71% of the 52 English level one candidates, 47% of the seventeen Zulu level two candidates, and 55% of the twenty Zulu level one candidates. For the 124 candidates entered (36% of all learners in class), an overall pass rate of 63% was achieved.¹¹



¹¹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, IEB results lists, 1994-1996.

Figure 29: IEB examination results per level: 1994-1996



The steadily improving pass rate for level three learners, which stood at 93% at the end of 1996, indicated that success was being achieved at this level, the target level set in the ABE policy document. The overall pass rate was also improving. 63% in 1996 was adequate considering that facilitators and learners were finding their feet with regard to standards. The lower pass rates for levels one and two, can be explained in that learners at the lower levels had had less exposure to schooling, and were presumably more unnerved by the examination situation. Learners at the lower levels were often older with more learning handicaps such as poor eyesight. A greater facilitator turn-over had also occurred at these levels. This impacted negatively, as new facilitators had to familiarise themselves with what the IEB expected. Finally, the IEB itself was still in the process of piloting levels one and two and establishing standards. These factors explained the poorer results.

In sum, an examination of measurable learner results at Umgeni Water from 1993-1996, leads to interesting conclusions:

1. Progress was slower than predicted.
2. Rate of progress varied from learner to learner.
3. However, progression was taking place.

The functional literacy rate at Umgeni Water was gradually increasing. One can conclude that rather than the programme being off track, the 1998 functional literacy target was unrealistic and needed to be revisited.

CHAPTER 7

ABE IMPACT

At the end of 1996, ABE at Umgeni Water had been running for eight years - on a small scale for five, and throughout the company for a further three. Reasons for implementation had been a combination of educational upliftment, improved company functioning, and enhanced public relations. Educational upliftment covered areas such as improved literacy and communication levels, increased self esteem, empowerment and social responsibility. It was an outcome expected by learners, unions, supervisors and managers alike. Improved company functioning covered expectations related to productivity such as trainability, promotability, safety, company ethos and loyalty, and was an expectation applicable to all stakeholders. Enhanced public image was an outcome expected by senior management and MANCO. Were these expectations met? By the end of 1996, what was the impact of the Umgeni Water ABE programme? Was it ultimately true to its mission statement elucidated in the ABE policy document?

The impact of an adult basic education programme on a workplace environment is difficult to measure. Literacy acquisition is by nature slow, and the link to productivity nebulous. ABE deals with human beings, who are not machines that will guarantee a certain output given certain inputs. Issues related to human behaviour, such as increased self esteem, are intangible. Conclusions on programme impact were drawn from quantitative material such as academic and statistical records, and qualitative methods such as questionnaires and interviews. These revealed the positive impact of ABE at Umgeni Water.

EDUCATIONAL UPLIFTMENT

Results

Statistical data on learner progress discussed in the previous chapter, revealed a functional literacy rate amongst grade 14-18 staff that had increased from 3% in 1993 to 13% in 1996. The overall IEB pass rate had increased from 58% in 1994 to 63% in 1996. The English level three pass rate (functional literacy level) had increased from 58% in 1994 to 93% in 1996. The conclusion reached was that literacy acquisition was occurring, though at a much slower rate than predicted and with significant differences in progress between individuals. The expectation of functional literacy by 1998, expressed in the policy document, was not fulfilled. Based on experience, slower progress was more realistic than original targets set. General educational upliftment of the workforce was provided. In this respect, the educational impact of the programme was positive.

Learner feedback

Written comments from learners reflected the fulfilment of educational expectations from the majority of this group. A Durban Heights learner reported that classes had helped him 'explain about my family in English, which is something I couldn't do before.' Another reported that 'it's helped me to speak to the managers without no problems.' An E&C learner said, 'I can teach my children the easy way to speak English, and show them how does the family tree look.' Another said he could 'read some of the sentences in the Bible.' One learner said he could 'write some words without looking at them.' A further said, 'there was some words which I did not know. Now I can tell you what it means.' He reported that classes were appreciated by people who had had no opportunity to learn. A coastal learner said that classes had 'helped me a lot because I can see my way forward.' He went on to express a need for them to continue:

'What I am asking you is to please continue (giving us lessons), do not stop what

you are doing. These are very helpful to the people who have never been to school. They will get an opportunity to learn to read and to write letters to anyone they like. People will be able to read their own letters for themselves.' ¹

What these comments suggested was that intangible benefits such as improved self esteem amongst learners were being met (the 1996 evaluation reached the same conclusion). ² Someone who could not read, could now do so, as well as read the Bible for himself. Improved company loyalty was suggested by comments expressing appreciation for classes, and requests for them to continue.

Drop outs

One anomaly that needs investigation is the steadily increasing drop out rate from the programme. Drop outs implied that for some learners expectations were not being met. When ABE was offered company wide in 1994, 26 employees in the target group (5%) abstained. Some 74 learners (14%) dropped out of classes during 1994. At the end of 1995 this had increased to 143 learners (25%). ³

Umgeni Water offered ABE during company time. Apart from shift workers, learners were not required to come in their own time. This should have lessened programme drop out. Why, then, was it so high? Possible reasons were long term commitment, unrealistic expectations, travelling, learning and physical disabilities, old age, disinterest, fear of returning after a period of absence, inappropriate materials, incorrect screening resulting in learners being placed in the wrong level, and inappropriate facilitation.

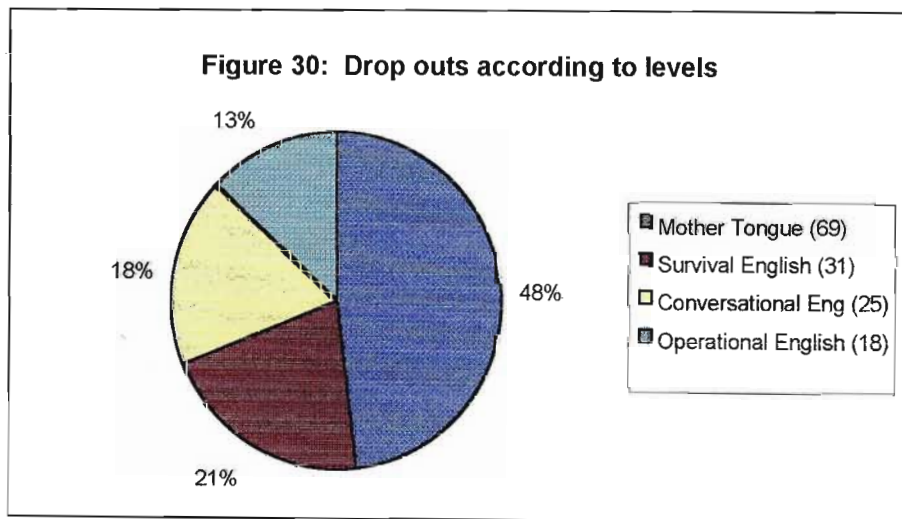
¹ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, 'Now I can....' (Unpublished promotional poster, Pietermaritzburg, 1993).

² Weyer, 'Umgeni Water Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programme Evaluation', Executive Summary.

³ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, K. Weyer 'Courses implemented to date' (Unpublished typescript, Pietermaritzburg, 1993), p. 2.

For shift workers, own time was an issue. Some 39 people, or 23% of all drop outs, worked shift, which suggested that the use of own time was a significant factor affecting attendance. Competing job demands also caused learners to drop out. This was an inherently negative problem specific to a workplace programme. To pinpoint exactly what factors were most influential in causing drop outs is difficult.

The highest drop out rate occurred amongst mother tongue learners and decreased steadily as the literacy level increased:



By the end of 1995, 69 people, or 48% of all drop outs, were mother tongue. Of these 69 people, the ages of 57 were available. Of these 57 mother tongue drop outs, 29 people, or 51%, were over the age of 50.⁴ This suggested that age was a significant factor affecting attendance. From Survival English to Operational English, the drop out rate got progressively lower: 31 people, or 21% dropped out of Survival English; 25 people, or 18%,

⁴ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, literacy data base on Q&A Version 3.0 computer software.

dropped out of Conversational English; and 18 people, or 13%, dropped out of Operational English. The remaining 26 people had abstained from the programme from the start.

These figures suggested that people at a lower level of literacy were more apt to become daunted by the task that confronted them and give up. People with some schooling realised the potential world that literacy opened up and were therefore more prepared to persevere. That the drop out rate increased each year and was as high as 25% by the beginning of 1996, suggested that it was a problem that needed to be investigated and addressed. For some learners, educational expectations were not being met. This was more likely because expectations were unrealistic in the first place, than because of a substantial weakness within the programme.

IMPROVED COMPANY FUNCTIONING

Management feedback

The relationship between ABE and increased productivity is difficult to measure. Qualitative feedback included comments from supervisors and managers in questionnaires sent out by Ward and Weyer. These suggested that the programme was having a positive impact on company functioning. For example, one Mkondeni superintendent, Colin Grey, reported 'easier and more confident communication'. E&C Services manager, Lesley Munger, reported that staff on the course 'appeared to be very much more motivated.'⁵ This formal feedback was collaborated by informal discussion and individual anecdotes. Zama Ngcobo, superintendent at Nagle Dam, reported that security guards were using their radios with more confidence. Vic Hydes of D.V. Harris reported that employees were signing their

⁵ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, ABE records, R. Ward, 'English Literacy Programme Questionnaire' (Unpublished literacy questionnaire, Pietermaritzburg, 1991), reply by L. Munger

names for the first time, and filling in their own leave forms.⁶ Such comments suggested that supervisors and managers felt that the programme was helping learners in terms of self confidence and job performance. The 1996 evaluation recorded comments that mentioned improved communication and cross cultural tolerance, relationships and team work.⁷

Training and promotions

Qualitative feedback on the impact of ABE on company functioning can be supported to some extent by quantitative results. In terms of learners who attended job specific training courses, no records were available, although in the 1996 evaluation, managers did report improved effectiveness of in-house training courses, which they attributed to literacy.⁸ Umgeni Water figures for promotions, upgradings and transfers from July 1993 to July 1996, indicated that of the 242 promotions in the grade 14 - 18 category, 140 of these people, or 58%, attended literacy classes.⁹ That 42% (102 people) did not attend literacy classes suggested that, in fact, participation in classes did not substantially affect a worker's chance of promotion.

Safety

An analysis of the Umgeni Water disabling injury frequency rate (hereafter cited as DIFR), which gave the average percentage of accidents during the year, showed that from October 1992 to October 1993, 26 injuries occurred with a DIFR of 10.2%. From October 1993 to October 1994, 27 injuries occurred with a DIFR of 10.4%. From October 1994 to October 1995, 22 injuries occurred with a DIFR of 8.96%.¹⁰ Figures for 1996 were incomplete. Thus

⁶ Umgeni Water, Training and Development Department, informal discussion between S. Frost, Z. Ngcobo and V. Hydes (1994).

⁷ Weyer, 'Umgeni Water Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programme Evaluation', 4.2.3.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Umgeni Water, Human Resource Services Department, H. Potgieter 'Promotions / upgrading / transfers' (Umgeni Water promotion, upgrading and transfer records, 1991-1996).

¹⁰ Umgeni Water, Safety Services Department, 'Operations Services: Safety Services: NOSA Files: Accident Recording and Investigation: Injury / Disease Statistics' (9.4.2/4.13, vol 1, 1991-).

the number of safety related accidents dropped between 1994 and 1995. These quantitative methods of analysis suggested that literacy training was helping Umgeni Water meet its need for improved safety. Comments in the 1996 evaluation reflected this perception.¹¹ Such statistics can be misleading, however. Names and accident descriptions were available for disabling injuries in the inland region from November 1995 - October 1996. 33% of these people were in literacy classes, 41% were illiterate and not in classes, and 26% were functionally literate already. All these figures proved, therefore, was that a greater percentage of safety related injuries occurred amongst illiterate people. In any case, many accidents were beyond the individual's control and not related to literacy, for example, when a roof collapsed under a worker.¹² Such statistics did not prove a direct correlation. At best they suggested a possible influence of ABE on improved company functioning and productivity.

IMPROVED PUBLIC RELATIONS

Internally

In terms of contributing to an image of Umgeni Water as a progressive company, certain indicators suggested that ABE helped in this case. Internally, awareness raising efforts such as video newsletter and *Flowmeter* coverage, the *Siyathuthuka* magazine and International Literacy Day celebrations put literacy on the map. They encouraged staff to believe that their well-being was being attended to, which in turn enhanced company loyalty. The Recruitment Officer reported that the knowledge of literacy training provision was often cited by potential grade 14 - 18 employees during interviews, as a reason for wanting to join the company.¹³

¹¹ Weyer, 'Umgeni Water Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programme Evaluation', Executive Summary.

¹² Umgeni Water, Safety Services Department, 'Monthly Accidents / Incidents Report 1995/6' (Ref. 4.12/14).

¹³ Personal interview with Myrtle Donnell, Pietermaritzburg, 24 November 1995.

Externally

Externally, the literacy seminars organised by Camp and Ward in conjunction with the CAE in the early 1990s gave Umgeni Water ABE good publicity. In November 1994, the Black Management Forum (hereafter cited as BMF) elected Umgeni Water as the most progressive company in South Africa during 1994. The affirmative action programme and ABE programme contributed towards this award.¹⁴ Further positive external publicity was achieved when the Umgeni Water ABE programme was filmed as part of a national series on ABE for television in 1995. Also in 1995, the co-ordinator was invited to present a case study on Umgeni Water ABE at two conferences in Johannesburg arranged by business conference organisers, International Executive Communications. In 1996, she presented a paper at a world conference on literacy in Philadelphia. This promoted Umgeni Water's image internationally.

Positive feedback was received from the external ABE world. The ABE support agency, NASA, sent its internship students to Umgeni Water to observe lessons. In 1995, twelve companies interested in starting ABE approached the co-ordinator for advice. Bona magazine piloted its educational materials, 'Learn and Teach', through Umgeni Water classes.¹⁵ In 1996, the programme was shortlisted for the national Gilbey's ABE award. Such indicators suggested that Umgeni Water had a positive public profile, which reflected well on Umgeni Water as a whole and implied that the expected output of improved public relations was being met.

¹⁴ Umgeni Water, Public Relations Department, 'Umgeni Water Annual Report: 1994-1995', p. 1.

¹⁵ Umgeni Water, literacy co-ordinator monthly report, report for 1995, p. 5.

IMPACT

At the end of 1996, ABE was running throughout Umgeni Water. This had been made possible by MANCO approval, and suggestions from BESA such as the formation of an ABE forum and policy document. The ABE policy document had given the programme a baseline of rules from which to operate and settle disputes. It had provided the programme with a mission statement, namely, to provide employees 'with opportunities for personal development'; to meet training and development needs via the provision of literacy and numeracy courses; and to develop all interested employees to a level of 'functional literacy competency, by the end of 1998'.¹⁶ In terms of accommodating 342 learners in classes in 1996, the programme had fulfilled its mission to reach all interested employees and offer them opportunities for personal development. The social responsibility expectation had been fulfilled. In terms of the policy's educational mission, literacy needs were being met to a greater extent than numeracy ones, although these had not been neglected completely. In terms of target dates set, statistics suggested that literacy targets required a much longer time frame. Functional literacy would not be met by 1998. One can conclude that the ABE programme at Umgeni Water was having a positive impact. It was reaching 88% of the target group by 1996. With the exception of the 1998 target date, it was generally in line with its mission statement. The 1998 functional literacy target date reflected a misconception with regard to the rate of literacy acquisition, rather than ineffective teaching.

The exact nature of the impact of ABE at Umgeni Water was difficult to measure. Correlation between ABE and an immediate increase in production was nebulous. Correlation between education upliftment and ABE was more defined. Course lengths pointed to a long term commitment in this respect, with few immediate results or rewards. The link between ABE

¹⁶ Umgeni Water, 'The Umgeni Water Adult Education Policy', p. 1.

and public relations was more visible and immediate. Many benefits lay in the realm of life skills, self esteem, public image, motivation, company loyalty and training potential. They were difficult to measure precisely. The very intangibility of these benefits suggested that investment in ABE was in fact a long term vision. ABE was not a quick fix.

COST

Finally, it would be valuable to note the impact of ABE at Umgeni Water in relation to costs incurred. Such an exercise is extremely difficult, in that no records exist with regard to how much the programme cost in its early stages. Although unreliable, a rough estimate (which ignores inflation) can be given if one applies the 1995 figure of R2 800 per learner,¹⁷ to previous years. Using this method, the actual costs of ABE to Umgeni Water (salaries, materials, stationary, transport and productivity hours lost) are estimated as follows: R89 600 in 1989 (32 learners), R117 600 in 1990 and 1991 respectively (42 learners), R140 000 in 1992 (50 learners), R170 800 in 1993 (61 learners), R641 200 in 1994 (229 learners), R901 600 in 1995 (322 learners), and R957 600 in 1996 (342 learners).

As more learners joined the programme and it spread throughout the organisation, costs rose. More facilitators were needed and more productivity hours were lost. If one considers that literacy cost the Training and Development department less than one sixth of its budget in 1995,¹⁸ the cost of ABE does not appear too high considering the programme's generally positive impact.

¹⁷ Weyer, 'Umgeni Water Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programme Evaluation', Executive Summary.

¹⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 8

OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The preceding chapters provided a largely narrative account of the history of adult basic education at Umgeni Water. It is necessary to summarise the implementation process between 1989-1996 before analysis is possible, and a generic model for implementation of ABE within an industrial setting extracted. Salient features of Camp, Ward, Weyer and Frost's periods of co-ordination, need to be highlighted.

OVERALL REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three distinct reasons for ABE implementation are traceable at Umgeni Water - social/educational responsibility, enhanced public relations, and improved company productivity:

- * The **general educational upliftment** of its grade 14-18 staff was seen by Umgeni Water to be part of its social responsibility. South Africa had a high illiteracy rate. 1990 was declared International Literacy Year.
- * ABE presented a **useful public relations tool** to promote the company's image both internally and externally. At a time of increasing union pressure, changing political climate and black advancement, ABE looked progressive.
- * International pressure forced South African industries to become competitive and **improve productivity**. The expectation that ABE provided an education base for further skills training,

and increased staff promotability, loyalty, communicative ability and productivity, led many industries to believe that its implementation would be desirable. Umgeni Water was influenced by this movement.

Reasons for implementation were interwoven, not always conscious, and varied in emphasis over time.

CAMP (1989-1990): EARLY BEGINNINGS

The first period of co-ordination was that of Stephen Camp, from 1989-1990. In this phase, Camp drove the programme with the active backing of his manager, van Deventer. Impetus for literacy came from them.

Under Camp, literacy was informal, *ad hoc*, and small scale, only part of his job as Training Officer. No separate budget existed. Literacy was a 'nice thing to do', an educational quick fix for workers. Reasons for implementation were primarily social, and to a lesser extent public relations motivated. Learner numbers were small. Classes were demand driven and run at three dams, two waterworks and three wastewater works. Learners volunteered and were recommended by their supervisors. Classes were not successful at the workshops. Classes were held for two hours' company time and two hours' private time. No formal implementation plan was followed. Classes were most successful on site, with line management support.

Operation Upgrade provided outside advice, materials and teaching method, because Umgeni Water was new to the field of literacy. Materials were content based and focused on mother tongue and beginner English. The educational philosophy of Operation Upgrade advocated functional literacy, or literacy that was useful and which enabled the learner to live and work better. Operation Upgrade conducted no detailed pre course assessment, company or learner needs analysis. Programme content stressed reading and writing rather than work and life skills. Part-time DET teachers were employed, but were judged unsuccessful because of unreliability, alcohol related problems and didactic teaching methods.

Senior management reaction to ABE was generally positive. Line management support was erratic, and decreased with an increase in logistical and workplace demands. Awareness raising for management and line management took the form of consultation, letters, advertisements and outings. Union input was minimal.

The external image of Umgeni Water was promoted via a literacy seminar on 26 September 1990, held in Durban in conjunction with the CAE. This addressed problems faced by commerce and industry because of illiteracy, and was opened by the CEO, an indication of his support. The literacy seminar developed external contacts in terms of materials development. The development of water education material precipitated the redeployment of Camp away from Umgeni Water's literacy programme.

In sum, under Camp the programme was co-ordinator dominated, small scale and demand driven - a 'nice, pro active thing to do'. In this it was essentially successful. A

wait and see attitude concerned its long term future. No in-depth needs analysis or cohesive implementation plan was followed, apart from general awareness raising and Operation Upgrade guidelines. Line, management and CEO support were critical.

In terms of impact, no independent measurement was taken apart from Operation Upgrade tests. Facilitators did not always deliver the goods, so the educational output of this period was nebulous. No formal evaluation was undertaken. However, it was the first time Umgeni Water had shown an interest in its unskilled workforce. This was appreciated and contributed to learner support for the programme. The result was improved internal and external public relations.

WARD (1991-1992): A PILOT PROJECT

For 1991 and 1992, Rosemary Ward co-ordinated the programme. The nature of this period was that of an extremely well planned pilot from which lessons would be learnt for possible future expansion. Ward, however, was employed on contract. A pilot project proposal was submitted to MANCO in September 1991. It spelt out the necessity for a needs analysis, screening of learners, consultation, awareness raising, report back, research, in-house materials, and evaluation. Some 42 learners participated in classes in 1991, and 50 in 1992. Classes concentrated on the inland region and were demand driven. Again, learners volunteered once their manager had given his support to the idea. An educational philosophy focused around functional literacy, which included literacy, numeracy, life and work skills. Learners were assessed using Learn and Teach tests and divided into three broad categories, namely, beginner, intermediate and

advanced English. Small numbers necessitated mixed ability teaching. Operation Upgrade mother tongue classes continued at Hammarsdale using DET teachers.

Ward employed a needs based, process approach. Her pilot was go it alone and in-house. The focus was practical, and stressed communication, life skills and work modules. Apart from a carry over of Operation Upgrade mother tongue, Ward moved away from an external, content based provider. Implementation remained essentially top down and co-ordinator driven, with no union involvement or steering committee support. Within this framework, however, Ward placed great emphasis on awareness raising and consultation. Class times and attendance were arranged in consultation with management around workplace pressures. In September 1991 Ward conducted needs analyses with management, line management and learners. She extracted perceptions of literacy, expectations of the programme, practical suggestions on implementation, and perceived impact to date. Management desired improved communication skills for improved work performance. Learners wanted work and life skills materials. These questionnaires acted as an informal evaluation of the programme, which elicited majority management and line management support. Informal feedback included increased company ethos, worker confidence and communicative ability.

Problems faced by Ward included indifference and negativity from specific individuals, unrealistic expectations from learners and management alike, problematic attendance and punctuality amongst learners, a tension between production and teaching demands, small classes necessitating mixed ability teaching, inherited DET teachers,

and an unavailability of good resources on the market. Such problems led to the realisation of the need to formalise the programme. Structure was necessary to expand, as was a guiding policy and formal stakeholder input. Ward submitted these proposals to MANCO in September 1992. She recommended a thorough needs analysis, literacy screening for all grade 14-18 employees, an ABE policy, a representative forum, and employment of the external consultants, BESA. Shortly after the acceptance of this proposal by MANCO, Ward left Umgeni Water, because of frustrations and lack of security in her job, combined with opportunities offered elsewhere.

In sum, Ward's period of co-ordination represented a planned, successful pilot. It met expectations and ended with a proposal for expansion and formalisation, through the adoption of a guiding policy, forum and external consultant. Co-ordinator driven, the pilot was in-house and process orientated. Work modules reflected a shift in thinking. Literacy was no longer predominantly seen in terms of social responsibility, but also as a way to improve workplace performance. Needs investigation, consultation, awareness raising and an attempt to accommodate work pressures was evident. Support came from all stakeholders. Reservations revolved around workplace demands. Ward enjoyed the support of the CEO. He opened the 1992 Pietermaritzburg literacy seminar sponsored by Umgeni Water, and in the same year sent her to an international literacy conference in New York.

WEYER (1993-1994): EXPANSION

1993-1994, the period of co-ordination of Kim Weyer, marked the expansion of ABE throughout the company. This was facilitated by the formulation and adoption of an

ABE policy, and the establishment of an ABE forum to guide and monitor. In the implementation of a full scale programme, Weyer consulted BESA.

Groundwork for full scale implementation took a year. Reasons included a break in continuity with the handover of co-ordination, bureaucratic red tape, and MANCO indifference. A representative ABE forum of 12 people drawn from learners, unions, line management, management and human resources, finally met on 24 August 1993, one year after its proposal. This body was drawn from a larger forum which met on 27 July 1993. The ABE forum submitted the ABE policy to MANCO, which was passed in November 1993. The forum was the first attempt to involve all stakeholders equally, including learners and unions, in the running of the ABE programme. It was an attempt to pass responsibility for the programme onto stakeholders and thereby ensure their co-operation, and the programme's legitimacy.

The ABE policy was crucial in the successful establishment of ABE company wide. It was an instrument that facilitated smooth implementation. Although drafted originally by Ward, its adoption by the forum theoretically passed programme ownership to stakeholders. However, the policy was not publicised beyond the forum. This lessened its effectiveness as a monitoring tool. The acceptance of the policy by MANCO represented formal CEO and director support. The policy placed ABE within the broad social responsibility role of Umgeni Water. It incorporated part of the company's mission statement, namely, that 'in return for their efficient, productive and loyal service,' Umgeni Water would provide its employees 'with opportunities for personal development.' The policy set levels and targets for the programme, namely, functional

literacy for all interested employees by the end of 1998. It spelt out courses to be offered, along the BESA continuum of mother tongue, Survival, Conversational and Operational English, as well as numeracy, and Zulu for management. It clarified potentially troublesome areas such as time allocation (four hours company time), transport (Umgeni Water's responsibility), attendance (80% compulsory for promotion to the next level), and work pressure (removal of learners allowed for emergency situations). It prioritised learners who needed mother tongue literacy and literacy for their jobs, and it stipulated a method of monitoring the programme through monthly reports.

The move to BESA represented the adoption of a product based, systems approach of programme implementation, and a move back towards an internal programme with an external consultant. BESA recommendations reinforced lessons learnt from experience. As an implementation model BESA recommended initial consultation with all stakeholders, the conduction of an ABE needs analysis, the establishment of a representative forum, the adoption of an ABE policy, awareness raising, selection of facilitators, screening of learners, arrangement of class logistics, ordering of materials, class implementation, and finally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation. BESA's influence on the Umgeni Water programme was felt in the field of implementation, formal consultation, materials, and facilitator training.

Weyer initially concentrated on awareness raising, screening of learners throughout the company, the establishment of a literacy data base, and individual consultation. No formal needs analysis was undertaken. Screening results for 1993 showed that 46% of

potential learners required mother tongue literacy, 24% required Survival English, 27% required Conversational English, and only 3% were above the functional literacy level and required Operational or Advanced English. Of Umgeni Water's unskilled workforce (42% of company employees), 97% were functionally illiterate, or below ABE level three (standard five).

In 1993 seven classes were implemented using the continuum of BESA marketed materials. These materials stressed literacy and life skills. Once MANCO approved the policy, 22 classes were implemented company wide at the beginning of 1994. This involved 240 learners at all levels out of a potential 560. Four full time contract facilitators conducted classes. Weyer left in May 1994 because of dissatisfaction with conditions of her contract position, combined with a job offer from BESA.

In sum, Weyer's period marked the successful establishment of a company wide programme driven by demand, the establishment of a forum representing more democratic involvement of stakeholders, an ABE policy to act as bench mark, a literacy data base, and the use of an external consultant who advocated a systems approach to implementation. Materials were communicative, competency based and arranged along a learning continuum. Classes were run by trained, full time professionals. Implementation was planned and followed through in detail. There was wide-scale consultation and awareness raising, a sensitivity to job demands and an attempt to work round them, and increasing stakeholder support owing to the accumulative effect of ongoing awareness raising over several years. Essentially the programme remained

co-ordinator driven, and the forum, management dominated. Van Deventer continued to provide practical support at senior management level.

FROST (1994-1996): CONSOLIDATION

The final period of co-ordination was that of Frost, who took over from Weyer in June 1994. Frost's period was one of consolidation. The position of co-ordinator became permanent. This indicated changing perceptions about the long term nature of adult education at Umgeni Water. Five full time, professional literacy facilitators were employed. They remained on contract, however. The programme was not regarded as indefinite. Although contracts were vastly improved, lack of security resulted in a high facilitator turnover.

An increasing percentage of the target group was accommodated in classes, as indicated in the following table:

Figure 31: Numbers of learners in classes

	CAMP		WARD		WEYER		FROST	
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
No's in class	32	42	42	50	61	229	322	342
Total illiterate gr 14-18	684	652	514	514	514	514	510	505
% of Total	5%	6%	8%	10%	12%	45%	63%	68%

ABE was reaching its target audience. Entry of remaining learners was staggered until 1998 in consultation with line management, to accommodate work pressures.

Facilitators gradually moved away from reliance on BESA's materials, towards an eclectic approach and the production of their own materials around learner work and life skill needs, and around Independent Examination Board outcomes. The advent of the IEB dominated this period. Learners were entered for IEB examinations at all levels. The results were as follows:

Figure 32: Umgeni Water Independent Examination Board pass rates : 1994-1996

LEVEL	1994		1995		1996	
	Pass	Wrote	Pass	Wrote	Pass	Wrote
1 ZULU	-	-	57% (18)	100% (32)	55% (11)	100% (20)
2 ZULU	-	-	50% (16)	100% (32)	47% (8)	100% (17)
1 ENG	-	-	48% (16)	100% (33)	71% (37)	100% (52)
2 ENG	-	-	62% (33)	100% (53)	43% (9)	100% (21)
3 ENG	58% (15)	100% (26)	73% (19)	100% (26)	93% (13)	100% (14)
OVERALL	58% (15)	100% (26)	58% (102)	100% (176)	63% (78)	100% (124)

A comparison of pass rates involves the comparison of samples of very different sizes. One can therefore draw conclusions from such different samples with only limited confidence. Nevertheless, for the co-ordinator and Umgeni Water management, the IEB acted as an external benchmark against which to measure the educational output of the Umgeni Water programme. Average pass rates at levels one and two indicated to them

that work needed to be done at these levels. Learners at these levels were often older and unacquainted with the examination situation, which hindered performance. Facilitator turnover was high at these levels, and thus facilitators were inexperienced with regard to standards, which the IEB was still piloting in any case. Facilitators needed to gauge correctly what level to enter learners at, and acquaint themselves with outcomes expected by the IEB at each level and expose learners to these standards. The improvement in English level one results suggested that facilitator and learner experience and knowledge of standards had been acquired at this level.

An improving pass rate for English level three, from 58% in 1994 to 73% in 1995 to 93% in 1996, suggested to Umgeni Water stakeholders a similar success in this area. Exams had run for an extra year at level three, and thus facilitators had had more experience with standards. A 63% pass rate for all levels in 1996 was an improvement on 1994 (58%) and 1995 (57%), and led to the belief within the Umgeni Water programme that facilitators and learners were gradually getting a feel for IEB standards and learner outcomes expected. The IEB stress on competencies filtered back into learning at Umgeni Water. Learning became both process and product orientated.

Consultation was ongoing, but predominantly with line management and management. Problems continued to centre around production demands, and were accommodated as best as possible in terms of class times, composition, and venues. Frost did not utilize the ABE forum, which reflected her reservations as to its practical value at the consolidation stage of implementation. The programme still functioned effectively under the model of a strong co-ordinator backed by a senior manager. The ABE policy was

not publicised and therefore did not fulfill its role as a benchmark for disputes. Tension continued to rise over work demands and absenteeism. At the beginning of 1996 the programme carried a 25% drop out rate, attributed to old age, learning disabilities, incorrect placement, one unsuccessful facilitator, shift work and work pressure.

The first formal evaluation of ABE at Umgeni Water was undertaken in February 1996 by Weyer, in the capacity of external consultant. This concluded that the overall impact of the programme was successful. Improved educational standard, the expectation of all stakeholders, was measurable via results in the independent IEB examinations. Statistics showed that functional literacy (taken to mean the progression of learners from the Conversational English course into Operational English, or alternatively, passing the IEB level three examination) had increased from 3% in 1993 to 13% in 1996. The target set in the ABE policy of a functionally literate workforce by 1998 was unrealistic. Learner progress was slower than anticipated.

The benefit of improved public relations, an expectation of management and senior management, was measured by the increased public profile of the programme. Externally, Frost presented a paper at the World Conference on Literacy in Philadelphia in March 1996. Umgeni Water's programme was shown on national television. It contributed to the BMF award for progressiveness. Contact with other companies involved in ABE and external organisations such as NASA, the CAE and Tembaletu, promoted Umgeni Water's image. Internally, the programme developed its own logo, promotional pamphlet and video which were used for awareness raising. International literacy day celebrations, articles in *Flowmeter*, the *Siyathuthuka* magazine,

stakeholder workshops and video newsletter coverage all improved internal public relations.

The expectation of improved company productivity was difficult to measure quantitatively. Qualitative feedback from stakeholders, in the form of questionnaires and focus group discussions, pinpointed improved communicative ability and trainability. However, it also pointed to the desire from all stakeholders for more work skills to be incorporated into the programme.

In sum, Frost's period was one of consolidation, evaluation and adaptation of a company wide ABE programme. It represented a process and product approach to implementation, and a move away from the external provider, BESA, towards more self-reliance with regard to materials development. Educational standards were measured according to IEB, competency based examinations. The programme remained coordinator driven with little recourse to the ABE policy and forum. Whilst ABE developed an increasingly high profile, work demands remained the dominant tension. A formal evaluation of the programme provided proof that the impact of ABE in terms of education, public relations and to a lesser extent, long term productivity, was positive. It also illustrated that ABE was not a 'quick fix'. Learners progressed at different rates. The evaluation suggested that the ABE programme had the potential to develop beyond a 'literacy' programme. If linked with work skills training, it could contribute significantly towards career pathing and multi-skilling for grade 14-18 staff according to their individual needs. Such a recommendation pointed to a potentially new future for ABE at Umgeni Water.

CHAPTER 9

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

From 1989 to 1996, ABE at Umgeni Water moved from a small scale to a company wide operation. The narrative of this story has been told. As a new field of concern within the organisation, ABE implementation and evolution was through trial and error. Yet the programme was essentially successful. In one way or another the expected outputs of educational upliftment, improved company image, and a more trainable and productive workforce were met. What deeper meaning lay behind the story? Working on the premise that the programme was successful, what trends emerged? What influences were at play? What ambiguities were evident? What lessons could be learnt? What ingredients aided implementation? Were such ingredients generalisable as guiding principles for the implementation of ABE in other workplace contexts?

The following table summarises programme ingredients that contributed to the successful implementation of ABE at Umgeni Water. Each principle was extracted because its evidence proved clearly beneficial to smooth implementation at some stage in the Umgeni Water programme. The table shows the evidence or absence of these positive programme ingredients under each co-ordinator. It will be argued that these ingredients are generic and applicable to any industry based ABE programme.

Figure 33: Successful implementation ingredients at Umgeni Water

		CAMP	WARD	WEYER	FROST
1. High calibre staff / leadership	a. Manager	✓	✓	✓	✓
	b. Co-ordinator	✓	✓	✓	✓
	c. Facilitators	✓x	✓x	✓	✓
	d. Secure employment for continuity	✓x	x	x	✓x
2. Directed, demand-driven approach	a. Needs analysis	x	✓	✓x	✓x
	b. Demand focus	✓	✓	✓	✓
	c. Directed goal setting	x	✓	✓	✓
	d. Initial pilot	✓	✓✓	-	-
	e. Flexible process / product approach	x	✓x	✓x	✓
	f. Up-to-date data base and administration	✓x	✓x	✓	✓x
3. Written policy	a. Targets	x	x	✓	✓
	b. Clarity on controversial issues	x	x	✓	✓x
4. Stakeholder consultation	a. Ongoing personal consultation	✓	✓	✓	✓
	b. Awareness raising/ PR	✓	✓	✓	✓
	c. Representative steering committee / forum	x	x	✓	✓x
	d. External advice used as needed	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Management Support	a. CEO	✓	✓	✓	✓
	b. Senior management	✓	✓	✓	✓
	c. Line management	✓x	✓x	✓x	✓x
6. Production environ catered for	a. Job demands	✓	✓	✓	✓
	b. Logistical constraints	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Learner needs met	a. Professional screening and placement	✓xx	✓x	✓	✓
	b. Union and learner support	✓x	✓x	✓	✓
	c. Needs-based, continuum-orientated, learner-centred mats.	x	✓x	✓x	✓
8. Sufficient budget	a. Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
	b. Growth	✓x	✓x	✓x	✓x
9. Prog. evaluation	a. Formal evaluation	x	✓x	✓x	✓
	b. Measurable results	x	✓x	✓	✓

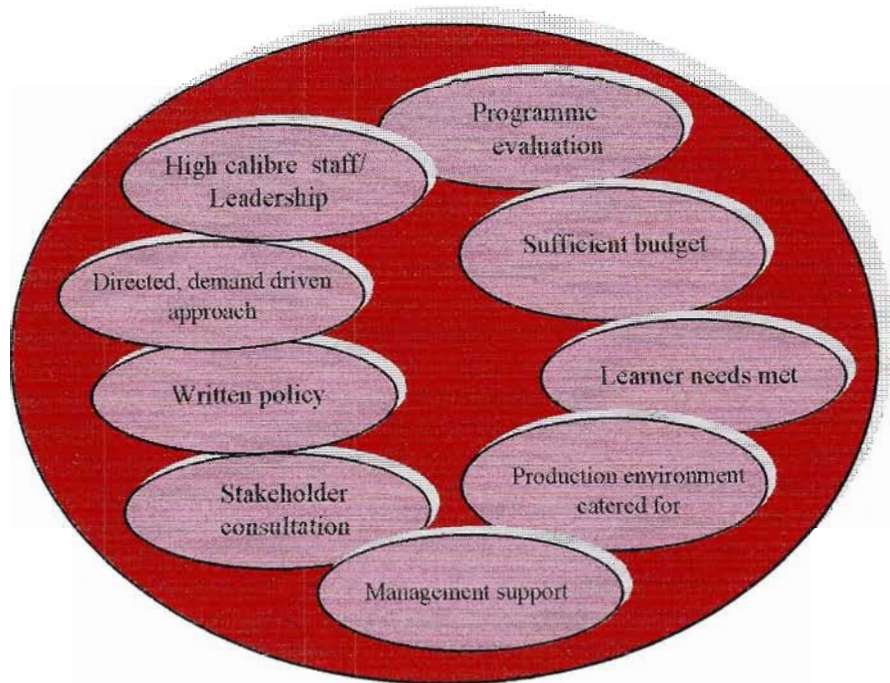
✓ = evident

x = absent

✓x = in some respects evident/absent

These implementation principles can be represented diagrammatically, to show how ingredients interacted dynamically with one another, and often occurred simultaneously:

Figure 34: Guiding principles for implementation



Collectively, the above factors contributed to the successful implementation of ABE at Umgeni Water. Two routes of inquiry arise. Firstly, it is necessary to decontextualise each highlighted ingredient so as to investigate whether it is applicable as a guiding principle for implementation with regard to other situations in other commercial programmes. One needs to consider the logic of each ingredient's extraction as a guideline generalisable to other contexts. Secondly, it is necessary to apply these guiding principles back to the Umgeni Water case study. When was each factor most evident? How were factors interconnected? What influence did each ingredient have

on the success of ABE? What were the implications of the absence of a certain input from specific periods in the programme? Each principle will now be investigated in the light of these two questions.

1. HIGH CALIBRE STAFF / LEADERSHIP

High calibre staff / leadership is posited as a generic guiding principle for ABE programme implementation. This refers to the necessity of a full-time co-ordinator to drive the implementation process and give it impetus; specific manager support to overcome obstacles at senior level within the company structure; and competent facilitators to ensure that the desired product, namely, learning, does in fact occur. Attractive terms of employment is an instrument to encourage the retention of key staff.

High calibre staff was extracted from the Umgeni Water experience because it proved a decisive factor in maintaining programme impetus. As an implementation ingredient it is applicable to other contexts because it reflects the influence of the individual on process. Such an influence operates above the level of specific context.

The Umgeni Water experience:

1. a-b. A strong, driving, full-time co-ordinator with senior support.

All four co-ordinators of the Umgeni Water programme believed in what they were doing. Without their individual efforts to drive the programme forward, it would have effectively died. They carried the load. Each had different strengths to contribute, such as ideas, insight, enthusiasm, organisation and perseverance. Large scale ABE needed full time

co-ordinator involvement. Because literacy was only part of Camp's job as Training Officer, the programme remained a part time project under his guidance.

Co-ordinators enjoyed senior support from Training and Development Manager, David van Deventer. Van Deventer provided backing when needed. He knew how to work the system. The combination of co-ordinator and senior manager effectively enabled opposition to be circumvented. When the Human Resources Director blocked Camp's proposal to set up a water education unit, Camp and van Deventer went straight to MANCO. Ward's 1991 pilot proposal and 1992 expansion proposal followed a similar route. When Weyer met with Human Resources Director indifference to forum and class implementation, she approached the Director of Operations instead. Van Deventer went straight to MANCO in his efforts to secure a permanent position for the ABE co-ordinator. A supportive manager made things happen at a senior level.

High calibre staff was integrally connected and fundamental to all other implementation ingredients. Management support and stakeholder consultation, for example, were not secured unless the co-ordinator saw the need for them and worked towards obtaining them. Levels of ABE staff were likewise interconnected. A dynamic manager to act as mentor encouraged co-ordinators to work harder. Similarly, co-ordinator commitment set a precedent for facilitator performance.

1.c Competent facilitators

The calibre of facilitator made or broke a literacy programme. Ultimately it was the facilitator who delivered the goods. If he or she was unable to facilitate effective adult

learning, money, time and effort invested were for naught, and levels of illiteracy remained the same.

Camp and Ward experienced difficulties with part time DET teachers. They found their teaching method autocratic and their level of commitment problematic. This led to infrequent classes which affected learning adversely. Frost and Weyer employed full time facilitators on contract. The majority of these people were degreed professionals. Frequency, reliability and standard of lessons improved accordingly. Learners expressed appreciation of the facilitation provided. The one experience Frost had of an unreliable facilitator proved the correlation between poor results, absenteeism and drop out amongst learners, and lack of dedication by the facilitator.

1.d. Secure employment for continuity

Adequate remuneration and job security was a necessary ingredient in retaining staff services. This was not often available in the Umgeni Water ABE programme and its absence had an adverse effect. Umgeni Water experienced a high turnover of facilitators and co-ordinators. Significant funds were invested in training of facilitators, only to have them leave because of contract insecurity. This proved costly and disruptive to learner progress. It had a detrimental effect on continuity within the ABE programme.

One reason Ward and Weyer left was because of dissatisfaction with their contract status. Camp and Frost, who were on permanent staff, remained at Umgeni Water. Loss of staff, however, cannot be attributed to insecure employment alone. Van

Deventer left in 1996 despite secure, well remunerated employment, which suggested other factors were at play. Ward left Umgeni Water for another short term contract position! Both Ward and Weyer accepted positions with external ABE organisations, Weyer with BESA and Ward with the CAE. This pointed to the 'wild-card' influence of the external ABE world on programme implementation within industry. Whilst useful advice could be obtained from outside organisations, the danger also existed for a workplace programme that competent staff would be 'poached'. This was a factor beyond programme management control.

Experience proved continuity in leadership to be desirable. It ensured that ideas were passed on and lessons learnt and applied. Ward was employed as a facilitator during Camp's period, and took over the reigns as he became more involved in water education. She benefited from his ideas and learnt from experience the disadvantages of using Operation Upgrade. This caused her to move towards an in-house, process based programme. Hand-over between Ward and Weyer was far more abrupt. The programme consequently slowed down as Weyer found her feet. Ward's classes stopped. The programme took a year to relaunch company wide. Frost benefited from ten months as a facilitator under Weyer. She helped with awareness raising, screening and class implementation. This ensured a smooth transition from one co-ordinator to the other. The ABE forum, however, fell through the cracks. Frost did not utilise it fully. She was not involved in its inception and therefore did not realise its potential. New co-ordinators brought new ideas and energy. Change of direction and focus, however, and a decrease in pace, were inevitable.

2. DIRECTED, DEMAND DRIVEN APPROACH

A directed, demand driven approach to ABE programme implementation is posited as a guiding principle generic to any workplace context. This refers to the meeting of stakeholder needs to ensure that the programme is relevant, beneficial, and has stakeholder co-operation. Stakeholder needs can be canvassed through the conduction of a formal needs analysis. It includes clear, demand-driven reasons for implementation so as to minimise dispute and impact on workplace productivity. It incorporates goal setting and planning, so as to give the programme direction and keep it relevant to company needs. An initial pilot is a useful approach to test the benefit of a literacy programme to an organisation in a cost-effective manner, and provide motivation for further expansion if successful. A flexible process (needs) / product (outputs) approach to implementation is recommended so as to meet both the needs of literacy learners as well as the outputs expectation of an industrial environment. Efficient administration and a literacy data base prove useful in research, monitoring of learner progress and planning. They facilitate programme management on a macro level.

A directed, demand driven approach was extracted as a guiding principle for implementation from the Umgeni Water experience because it was essential in winning stakeholder co-operation, meeting Umgeni Water's needs, and providing a foundation for expansion. As an implementation ingredient it is applicable to other workplace contexts because they too face productivity demands and operate within an output orientated environment. ABE is not the core business of any workplace environment.

It is therefore essential that an ABE programme meets company expectations and focuses around in-house demand.

The Umgeni Water experience:

2.a. Needs analysis and meeting of stated needs

No needs analysis was undertaken by Camp. Implementation was *ad hoc*. That classes were positively received by learners suggested that some needs were being met. The approach of Operation Upgrade was content based, however, and therefore did not lend itself to adaptation or meeting of work needs. Under Ward, a strong attempt was made to investigate needs through the use of questionnaires. This approach brought out the desire for work modules and life skills, around which needs the programme was accordingly moulded. By adopting a process driven approach, Ward ensured that ongoing needs were met. Neither Weyer nor Frost conducted a formal needs analysis, although both were aware of the necessity of meeting needs. Consultation occurred with management and line management, and to a lesser extent, with learners. Frost held workshops with respective stakeholders to establish needs. She attempted to meet them through, for example, the introduction of a safety module at the request of management. The 25% drop out rate from the programme amongst learners, and antipathy amongst some line management, suggested that the needs of these groups were not being met fully. This was linked to unrealistic expectations.

Needs had to be extracted and dealt with for Umgeni Water to keep stakeholders on board and deliver a beneficial programme. The 1996 evaluation was an attempt to address this. As an implementation ingredient the meeting of needs was integrally

connected to stakeholder consultation (this was how they were met), and to catering for a production environment (this influenced stakeholder expectations). The natural result of meeting needs was a written policy as an accommodation of those needs.

2.b. Clear, demand driven reasons for implementation

Camp provided classes when plants requested them. Whilst *ad hoc*, they were demand driven. Reasons for implementation were clear. Literacy training was seen as a desirable thing to do and part of Umgeni Water's social responsibility. This was understood by all stakeholders, and was not an issue of dispute. The public relations value of the programme was grasped by Camp, and led to the successful involvement of Umgeni Water in the 1990 Durban literacy seminar.

Under Ward, classes were again demand driven. The Operations Division requested them. Implementation reasons were very clear, namely, to run a pilot to monitor ABE's potential for expansion. Under Weyer and Frost, the ABE policy provided this clarity. It placed ABE firmly within the social responsibility role of Umgeni Water, outlined the spin-off literacy had on worker productiveness, and set the target of functional literacy by 1998.

If the balance of demand shifted from Operations wanting ABE, to Human Resources providing, problems occurred, and line management complained about loss of productivity time. When management and line management understood reasons for ABE, co-operation increased, especially if the relationship between functional literacy

and job performance was clear. Such understanding was achieved through awareness raising and consultation.

2.c. Goal setting and planning for direction

Camp's period lacked planning and direction. It was essentially *ad hoc*, with a wait and see attitude as to where everything was going. This decisively affected its capacity to be permanent. Classes started and stopped haphazardly. This was fine for a small programme, but it was unlikely that Umgeni Water would have been able to expand ABE at this stage. Without a long term vision, the programme remained at the level of a 'nice thing to do'. In terms of learning progression, Operation Upgrade only catered for mother tongue and beginner English. It made no provision for learners passing beyond this stage. Therefore it was not a long term solution.

Ward's period was marked by meticulous planning. A proposal was written for a pilot project, with the view to expanding if it was successful. This happened. The pilot proposal indicated detailed planning. It spelt out Ward's job description which included needs analyses, learner assessment, research and reporting. The expansion process was preceded by a detailed proposal to MANCO spelling out the necessary procedures to follow, through setting up a forum, adopting a policy, and employing BESA. Clear goals and procedures facilitated the successful conclusion of the pilot and provided motivation for expansion. Direction was less clear cut when it came to classroom learning. Learning was process driven, depending on learner needs. Levels of progression did exist, but these were quite broad and proved a problem for some learners.

Weyer followed BESA's model for implementation, which included the establishment of a forum, adoption of policy, awareness raising and consultation, assessment, facilitator selection, and class implementation and monitoring. This was clearly defined, and ensured successful implementation on a large scale. Stated targets for obtaining functional literacy gave the programme direction. A data base facilitated future planning as learner records and rates of progression were on file. Frost, likewise, stressed planning and direction. Learner entry into the programme was planned until 1998, yearly plans for the programme were drawn up, and formal evaluation was linked to future direction. This ensured that literacy targets were kept in sight, and that the programme remained relevant to company needs.

Umgeni Water illustrated the fact that goal setting should not be rigid. With human beings, a formula of inputs did not guarantee expected outputs. Learners progressed at vastly differing rates. Progress was slower than anticipated. Goal setting was more important in providing direction than in setting rigid targets.

2.d. Initial pilot

The Umgeni Water literacy programme started small and then expanded. New to the field, it made sense to try out the idea before investing significant resources. Such an approach was more likely to win cynics over. A pilot beginning was far more conscious with Ward than it was with Camp. Under Camp, the internal environment at Umgeni Water was not politically conducive to any large-scale social responsibility initiative. A small scale operation was the most practical route to go. Under Ward, the

effectiveness of literacy was consciously tested through a pilot, whose successful nature provided the motivation to expand. The pilot showed that ABE could work. From it Ward learnt valuable lessons, namely, the need for a guiding policy and forum, stakeholder involvement and consultation, the necessity of meeting needs and accommodating production demands and logistical constraints, and the value of learning content to focus around life and work skills.

2.e. Flexible process (needs) / product (outputs) approach

ABE dealt with people and therefore had to cater for needs. Yet within an industrial environment measurable outputs were expected. Implementation needed to be both process and product orientated.

A combination of process (needs) and product (outputs) was most evident under Frost. Camp was predominantly content orientated in his approach, the influence of Operation Upgrade. The inherent inability to meet needs led Ward towards a process approach, with an in-house programme of needs analyses and Umgeni Water work modules. The adoption of BESA under Weyer, with a very systematic approach to implementation, indicated the realisation of the need for measurable outputs in an industry based setting schooled in that way of thinking. Under the systems approach, the ABE forum was an anomaly. In a 'system', certain inputs guaranteed certain outputs. The human factor, in the form of a consultative forum, was not essential. BESA's systems, or product, approach, could effectively be driven by the co-ordinator alone. Frost's move towards process and product, indicated the realisation that when dealing with human beings, a system was not sufficient. The human factor, in the form of moulding materials and

methods around learners, was necessary. The IEB encouraged such an approach, in that competencies or outcomes were reached, through a process route.

2.f. Up-to-date data base and administration

A literacy data base for all grade 14-18 staff was set up under Weyer. Such a data base provided useful information on literacy and numeracy levels within the target group, courses, facilitators, individual speed of progression, ages, jobs, supervision, and IEB results. It facilitated research and long term planning of classes, monitoring of progress, and provided statistical proof of the need for ABE classes. Ironically, the time taken to collect data and set up the data base caused momentum loss in terms of actual learning provision. Frost was able to build on the data base established by Weyer, to form a record of learner progress over time. The 1996 evaluation suggested that this was becoming insufficient. Camp and Ward were hampered by their lack of data. They could not monitor learner progress nor provide statistical evidence of the need for classes. Not essential whilst the programme remained small, a lack of statistical data would have severely hampered Umgeni Water's ability to plan and manage a large scale programme, and to produce proof of progress.

All four co-ordinators kept good administrative records, including class, progress and monthly management reports. These records kept stakeholders informed and involved. They ensured that ABE was well managed on a macro level and that reference materials were there to be used as necessary. They led to a more professional programme.

3. WRITTEN POLICY

A written policy is posited as a guiding principle for ABE programme implementation. This refers to the necessity of a document that lays out the mission, goals and targets of the ABE programme, provides guidelines on contentious implementation issues that can be referred to when necessary, is ratified at a senior level within the company to give it legitimacy and weight, and is publicised amongst stakeholders so as to be effective as an implementation tool.

A written ABE policy was extracted as a positive implementation ingredient from the Umgeni Water case study, because experience proved it to be the decisive factor in enabling the programme to expand throughout the organisation. It is posited as generic to any implementation context as it is a tool that supplies guidelines and thus operates at the macro level of implementation. It provides the parameters within which implementation can occur.

The Umgeni Water experience:

3.a-b. Targets and clarity on controversial issues

No policy existed during Camp and Ward's co-ordination. It was prominent during Weyer's period. It was not fully utilised by Frost. Owing to a lack of policy Camp's programme remained *ad hoc*. With no benchmark to set standards of behaviour, Ward experienced problems with teachers. Some managers gave her problems and pulled learners out of classes. A small programme was manageable without a policy, but Ward's experience pointed to the fact that it was essential to lay guidelines for a full

scale operation. Without a policy, Weyer battled to implement the programme throughout the company. Once the policy had been passed, the programme was implemented in both the coastal and inland region quickly, smoothly and efficiently, and with stakeholder co-operation. Through MANCO approval, the policy gave the programme legitimacy. It provided clarity on targets, report back, prioritising and promoting learners, and on previously problematic issues such as attendance, logistics, transport, time, and work demands. The policy was a tool to meet other implementation ingredients such as stakeholder consultation, meeting of learner needs, and catering for a production environment.

Under Frost, the policy continued to provide targets and guidelines. However, in that she did not refer to it or advertise it amongst stakeholders, its impact was minimised. Problems regarding attendance and work demands resurfaced. The policy needed to be circulated and accepted if stakeholders were to adhere to it. It needed to be updated and adapted with changing goals and targets for ABE.

4. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Stakeholder consultation is posited as a generic guiding principle for ABE programme implementation in a workplace context. This refers to ongoing personal consultation with managers, supervisors, learners and shop stewards, so as to win support, unearth individual concerns and prevent decline in interest. It includes ongoing awareness raising and public relations building to promote a positive image of the programme and thus entrench ABE in a non-educational environment, and to encourage realistic

expectations, motivation and commitment from stakeholders. A representative steering committee is one way to encourage stakeholder involvement, monitoring and ownership. Stakeholder consultation also involves using external advice and expertise as needed.

Ongoing stakeholder consultation proved vital at Umgeni Water in winning long-term support for ABE and alleviating legitimate concerns raised by stakeholders. For these reasons it was extracted as a positive implementation ingredient. It is posited as being a generic implementation principle for workplace ABE programmes, because it is a means of catering for the inevitable tensions that arise in an industrial context between ABE and production demands. Consultation is a way of canvassing opinion and meeting demand.

The Umgeni Water experience:

4.a. Ongoing personal consultation

Personal, ongoing consultation with stakeholders was a strength evident throughout the history of ABE at Umgeni Water. It served to win people to ABE and unearth individual concerns. It fed into other implementation ingredients such as the meeting of learner, management and company needs. Camp, Ward, Weyer and Frost all held individual and group meetings with line management and management. Van Deventer was often involved in this process, if a sensitive issue such as tension with work demands was under discussion. Personal consultation was an ongoing process to prevent decline in interest. The evaluation showed that those managers and line managers who were most supportive of ABE, were those who had had most personal contact with the coordinator.

Formal learner consultation only came about with the formation of the ABE forum. When this fell into disuse under Frost, such consultation declined. Nevertheless, consultation with learners was ongoing via the teaching process. Their needs were not neglected. All four co-ordinators made an effort to address concerns that were raised through consultation. Frost changed classes at Mkondeni workshops to a Friday afternoon to accommodate line management requests. By following through on issues raised, support was won.

4.b. Ongoing awareness raising and public relations building

Umgeni Water's ABE programme was consistently strong in terms of ongoing awareness raising and public relations building. This helped win support which did not come automatically, from people for whom ABE was not the core business. It gave the programme a high profile, both within and without the company. Public relations efforts helped ABE contribute towards the image of Umgeni Water as a progressive organisation. It helped win friends for the programme. By increasing the programme's profile, it made it that much more difficult to dismiss.

Camp was well aware of the value of public relations. He wrote circulars to stakeholders. The literacy seminar organised in Durban brought positive publicity for Umgeni Water and contributed towards its image as a progressive organisation. The literacy initiative conducted with companies in Hammarsdale likewise improved Umgeni Water's external profile. Ward made use of *Flowmeter*, learner booklets and scrapbooks of class activities to raise internal awareness. The literacy seminar she

organised in Pietermaritzburg reinforced the external image initiated by Camp of Umgeni Water as a pro-active body. Weyer initiated the first large scale awareness raising amongst learners. She visited all the plants and addressed and screened groups of potential participants. This encouraged realistic expectations, motivation and commitment. Frost promoted ABE internally through literacy day celebrations, award ceremonies, learner booklets, *Flowmeter* articles, video newsletter features, a ten minute video on the programme, the development of an ABE pamphlet and logo, and the publication of the learner magazine, *Siyathuthuka*. Externally she gave presentations at several conferences and networked with other industries.

Such public relations building and awareness raising was ongoing in order to ensure continual interest in the programme. The fact that the same problems kept occurring, for example, line management reluctance to release learners for classes, pointed to the inherently negative influence of production demands on a workplace programme. Nevertheless, the accumulative efforts of four co-ordinators, all conscious of the value of public relations, contributed to a positive image of ABE and Umgeni Water both internally and externally.

4.c. Representative steering committee / forum

Camp and Ward operated without an ABE steering committee or forum. Because their programmes were small, they functioned through individual consultation with stakeholders. Without a representative body, implementation with Camp and Ward was primarily top down. Management and line management were consulted, but not unions. Ward did consult learners on course content.

Weyer and Frost both had recourse to a representative stakeholder forum. Weyer found it extremely useful. Frost found it time consuming and irrelevant. These opposing views reflected the value of a forum in relation to the life cycle of an ABE programme.

With the implementation of a company wide programme under Weyer, the forum was an ideal way to encourage stakeholder involvement and ownership. It served a purpose in giving the programme legitimacy in the early stages. The forum played an active role in endorsing an ABE policy. This had previously been drafted by Ward, which pointed to the critical role of the co-ordinator. Nevertheless, forum members were interested because cutting edge issues were at stake, and the canvassing of stakeholder opinion necessary. In addition, because Weyer believed in its value, she put time and effort into the forum, which increased its competence as a body.

Under Frost, the forum, whilst in existence, played hardly any role at all. It met once or twice a year to be given feedback and rubber stamp decisions made by the co-ordinator. People outside of the forum did not know of its existence. On the one hand this suggested stakeholder apathy and lack of pressure. Secondly, it reflected a lack of effort on Frost's part, which in turn reflected an underlying reservation from programme implementors with regard to its value.

Primarily, however, the forum was low key because it had outgrown its usefulness in the ABE implementation life cycle. The programme was at the stage where decisions taken needed to be implemented, not talked about. A full time, committed co-ordinator

was far more effective than a part time body of questionably interested and non specialist persons. At the consolidation stage in ABE implementation, the most practical role for a forum was as a monitoring body. This happened with Frost in the form of annual report back meetings. It was Umgeni Water's experience that hands on involvement in the programme of a non-trained, otherwise occupied group of stakeholders, when they no longer had a practical purpose to serve, was idealistic rather than realistic.

4.d. External advice used as needed

The amount of advice sought from external providers varied from co-ordinator to co-ordinator according to the need of the time. Camp relied on Operation Upgrade because he was new to the field. Operation Upgrade proved valuable in providing an introduction to the world of literacy. Ward had more experience in the field of ABE and therefore favoured a go-it-alone approach with in-house modules. When the programme expanded under Weyer, advice with regard to large scale implementation was needed. The services of BESA were necessary. Frost relied less on BESA as the programme moved from implementation to consolidation. With all four co-ordinators, external advice was used as needed, but was not adhered to rigidly at the expense of adaptation and development. In this lay the strength. In terms of models for implementation, the programme moved from a content approach to an emphasis on process, then to a product orientation, and finally to a combination of process and product.

Co-ordinators actively established a network of external contacts. The literacy seminar organised by Camp and the CAE and his contact with the CAE, opened his eyes to materials available and led to his contact with the NPB and the growth of water education material. Ironically, it precipitated his departure from ABE into environmental education. The literacy seminar organised by Ward and the CAE and the International Literacy Conference, improved her experience and confidence in the field and enabled her to follow an eclectic approach with regard to materials. Her contact with Eskom formed the groundwork for Umgeni Water's ABE policy. Weyer found that contact with the CAE and Tembalethu helped facilitators with teaching ideas. Frost had a similar experience through her contact with NASA and the CAE. Contact with other industry based programmes allowed her to learn from similar experiences. Umgeni Water's literacy programme grew because co-ordinators used and then adapted outside input to meet the company's specific needs. Contact with external organisations, however, was also detrimental to the programme when it resulted in facilitators and co-ordinators leaving because of outside job offers.

5. MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

The necessity of management support is posited as a generic guiding principle for ABE programme implementation. This refers to Chief Executive Officer support to create the right climate for company commitment to ABE, senior management support to provide backing for classes in principle, and line management / supervisor support to ensure smooth running of classes at ground level. Management support was extracted as an implementation ingredient from the Umgeni Water experience because it proved

decisive in terms of which classes worked and which did not. It is generically applicable to the implementation of ABE within industry, because within any workplace environment, managers and supervisors are inevitably key stakeholders because of the hierarchical structure of large corporations. Workers, who are the ABE target group, are controlled by management, whose co-operation is therefore essential.

The Umgeni Water experience:

5.a. Chief Executive Officer

All four co-ordinators enjoyed positive CEO support. Atkinson gave the opening address for both the Durban and Pietermaritzburg literacy seminars. Ward and Frost were sent to international conferences with the blessing of the CEO and reported back to him on their return. Walford, the new CEO, attended literacy day celebrations and IEB prizegivings under Frost. Such involvement ensured symbolic support from the highest level and gave ABE weight. It created the right climate for company commitment to the upliftment of its employees. It influenced management and line management. Without a supportive CEO, implementation of ABE would have been that much harder. With a supportive CEO, indifference from directors and managers was circumvented. Important decisions were taken straight to MANCO, over which the CEO dominated.

5.b. Senior management

In general, senior management (managers of different departments such as Water, Wastewater and Maintenance) were supportive of ABE. Such support increased with awareness raising and personal persuasion by the co-ordinator. Latter co-ordinators

benefited from the accumulative effects of awareness raising by their predecessors. Questionnaires compiled by Ward and Weyer, and workshops run by Frost, produced positive feedback. Managers saw the necessity of ABE in terms of social responsibility, public relations and productivity. Their support increased when ABE was perceived to focus on demand, cater for a production environment and produce measurable results. Nevertheless, whilst seeing Umgeni Water's primary function to be that of producing water, they could see the broader picture. However, they were less directly affected by the logistical impact of ABE classes.

Where a manager was supportive, his staff were generally supportive too and classes functioned smoothly. Where managers were unsupportive, problems immediately arose, for example, at the inland workshops. The maintenance manager was unconvinced of the value of classes and co-operated with reluctance. Consequently, learners were commonly pulled out of class for work, and line managers were noticeably less supportive than their counterparts elsewhere. When the E&C manager withdrew his support of classes at Hammarsdale, they stopped. Levels of stakeholder support were integrally connected.

5.c. Line management

Line management support (superintendents, supervisors and foremen) was fundamental to the success or otherwise of Umgeni Water's literacy programme. Unlike management co-operation, line management support was hands-on. It involved releasing workers from work, covering for them, meeting production demands without them, arranging transport and providing venues. Line management support ensured

that learners came to class. Line management antagonism resulted in learner lateness, absenteeism and drop out - in effect, a dysfunctional programme. Even if a manager told his line that classes must go ahead, a surly supervisor on the ground could make life very difficult.

All four co-ordinators had a mixture of supportive and recalcitrant line managers. All four realised the importance of line support and made the utmost effort to win it. This happened through personal consultation, awareness raising and a genuine attempt to mould class times and logistics around production pressures experienced by line. That each co-ordinator had to raise awareness suggested that, in fact, basic attitudes amongst line management stayed the same. Nevertheless, the accumulative efforts of Camp and Ward benefited Weyer and Frost. In winning supervisor support, co-ordinators had to show how sending workers to class was going to benefit supervisors themselves. This motivation lay behind Ward and Frost's attempts to introduce work skills into the ABE programme.

6. PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT CATERED FOR

The necessity of catering for the production environment of big business is posited as a generically applicable principle for the implementation of ABE within a workplace context. This refers to an awareness of and catering for the job demands and logistical constraints that the implementors of a workplace literacy programme find themselves confronted with in their particular context. Such sensitivity to production demands is necessary to prevent the negative influence thereof on the smooth running of classes,

and to win the support and co-operation of managers and supervisors in releasing workers from the job.

A sensitivity to job demands was extracted from the Umgeni Water experience as an implementation ingredient, because it proved vital in ensuring that classes impacted as little as possible on productivity. This in turn won management support for ABE and ensured smooth programme implementation. Awareness of and catering for job demands and logistical constraints is applicable to any workplace context as a guiding principle. Industry based programmes work within the context of that particular organisation's core business, and will need to accommodate the resultant tension between time needed for class and production demands. Insensitivity to such tension invites disaster.

The Umgeni Water experience:

6.a-b. Awareness of and catering for job demands and logistical constraints

Throughout its history, classes at the workshops were more problematic than those at the dams, waterworks and waste waterworks. Camp was unable to start classes there at all. Ward, Weyer and Frost battled continually with attendance, lateness and line management complaints. This pattern can be attributed to the greater degree of job demand and logistical constraint. At the workshops workers were arranged in gangs, whose full complement needed to be present to do a job. Gangs went out to various locations, which meant learners had to be brought back to the workshops to attend class. These issues did not occur at the dams, waterworks and wastewater works where learners remained on site. Problems specific to these areas revolved around shift

workers who came to class in their own time. Logistical constraints linked to the nature of production thus placed a huge pressure on the programme and on line management, who still had to get the job done despite workers being at class.

The strength of Umgeni Water's ABE programme was that it was aware of such work pressures and adapted around them. Noticeable effort on the part of the co-ordinator to accommodate complaints, won support. Camp ran classes for only two hours of company time, the other two hours being the learners' own time. Ward held classes on a Friday afternoon as the least disruptive time to the workplace, and organised classes around workforce gangs. Weyer and Frost consulted every line manager individually to establish what class times would suit him best, and arranged the ABE timetable accordingly. Wherever possible classes were held on site. The ABE department secured a minibus to help with transport.

In sum, co-ordinators bent over backwards to accommodate production demands. This increased management and line management support and enabled a directed approach to programme implementation. Co-ordinators were aware that they were operating in an industrial setting. Work pressure would not go away and needed to be worked around. The ABE policy was an attempt to provide guidelines to lessen such tension. It provided standards on transport, hours, attendance, and when a learner could be removed from class. If Frost had used the policy more, she would have had less problems with these issues during her period of co-ordination. Ironically, a literacy programme helped a workplace environment by producing a trainable workforce. Yet in the short term, the time needed to educate employees impacted negatively on meeting production targets.

7. LEARNER NEEDS MET

The meeting of learner needs is posited as a generic guiding principle for ABE programme implementation. This includes professional screening of learners to measure progress and to prevent loss of learner motivation through incorrect placement. It refers to the canvassing of learner and union opinion so as to win their support and co-operation with regard to classes. It incorporates the necessity of learner-centred, continuum orientated materials to ensure that learners learn what they find relevant and progress in their literacy skills.

The meeting of learner needs was extracted from the Umgeni Water experience as a guiding principle for programme implementation, because programme evaluation showed that when learners felt that their needs were being met they remained motivated, committed and in class. When they felt their needs were disregarded they dropped out. The meeting of learner needs is applicable as a generic guiding principle for ABE implementation, because ultimately, ABE is about learners learning. Meeting learner needs is not programme specific. No matter what the context, if learners feel their needs are not met they will withdraw, and the literacy programme in question will have no target market. In effect, it will be dysfunctional.

The Umgeni Water experience:

7.a. Professional screening and placement

It was Umgeni Water's experience that if participants were not screened and placed at the correct literacy level, self esteem was adversely affected and learners were lost. In

order to measure progress of learners from entry to exit from the programme, initial screening was essential.

Camp was inexperienced and haphazard when it came to screening and placement. Screening that occurred happened along Operation Upgrade lines. It divided learners broadly into mother tongue and English. The Learn and Teach screening tests employed by Ward were similarly broad, and divided learners into beginner, intermediate and advanced English. Because of small numbers classes were of mixed ability, which impacted negatively on the self esteem of weaker learners. Weyer and Frost used the screening tests provided by BESA, which gave a more detailed breakdown of learners into three levels of mother tongue competency, two levels of beginner English, two levels of intermediate English, and two levels of advanced English. Some learners were still misplaced, however. This was highlighted by the 1996 ABE evaluation as one reason why learners dropped out of the programme.

7.b. Learner and union support

Learner support was fundamental, as learners were the target group being educated. Yet learner support was effectively taken for granted by all co-ordinators, and never seriously canvassed. Ward did do a questionnaire with her learners, and Frost held a learner workshop to gain feedback. The bottom line was that it was assumed that learners wanted classes. To a large extent such an assumption was correct. Learners continued to come to class and express their appreciation at events such as literacy day. If learners had not seen ABE to be relevant and given it their support, there would have been no programme. There would have been no one to teach. A 25% drop out

rate from the programme by the end of 1995 suggested that if materials were irrelevant and levels incorrect, learner motivation declined and support was withdrawn. It also suggested that weak facilitation and unrealistic expectations amongst learners had a detrimental effect. In gaining learner support, implementation procedure needed to raise awareness, set realistic expectations, work around job demands, and provide appropriate and well facilitated learning material. Such factors were integrally connected.

Union support of ABE was not a contentious issue. At Umgeni Water the union movement was fairly non-confrontational. Most shop stewards were in classes. Their presence gave the programme legitimacy with learners. Camp, and to a lesser extent Ward, had virtually no contact with unions, but dealt predominantly with line management and management. This led to a top down approach. Weyer and Frost had more formal contact through the ABE forum, which had three union representatives. This provided the potential for a shift in thinking towards bottom up implementation - a logical step if one wanted workers, for whom the programme was intended, to benefit. At Umgeni Water, however, such an approach remained more theoretical than real. Management dominated the forum, which then became defunct. Like learner support, the importance of union support would have been felt by its absence. If NEHAWU representatives, the predominant union at Umgeni Water, had actively discouraged learners from attending class, their influence would have been substantial.

7.c. Needs-based, continuum-orientated, learner-centred materials

Effective literacy materials in an industry based programme met learner, management and line management needs. Meeting learner needs ensured that implementation ingredients such as demand focus, consultation and evaluation occurred. Evaluation showed that learner and management expectations in terms of lesson content were remarkably similar. All parties wanted an increase in communicative ability, work, and life skills. Learners and management wanted progression through levels towards a target of functional literacy. Discontent arose when expectations were not met. Management questioned the value of the programme, and learners dropped out.

Camp relied on Operation Upgrade materials. Operation Upgrade was very content based in its approach, with a fixed learning syllabus which did not allow for adaptation to learner and company needs. Levels were rudimentary - mother tongue and English. There was little scope for progression beyond beginner English. Operation Upgrade was abandoned by Ward precisely for these reasons. Ward went to the other extreme of adopting a totally process orientated approach to materials. No external provider was used and lesson content revolved around elicited learner and company needs. Whilst materials met needs, levels and progression were less successful. Wide ranges in ability were grouped into one class which led to discontent amongst weaker and stronger learners.

Weyer reverted to an external provider in order to address the need for levels and progression. *Breakthrough* and EFA materials marketed by BESA offered very clear learning levels, and a continuum of learning progression from mother tongue to

functional literacy. A product based, outcomes approach ensued. However, EFA was orientated towards the mining industry. The problem of materials not ideally suited to the Umgeni Water workplace re-emerged with an external provider. Frost maintained *Breakthrough* and EFA levels of progression. Course content, however, was used loosely. Facilitators created their own materials around learner and company needs. The advent of the IEB encouraged facilitators to develop materials around IEB outcomes for each level. The programme incorporated both a process and product approach to materials usage. One anomaly that inhibited planning for a literacy continuum, was that learners progressed at different rates and therefore did not always fit the blueprint.

8. SUFFICIENT BUDGET

Sufficient funds is posited as a necessary implementation ingredient generic to the implementation of any ABE programme. This refers to the availability of sufficient budget for programme management in terms of money for salaries, materials, transportation, stationary and awareness raising; and programme growth with regard to special projects and expansion. It was extracted from the Umgeni Water experience as an implementation ingredient because funding enabled the programme to secure competent facilitators and effective materials to aid the learning process, and because a lack of funding would have prevented the programme from being initiated in the first place. As a guiding principle for implementation, sufficient budget is applicable to any ABE initiative because it is in effect a foundational enabling factor. Without money, no literacy programme can function on a sustainable basis.

The Umgeni Water experience:

8.a-b. Management and growth

No co-ordinator had a separate budget for ABE. Money came out of the Training and Development budget. However, no one complained of a lack of funds. There was sufficient money to function efficiently and to cover salaries, materials, transport, stationary and awareness raising. The more successful the programme, the more likelihood of money. Frost was able to secure funds for more competitive facilitator salaries because results had been achieved.

A surplus of funding would have been beneficial for programme growth and specific projects such as materials development. When Frost made a video of the programme, this money was eventually acquired after much difficulty from Public Relations, as there were insufficient funds in her own budget for special projects. Nevertheless, the money was secured. At Umgeni Water money was therefore available for programme management. If effort and determination were applied, it could be secured for programme growth. Insufficient funds would have affected the quality of teaching and materials. Without funds, there would have been no programme. Programme budget was the primary enabling factor that made implementation possible. It was integrally connected to organisational belief in the necessity for ABE, as such vision ensured budgetary provision. However, funding did not ensure a successful programme. Funding was interconnected with other implementation ingredients. If stakeholder support was missing, learner needs not met, a demand approach not adopted and a

production environment not catered for, no amount of money would make a successful programme.

9. PROGRAMME EVALUATION

ABE programme evaluation is posited as a generic guiding principle for ABE implementation in industry. It refers to ongoing consultation with stakeholders to see if goals, needs and expectations are being met. It includes formal programme evaluation by an external consultant to measure outputs and adapt the programme to keep it relevant.

Programme evaluation was extracted from the Umgeni Water experience as an implementation ingredient, because ongoing consultation ensured stakeholder co-operation, and formal evaluation of the programme provided quantitative evidence to justify its continuing existence, and suggested means of improvement. As an implementation ingredient programme evaluation is generalisable to other workplace contexts because any programme that operates within an environment where ABE is not the core business, will need to produce measurable results to prove its value, and continually adapt itself to changing stakeholder and workplace demands to ensure support.

The Umgeni Water experience:

9.a-b. Formal evaluation / measurable results

Evaluation of the Umgeni Water ABE programme occurred on an informal and formal level. Evaluation fed back into other implementation ingredients and encouraged their

flexible management. If no money had been available, a formal evaluation of the literacy programme would not have occurred. If not followed through, this evaluation was of little use.

Programme evaluation provided measurable results which could, in turn, be used to justify ABE. Camp and Ward lacked recourse to measurable results. It was difficult to convince management and line management with regard to learner progress. Weyer had access to BESA tests. Frost entered learners in external IEB examinations. Where results were available, statistical evidence could be produced with regard to programme necessity. Results were integrally connected to facilitator competence, as they were the ones who facilitated learning.

Under Camp, Ward and Weyer, no formal evaluation occurred. Both Ward and Weyer expressed the need for such an undertaking. All co-ordinators evaluated the impact of the programme on an informal basis through consultation, and made changes accordingly. Owing to informal evaluation Ward submitted her proposal for the expansion of the programme.

The only formal evaluation of the programme was conducted in February 1996. It was conducted by Weyer, a former co-ordinator. This was potentially problematic in terms of objectivity. However, Weyer was sufficiently removed to use her inside knowledge of the programme to its advantage. The evaluation confirmed outputs achieved, highlighted strengths and weaknesses, and recommended changes to be made. This gave security that the programme was on track, and provided motivation to learn from

experience and make improvements. That a formal evaluation of Umgeni Water's ABE programme was conducted under the fourth co-ordinator was logical. It assessed the accumulative effect of literacy on the company.

CHAPTER 10

TRENDS IN OTHER INDUSTRIES

Nine guiding principles for ABE programme implementation in industry have been posited, based on an analysis of the Umgeni Water case study. It is valuable to compare these extracted principles with available literature, to see if they correlate with workplace implementation experiences elsewhere.

Common problems in industry based programmes

In *Adult Basic Education in South Africa*, Edward French documented common problems in industrial literacy programmes. Firstly, he pointed to the lack of consultation with learners. He noted that '... top-down approaches prevail and have led to confusion, resentment and even resistance, and to a failure on the part of the learners to control their learning.'¹ This point is in line with the principle extracted from the Umgeni Water experience, namely, the importance of meeting learner needs, one method being through learner and union consultation, and an ABE forum.

The second problem French highlighted was management's ignorance about literacy issues, workers' learning needs and educational values. Umgeni Water experienced such ignorance from management in terms of unrealistic expectations with regard to the time frame for literacy acquisition. General management ignorance about ABE underpinned the extraction of stakeholder consultation and management support, as two guiding principles for programme implementation. Umgeni Water found that awareness raising and personal consultation lessened ignorance and won co-operation.

¹ E. French, 'Adult literacy in South Africa: past to present', in Hutton, *Adult Basic Education in South Africa*, p. 74.

A third problem noted by French was the general attachment within industry to 'quick-fix' ideas about learning, with a consequent failure of both the process and the product. This attitude was prevalent at Umgeni Water. Learners and managers expected learning to occur speedily. Umgeni Water's outputs-orientated environment expected a measurable literacy product. Experience proved learning to be slower and more nebulous. The problem of 'quick-fix' expectations was exacerbated by providers such as BESA giving unrealistic time frames for learner progression. Two guiding principles suggested by the Umgeni Water model, namely, awareness raising around expectations, and a flexible process / product approach to learning, was the solution adopted to shed the 'quick-fix' mould.

French pointed to a tendency within industry to abandon rather than to evaluate and improve ailing programmes. This was not the case within Umgeni Water, but it touches on one of the guiding principles put forward, namely, the importance of ongoing and formal programme evaluation. Evaluation occurred throughout the Umgeni Water programme and contributed to its successful adaptation, growth and development.

French highlighted a '... disjunction between high-level management's distanced and idealised commitment to literacy projects and a lack of commitment, or even hostility, on the part of local and line management to the project.'² Umgeni Water's experience validates this argument. Management were more committed but also more removed. Line management faced the day to day logistical inconveniences of literacy and were consequently more antagonistic. This situation lay behind the extracted guiding principle of ongoing personal consultation and awareness raising to gain realistic support from both management and supervisors.

² Ibid.

Finally, French pointed to the '... sheer pressure for productivity in settings not designed for education', and a failure to combat the disadvantages of the industrial setting. This negative effect of job demands was strongly felt at Umgeni Water. It led to the extracted guiding principle of the necessity of a production environment being catered for in terms of accommodating workplace pressure and logistical constraints.

French discussed implementation options open to workplace-based literacy programmes. These included the use of '... inadequate and dated programmes of mainline or official - literacy organisations'; the purchase of '... the professional (but usually untested and expensive) services of commercial literacy agencies'); and the development of in-house programmes using a range of resources.³ Umgeni Water in their use of Operation Upgrade, BESA and their own home-grown materials, followed all these routes respectively. This experience led to the implementation ingredient of using external advice as needed, and a flexible process (needs) / product (outputs) approach to materials and programme implementation.

Marks of successful literacy work

The distinguishing marks of successful literacy work were pinpointed by French. He stressed the importance of the teacher, who should respect the learners, notice their needs, believe in what he or she was doing, have insight into the teaching methods used, and be adaptable and resourceful in terms of materials. Unsuccessful programmes had teachers who arrived late. The Umgeni Water model stressed the importance of high calibre facilitators. From Umgeni's experience, successful learning occurred when the facilitator was competent and committed. When the facilitator lacked these qualities, classes broke down.

³ Ibid., p. 75.

French noted that a successful literacy programme had broad aims and end targets, expressed in smaller attainable objectives.⁴ This was the Umgeni Water experience. A written policy expressing programme targets, aims and objectives, was put forward as a guiding principle for implementation because it was the decisive factor in allowing the Umgeni Water programme to expand. Similarly, the implementation ingredient of a directed, demand-driven approach reflected Umgeni's experience of the positive influence of directed goal setting and demand focus in programme implementation.

French remarked that successful literacy programmes fostered 'active learning'. Unsuccessful programmes displayed prescriptive teaching methods, rote learning and passive learners. Umgeni Water's recommendation for needs-based, continuum-orientated, learner-centred materials reflected a similar realisation, based on their experimentation with different teaching methods and materials. The Umgeni Water model further suggested that learners be professionally screened and placed to alleviate mixed ability adult literacy classes which had been a problem that caused drop-outs from the programme. This reflected French's point that the difference in levels of proficiency and learning needs among learners was a problem in workplace programmes.⁵

French commented that '... programmes that have made a mark have all had effective leadership.'⁶ This was the experience of Umgeni Water. The programme worked because it had a full-time, committed co-ordinator, with the backing of a supportive manager. Umgeni Water's recommendation for high calibre leadership corroborated French's analysis.

⁴ Ibid., p. 79.

⁵ Ibid., p. 81.

⁶ Ibid., p. 82.

Brian Phillips and Brian Wood in the periodical, *People Dynamics*, discussed marks of successful literacy initiatives. These included consultation and negotiation, management commitment, flexibility, articulated reasons and desired outcomes for the programme, needs analysis and awareness raising, competent facilitation, programme monitoring and evaluation, and management.⁷ They argued that "... more programmes failed to achieve their expected outcomes as a result of poor management than almost any other single reason."⁸ These findings were in line with both the arguments posited by French with regard to successful programme implementation, and the Umgeni Water case study.

Case studies in other industries

General conclusions reached by French, Phillips and Wood are corroborated by specific case studies. In 1988 French undertook an evaluation of the Metal and Engineering Industries' Education and Training Board pilot literacy programme. His evaluation highlighted major problems to be the inadequate identification and satisfaction of learning needs; a failure to take account of environmental factors; outmoded, ineffectual methods and procedures in implementation; unsatisfactory trainer training and back-up; a lack of resourcefulness in handling problems; and a diffuseness in programme aims.⁹ He suggested that lessons to be learnt from this experience included the need for an education policy statement to provide clear aims; the definition and shaping of roles of stakeholders through the medium of a steering committee; the need for active propagation and awareness raising; the necessity of broad programme organisation; the importance of selecting the correct provider and materials; the usefulness of a pilot project; and the

⁷ B. Phillips and B. Wood, 'Adult Basic Education: Fact Sheets', in *People Dynamics* (August - October 1992).

⁸ *Ibid.*, (October 1992), p. 3.

⁹ E. French, 'Metal and Engineering Industries' Education and Training Board: Pilot Project in Industrial Literacy 1987/8: A critical evaluation including suggestions about future directions' (Pretoria, HSRC, 1988), pp. iii.

identification and definition of learning needs.¹⁰ In a separate discussion of the literacy initiative at Genmin, a major mining corporation, French argued that the programme's success was based on a '... rigorous analysis of the company's and workers' education and training needs.'¹¹

SPA Consultants, in their study, *Literacy Training in South Africa*, interviewed stakeholders in five workplace literacy programmes, namely, South African Breweries, Mercedes Benz, Premier Foods, Lonrho and Eskom. Factors that aided success were pinpointed as CEO support, union and management involvement, stakeholder sensitisation, needs assessment, programme focus and evaluation, good trainers, partnership with external consultants, careful choice of materials, and a workplace focus.¹²

Case studies provided by French and Pennington validate the general findings of French, Phillips and Wood. Likewise, they are in line with guiding principles for ABE programme implementation extracted from the Umgeni Water experience. One can conclude that available literature substantiates the claim that the Umgeni Water model for programme implementation, is generic and applicable to other workplace environments.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹ E. French, 'Adult literacy in South Africa: past to present', in Hutton, *Adult Basic Education in South Africa*, p. 73.

¹² Pennington, *Literacy Training in South Africa*, pp. 103-132.

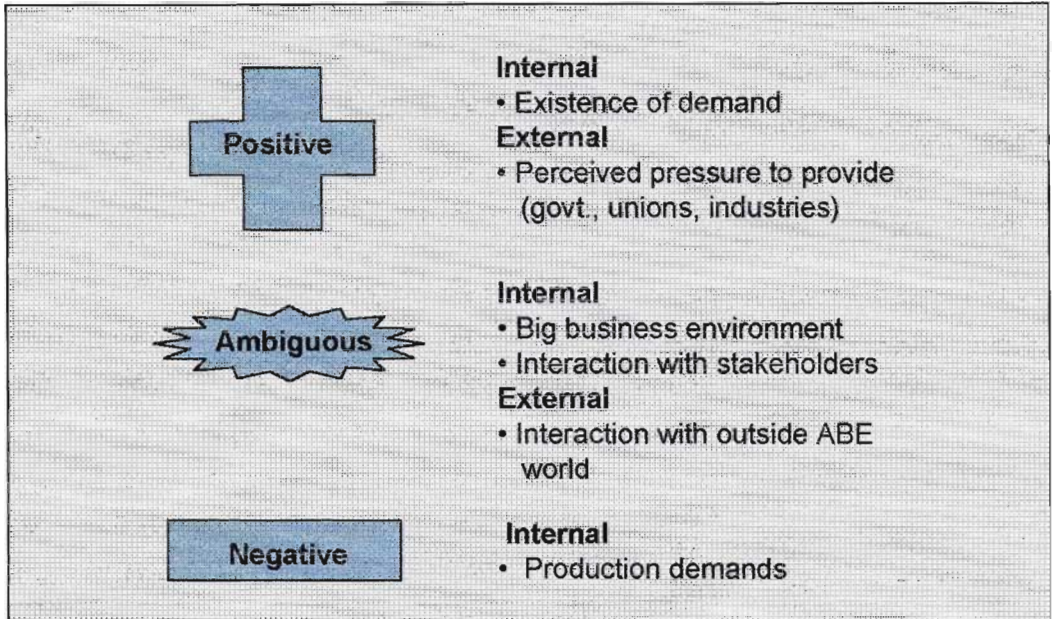
CHAPTER 11

INDEPENDENT INFLUENCES ON IMPLEMENTATION

Guiding principles for the implementation of ABE in industry have been extracted, based on a case study of Umgeni Water from 1989-1996. These principles were applied back to Umgeni Water to show interconnections between implementation factors, when each factor was most evident, the influence it had on the success of ABE, and the implications of its absence from specific periods in the programme. The applicability of guiding principles extracted from Umgeni Water to workplace literacy programmes in general, was validated by reference to literature on other literacy initiatives in industry.

ABE implementation did not occur in a vacuum. It is necessary to look at the context within which it operated and interacted. What dynamic factors impacted on the smooth flowing of the implementation process that were beyond planned control? What independent influences, both within and without the organisation, interplayed with the implementation process? Were they advantageous or detrimental? Could they be harnessed? Independent influences on implementation can be represented diagrammatically:

Figure 35: Independent influences on implementation



The following table provides an alternative picture of contextual factors that impact on an orderly systems approach to implementation. These can be harnessed or accommodated if understood, but are ultimately independent of implementation control.

Figure 36: Independent Influences on Implementation

			CAMP	WARD	WEYER	FROST
1. Positive	Internal:	a. Existence of demand	✓	✓	✓	✓
	External:	a. Perceived pressure to provide ABE:				
		* govt / pol transition	✓	✓	✓	✓
* unions	✓x	✓x	✓	✓		
* moves in Industry	✓x	✓	✓	✓		
2. Negative	Internal:	a. Production demands	✓	✓	✓	✓
	External:	-				
3. Ambiguous	Internal:	a. Big bus. environment (infrastructure, finance & outputs focus vs bureaucracy & staff turnover)	✓	✓	✓	✓
		b. Stakeholder interaction (support vs lack of, unrealistic expecs & diff rates of learner progress)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	External:	a. Interaction with outside ABE world (expertise vs staff loss) (results vs over focus)	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ = evident

x = absent

✓ = in some respects evident/absent

Independent influences impacted on ABE implementation at Umgeni Water during all periods of programme co-ordination. An investigation of these factors reveal the effect they had at Umgeni Water, and the extent to which they could be accommodated.

POSITIVE INFLUENCES - INTERNAL

Existence of demand

In industry, the demand for English communicative ability existed. English was the predominant language used. At Umgeni Water, meetings occurred in English, notices were in English, instructions were given in English. Translation of information into Zulu was minimal. English proficiency was an unwritten prerequisite for promotion within the organisation. Yet in 1993 41% of employees were functionally illiterate in English, a large percentage of the staff composition. Thus the motivation existed to teach people English. This was a positive influence that was used to full effect by co-ordinators. They touted the need for communicative ability as a reason to implement classes. Ward pointed to the illiteracy rate as reason to expand the programme. The existence of demand was used to win management support. It ensured that classes were wanted, and not imposed.

POSITIVE INFLUENCES - EXTERNAL

Perceived external pressure to provide ABE

Within Umgeni Water, the perception existed of external pressure on the organisation to provide ABE. This came from three sources, namely, political transition in the country, union activity, and broader moves in industry.

The 1990s was a period of political transition in South Africa. The political climate under the new ANC government was perceived to be progressive. Whether real or imaginary, industry felt pressure to foot the bill for ABE as part of its social responsibility.

After COSATU's 1987 education conference, the union movement in South Africa sat solidly behind ABE and placed it on their agenda in negotiations with management. Such union activity placed pressure on business to implement ABE. Implicit union opposition to the removal of ABE likewise encouraged its retention.

Broader moves in industry indicated that companies were increasingly implementing ABE programmes, in reaction to the changing political climate and union activity.

Umgeni Water prided itself as a progressive, far-sighted organisation, a leader in the field of water provision and social responsibility. It worked hard at fostering this perception both amongst its staff and in the external community. It was extremely sensitive to the image it portrayed. Awards for progressiveness, such as that of the Black Management Forum, were prominently displayed in the foyer at Head Office. Perceived government pressure, union activity and developments in other organisations fell, therefore, on fertile soil. This sensitivity to external pressure was used to favourable advantage by all the co-ordinators. Social responsibility and external image were touted as major reasons to implement ABE. Increasing implementation in other companies was used as an argument to sustain the programme.

NEGATIVE INFLUENCES - INTERNAL

Production demands

The demand of production was the biggest problem that beset the Umgeni Water ABE programme. It applied equally to all periods of co-ordination. An inherent and permanent tension arose from the need to release learners for class during work time (four hours per week), and the need to produce clean water. Production demands caused shift workers to miss classes, lateness, and learners to be removed from class because of emergency situations. Production demand was a significant factor in any line management antipathy towards ABE.

The demand for production led to the low priority of ABE within Umgeni Water. Umgeni's core business was to produce clean water, not to educate its staff. The low priority of ABE was reflected by the relatively low grading given to the position of ABE co-ordinator. As a low priority, ABE was often sacrificed to needs that appeared more pressing. Learners were removed from class if supervisors felt there was a job to be done or a meeting to attend.

Logistics was an inherent problem related to production demands. Owing to the nature of the industry, which was spread out over the KwaZulu Natal coastal and inland region, Umgeni Water ABE was severely affected by logistics. Classes were spread out and learners and facilitators often had to travel. This was costly in terms of inconvenience and time lost.

The negative impact of production demands was inherent and permanent in a workplace programme. It could be accommodated to some extent. Co-ordinators arranged class times and composition in consultation with line management and management. The ABE policy was an attempt to provide guidelines to settle disputes arising out of work demands. Where possible, classes took place on site to accommodate logistics. Facilitators helped with transport. Public relations efforts by all co-ordinators did much to increase the public profile of ABE within and without the company, and thus combat its low priority status. Nevertheless, problems that arose in implementation were often rooted in tensions with workplace pressure, for example, absenteeism from class when learners had to finish a job.

AMBIGUOUS INFLUENCES - INTERNAL

Big business environment

The environment of a large organisation inherently had both a positive and negative impact on ABE implementation. Existing infrastructure, funding availability and a systems mindset aided implementation. Bureaucracy and staff turnover hindered it.

Positive influences

Big business provided a formidable infrastructure that was useful to ABE co-ordinators. Transport, furniture, equipment, computers, communication systems, buying procedures, data and expertise, were all available. Such infrastructure enabled ABE to be implemented that much more efficiently.

Big business had recourse to finance. Umgeni Water was a wealthy company with sufficient funds to invest in ABE. This meant, in effect, that co-ordinators did not have to scrimp and save. Finance was available to buy materials, pay transport and salaries, and pay examination entry fees. Co-ordinators operated within a budget, but if money was desperately needed for something, it usually could be found. The programme was enriched by such 'luxuries' as class trips, materials development, and an ABE pamphlet and video - in sum, by access to money.

In the industrial, systems based environment of Umgeni Water, the attitude prevailed that agreed on inputs guaranteed certain outputs. This expectation of measurable results impacted positively on the ABE programme. It encouraged high standards in facilitation, training of facilitators to achieve such standards, programme critique and monitoring, and investigation and adaptation if the expected education results were not achieved. Useful and transferable life and work skills were expected and therefore increasingly focused upon. The product environment of Umgeni Water ensured that the IEB approach of competencies was accepted. It encouraged vigilance, programme evaluation and adaptation. It ensured that targets were kept in sight and the programme kept on track.

Negative influences

A large organisation provided useful infrastructure. Yet it also brought bureaucracy. Ordering of materials passed through a circuitous internal route of departments. Decisions were delayed by a hierarchy of decision makers. This proved frustrating to co-ordinators on the ground who wanted to get the job done. Accordingly, co-ordinators

made the system work for them. This often included the use of van Deventer, who had the power, inclination and knowledge to work around bureaucratic knots and pitfalls.

Inherent to any organisation environment was staff turnover. At Umgeni Water, co-ordinator turnover was high, owing to the contract nature of the position, its relatively low status, and personal frustration. This had a detrimental effect on the programme, as continuity and progress were broken with each new incumbent. It took time to bring things up to speed again. The position of co-ordinator was made permanent as a deliberate attempt to counter the negative impact of this trend. That facilitators remained on contract, however, raised the question of the long term future of ABE staff and impacted negatively on facilitator motivation.

Stakeholder interaction

The influence of the various ABE stakeholders (learners, unions, line management, management) on programme implementation was profound. If stakeholders were on board, they impacted positively on programme implementation by giving their support and co-operation. Classes ran smoothly. At Umgeni Water, ongoing awareness raising, involvement and consultation by all co-ordinators won majority stakeholder support.

Interaction with stakeholders, however, had in certain respects an inherently negative impact on smooth programme implementation. Potential lack of stakeholder support, unrealistic expectations, and differing speeds of learner progress, were factors ultimately beyond programme control. These had the potential to disrupt smooth implementation.

Potential lack of stakeholder support

Reasons not to support ABE were most prevalent amongst supervisors and managers. The inconvenience factor of literacy classes fell squarely on the shoulders of line management (supervisors). They were the ones who had to get the job done without a full complement of staff, and who were involved with transporting learners to classes, which often left them without a vehicle. Managers, who were responsible for meeting production targets on a macro level (which time for ABE did not help), also possessed inherent reasons to be hostile towards ABE. Line management antipathy made life difficult on the ground. Lack of management support affected the programme at a higher level. Whenever a manager opposed the programme, classes did not occur.

Inherent stakeholder opposition from line management and management could be neutralised to some extent if recognised, through consultation, awareness raising and involvement. The ABE policy was a tool that could be used to enforce the programme and counter opposition. However, the policy was not used to its full potential. Whenever stakeholders were neglected, inherent opposition resurfaced. If complaints were addressed, support and co-operation increased.

Unrealistic expectations amongst stakeholders

Unrealistic expectations amongst stakeholders impacted negatively on smooth implementation. Learners, supervisors and managers alike expected progress to occur far more quickly than it did. Some learners expected to be able to read and write immediately, or to be guaranteed promotion. These expectations arose when ABE publicity was not accompanied by explanation of how long the acquisition of literacy

might take, or how exactly it would impact on job opportunity. Line managers expressed amazement that interpreters still needed to be used at meetings. This misconception arose because they had not been informed on the length of time ABE involved. In practice, learner progress was varied, gradual and slower than the rate predicted by external providers. When expectations were disappointed, demotivation amongst learners and antagonism from supervisors arose, which had a negative effect on attitudes towards ABE.

Unrealistic expectations amongst management led to the attitude that ABE was a 'quick fix'. Whilst management saw the need for ABE in terms of raising educational standards within the country and improving trainability, they expected this to happen overnight. They gave their support up until 1998, but then they wanted the problem to be solved, permanently. Coming from a systems based environment, management assumed that people **would** become literate and **would stay** literate if the right inputs were applied. A lack of understanding of the human element in literacy and of the concept of learning as a lifelong process, was evident.

Unrealistic stakeholder expectations reflected a more fundamental absence of a culture of learning. Umgeni Water was a business, not a school. Learning was not its *raison d'etre*. Appreciation of learning, therefore, did not occur automatically. Black learners often came from a historical tradition of inferior education devoid of a learning culture. Without a culture of learning, ABE remained a fringe involvement which took second place to other work demands.

Unrealistic expectations were encountered by all co-ordinators and were difficult to combat. The approach adopted was to communicate and raise awareness. Workshops were held with stakeholders to provide them with information on adult learning. Under Weyer and Frost, learner expectations were voiced and clarified with initial awareness raising and assessment. Yet if stakeholders did not attend awareness raising sessions, misconceptions continued. Events such as literacy day and the learner magazine, *Siyathuthuka*, attempted to instil a culture of learning.

Differing speeds of learner progress

Experience showed that given the same educational inputs, learners progressed at differing speeds. This human element impacted negatively on the smooth implementation of programme targets for achieving functional literacy. The best way to accommodate this independent influence was to make people aware of it, place learners correctly, and adapt targets accordingly.

AMBIGUOUS INFLUENCES - EXTERNAL

Interaction with external ABE world

Umgeni Water interacted substantially with the external ABE world, both in terms of organisations and trends. It sought advice from ABE experts such as the CAE. It implemented national trends such as IEB examinations. Inherently, this interaction was both positive and negative in its impact.

External ABE organisations gave Umgeni Water useful advice. Bodies such as BESA, Tembaletu, NASA, and the CAE helped with implementation, materials and facilitator training. This input was inherently positive. Yet contact with the external ABE world led to co-ordinator loss. Co-ordinators left Umgeni Water to take up jobs in external ABE organisations. This impacted negatively on programme continuity.

Trends with regard to a national qualifications framework for education and training, and national examinations in ABE led to the use of the Independent Examinations Board. This influence on Umgeni Water ABE was profound. The whole programme shifted towards putting learners through examinations. Lessons focused on IEB outcomes. Such a development was positive in producing a competency orientated programme and giving learners nationally recognised certificates. Yet its influence was also potentially negative, if the love of statistics became too great. An obsession with getting as many learners as possible through the examination system was dangerous. Quality could be sacrificed for quantity.

In sum, the preceding discussion of independent influences on ABE programme implementation proves that implementation did not occur in a vacuum. Given certain inputs and a recipe of guiding principles, smooth implementation could not be assumed. Interaction with independent contextual factors, both within and without the organisation, alternatively hindered and aided the attainment of programme goals. These influences needed to be recognised, harnessed and accommodated for successful ABE implementation.

CONCLUSION

A MODEL FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This dissertation set out to investigate the implementation process followed during the history of the Umgeni Water ABE programme. From this case study it aimed to extract a generic model for the implementation of an ABE initiative in a workplace environment.

Umgeni Water initiated literacy classes for three main reasons - to fulfil its social/educational responsibility towards its workforce, to improve productivity, and for their public relations value. Four co-ordinators ran the Umgeni Water ABE programme from 1989-1996 - Stephen Camp, Rosemary Ward, Kim Weyer and Sally Frost. Camp started a small scale, *ad hoc* initiative with the help of Operation Upgrade. Ward ran a carefully monitored, in-house pilot project. Weyer initiated a large scale ABE programme under the guidance of BESA. Frost consolidated a company wide initiative. A target date of functional literacy for all participants by the end of 1998 was set. An evaluation of the programme commissioned in 1996 concluded that learners were moving towards this target, although at a slower rate than expected. The overall impact of ABE, whilst difficult to quantify, was positive. Expectations were being met in terms of raising education standards, improving trainability, and generating positive public relations.

From a case study of Umgeni Water literacy, an implementation model can be extracted, which reveals:

- * **enabling factors** needed to initiate a programme
- * **guiding principles** for programme implementation
- * **independent influences** that interact dynamically with any implementation blueprint and affect the realisation of targets set.

Enabling factors

Enabling factors are necessary to get an ABE programme off the ground. Before ABE can be initiated within a company, the **vision** for such a programme needs to be present. The vision for ABE leads to the provision of **funding**, without which no programme can start. This vision to implement is grounded in **specific reasons**, which in turn reflect the internal and external context within which the organisation is operating. In the case of Umgeni Water, implementation vision was grounded in educational/social responsibility, productivity and public relations motives.

Guiding principles

Nine guiding principles for programme implementation, distilled from the Umgeni Water experience, are offered as useful ingredients that will maximise chances of ABE success:

- * securely-employed, full-time, **high-calibre staff and leadership** are essential to drive the programme - at management, co-ordinator and facilitator level.
- * **a directed, demand-driven approach** is necessary. Directed goal setting, backed by efficient administration and data capture, must focus around needs analyses and vocalised demand. Programme management should be both process and product orientated.
- * an **ABE policy** is necessary to set targets and give clarity on controversial issues.
- * ongoing **stakeholder involvement**, in the form of consultation, awareness raising and steering committee representation, are vital to ensure support. External consultation should be used as needed.
- * **management support**, at CEO, senior management, and supervisor level, must be secured in order to prevent obstruction.

- * classes must be **arranged around logistical constraints and work demands** that exist in an industry environment.
- * **learner needs must be met**, in terms of professional screening and placement, learner and union consultation, and needs-based, continuum-orientated, learner-centred materials.
- * the programme must run with **budget security** for facilitator remuneration, materials, projects and general management.
- * **formal evaluation**, including external measurable results such as IEB examinations, is a necessary ingredient to ensure the ongoing flexible adaptation of the implementation process.

Implementation ingredients interact with each other and often occur simultaneously.

Independent influences

Independent influences affect smooth programme implementation. These contextual dynamics are inherent to an industry based programme, have both a positive and negative influence on the implementation process, and need to be accounted for, accommodated or harnessed.

Positive influences include:

- * the **existence of a demand** for English and for a trainable workforce within the organisation.
- * the **perception of external pressure** from government, unions and industry to provide ABE.

Negative internal influences focus around:

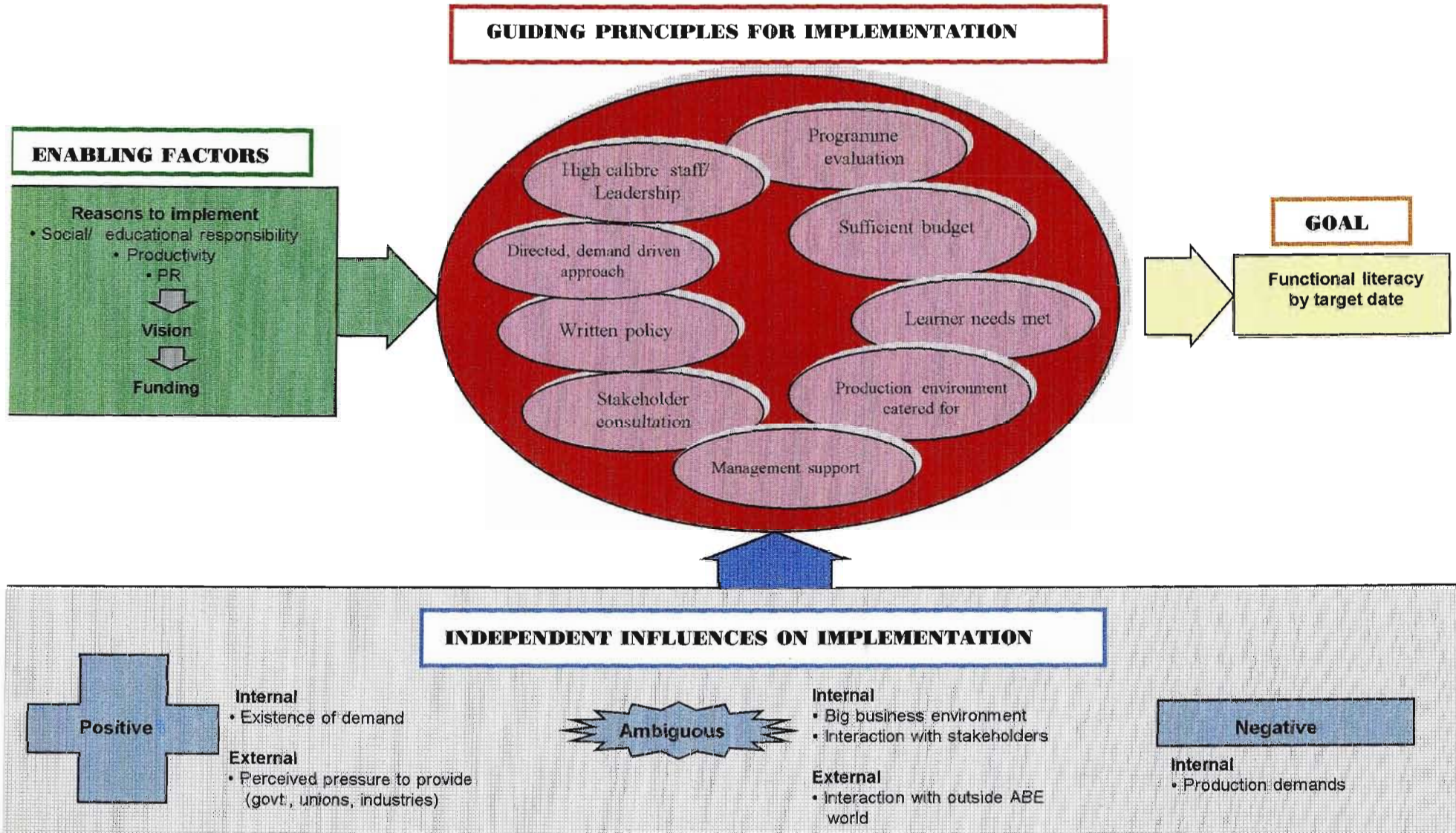
- * the tension with **production demands** faced by an ABE programme operating within company time.

The impact of three independent influences is ambiguous:

- * the **environment of a big business** has a positive influence on ABE implementation in terms of available infrastructure, finance and an output orientated work ethic. However, the impact of bureaucracy and staff turnover is detrimental.
- * **interaction with stakeholders**, in terms of potential lack of manager and supervisor support owing to work pressure, unrealistic expectations amongst stakeholders with regard to what ABE can achieve and how soon, and differing speeds of learner progress upsetting literacy targets, can be negative. If learners, unions, line management and management have been won by consultation and awareness raising, interaction is positive.
- * **interaction with the external ABE world**, whilst positive in terms of sourcing expertise, affects the programme adversely when it causes blind implementation of trends, and loss of staff to outside jobs.

In sum, given the correct enabling factors, ABE can be successfully implemented within a workplace environment. If certain guiding principles are followed, and independent contextual influences accounted for, programme goals and targets for functional literacy can be achieved. Based on lessons learnt from a case study of Umgeni Water literacy from 1989-1996, the following diagram is offered as a generic model for ABE programme implementation within industry.

Figure 37: Model for ABE programme implementation in industry



APPENDIX 1
WARD'S PROPOSAL FOR A PILOT LITERACY PROGRAMME - 1991

**THE UMGENI WATER ENGLISH LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRAMME: A
PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that

- * Rosemary Ward, the current English literacy teacher and co-ordinator, is hired on a contractual basis to continue present research, and to develop an English Literacy and Numeracy Programme unique to Umgeni Water.

- * The present Pilot English Literacy Programme, which began in the Natal Inland Region in July 1990 under Mr Grant Bruce, be extended to other plants at Umgeni Water when the proposed Umgeni water Programme is complete.

A specific advantage of this proposal is that various modules of the Umgeni Water Programme, for example *Safety* and *Tools*, could be used by other companies and organisations in the Natal region.

WHY AN ENGLISH LITERACY AND NUMERACY PROGRAMME?

The Pilot English Literacy Programme began, appropriately, in 1990 - the International Year of Literacy.

- * The United Nations issued the following challenge:
We want every adult to be able to read and write before the year 2000!

- * Umgeni Water responded to that challenge by co-hosting a seminar on literacy in September 1990 in Durban. The statistics on illiteracy were highlighted: 66%

of the South African population and 70% of the Natal/KwaZulu population is functionally illiterate. Mr Graham Atkinson, agreeing that illiteracy and semi-literacy hinder future development in South Africa, challenged the Natal business community to help eradicate illiteracy in the region by the year 2000.

- * English, as the major international language, is the language of the future in South Africa. It is thus important for people not only to be literate in their home language but to have communication skills in English too.
- * It was in the spirit of the International Year of Literacy, together with a request for English classes from various workers themselves, that the Pilot English Literacy Programme began.
- * The relevance of this Pilot Programme is evidenced in the enormous interest in the field of literacy and adult education shown by various mass organisations and unions. A conference was convened by the Sached Trust in Durban, August 2-3, 1991, to discuss the formation of a Natal Adult Education Forum. 250 delegates attended. Cosatu sees literacy as a priority and is launching a nationwide literacy campaign.

A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

Definition of functional literacy

- * Adult education has moved from a traditional understanding of literacy to a position of functional literacy.
- * Unesco defined literacy in the traditional sense in 1979 as the ability to read and write, with understanding, a simple sentence about everyday life.
- * Functional literacy can be defined as practical education which provides communication and life skills giving the individual the ability and confidence to

cope and contribute effectively in daily life. Functional literacy is of immediate benefit to the learner.

- * When is a person functionally literate? The Unesco guideline is that a person needs a minimum of four years of formal schooling to retain literacy and numeracy skills outside school. In South African terms these four years translate in a Standard Three level of education as the minimum for an individual to be functionally literate.

BENEFITS OF ENGLISH LITERACY

- * English literacy and communication skills lead to a better understanding amongst members of the workforce and, therefore, improved work performance and efficiency.
- * When people communicate more easily, relations are improved in terms of mutual understanding and respect. Industrial relations will be enhanced leading to a sense of belonging and loyalty to the company.
- * Literacy is the foundation for further skills training. In the future South Africa, any plans for economic expansion, job creation and competing internationally will require many more technically trained people. The training will not only be job specific but will require flexibility and understanding on the part of the workers to adapt to new technologies. A literacy programme includes good basic education which provides this flexibility.
- * An English Literacy Programme definitely enhances the self-respect, confidence and quality of life of people who, for various reasons, have been disadvantaged by being illiterate or semi-literate in English.

WHO ARE THE LEARNERS AND WHAT WILL THEY ACHIEVE?

- * Learners are evaluated into a Basic, Intermediate or Advanced Level using assessment tests.
- * It is a recognised, and common problem that there will always be mixed literacy levels in almost every adult literacy class. However, one can group learners of a Basic to Intermediate or Intermediate to Advanced Level together if need be. More advanced learners can contribute and participate by helping teach.
- * Adult educationists have found that it takes adults five years to move from a functional use of their home language to a functional use of English. This is obviously unrealistic in terms of a company's production needs: it is accepted that a 120 hour course is a workable alternative.

AIM OF COURSE AND DURATION

Basic

This course takes a learner who is functionally illiterate in English to a Standard Three level of functional literacy.

Duration: 120 hours.

Intermediate

Most of these learners have had four to five years of formal schooling (sometimes inadequate). They have limited confidence and limited communication skills in English. The Intermediate course consolidates and extends the learners' proficiency. The learner will reach a level of fluency and have a confident working knowledge of English.

Duration: 100-120 hours.

Advanced

For learners who have completed six years or more of formal schooling. The course is ideal for promising candidates selected for their potential: it is a foundation for further

technical and practical skills training. Comprehension and grammar lessons promote a greater degree of articulacy. The course enables the advanced learner to turn a job into a career and to contribute in the workplace and the community.

Duration: 80 hours.

THE PILOT ENGLISH LITERACY PROGRAMME

Teaching approach

- * Adult education is quite different from primary and high school education. There is a need for the course to be practical and to give immediate benefits and skills, for example the filling in of forms, to ensure learners' motivation.
- * An emphasis on communication skills to improve understanding and relations.
- * To respect and use the knowledge of learners as the foundation for teaching.
- * Live tuition and participatory learning through, for example, role play and reinforcement, build confidence. Confidence is the key to learning and language.
- * The use of visual tuition, such as flashcards (including even safety notices!) and literacy "comic" books, such as *99 Sharp Street: The River of our Dreams* is effective. Visual literacy materials are an ideal bridging medium between an oral and a written culture.
- * The establishment of mini-libraries, run by the learners themselves, as a post-literacy follow-up. This will maintain and further an interest in literacy.
- * Literacy and communication skills are skills acquired for life, and directly link in with work and community life.

Response and progress

- * There has been an enthusiastic response from learners: motivation has been high as the activities in class have been practical and linked with actual work needs. For example, the writing of a safety report.
- * Confidence has been boosted: foremen have reported a marked increase in the learners' use of English.
- * Interest in Umgeni Water has been sparked. There have been lessons in which we read *Flowmeter* and discussed Umgeni's role in the water process in Natal. At HD Hill a request from the class led to an Induction by Mr Hendrik Zulu in July.
- * The literacy comic *99 Sharp Street: The River of our Dreams* has been a great success. An element of the success was a strong sense of identification with the Umgeni Water logo on the back of the comic. (The logo was in connection with Project Water).
- * Meetings with management and foremen, where they were given a presentation on literacy and consulted on the content of the syllabi, have helped create a sense that they are participating in a project of worth not only to the learners, but to themselves and the company as a whole.

THE REASONS FOR AND ADVANTAGES OF A COURSE DEVELOPED SPECIFICALLY FOR UMGENI WATER

- * Many existing courses are orientated to the Transvaal or Cape workforce and conditions. Some have been outdated by recent developments in South Africa and need updating. For example: VAT superseding GST, and changes in the

country's laws: the pass laws being repealed. There is a need for a local English course from a basic through to a post-intermediate level.

- * There is very little material available on numeracy. Numeracy, alongside literacy, is a prerequisite for further skills training. The proposed programme will have a strong numeracy component.
- * It is a recognised fact that teaching is more effective when the material relates directly to the learner's own work and daily life. For example, filling in forms. It is far more relevant for the learner to practise filling in Umgeni Water forms than standardised forms. The learning process is made easier because the learner is using information taken from his daily life. He is also acquiring a skill of immediate benefit, which will increase his motivation.
- * It is surely desirable for companies to have every employee informed and interested in the different aspects that make the company unique, rather than have employees working in isolation knowing only the specifics of their job. A literacy programme can include company forms, signs, notices, procedures and the newsletter as an important component. A literacy programme is thus the ideal vehicle for providing workers with an overview of the company and its role in the wider community. This can lead to a greater sense of belonging to the company and a sense of pride in individual work. Thus, an effective literacy programme can sell a company to its employees.
- * Umgeni Water, by producing its own English Literacy and Numeracy Programme will be a forerunner in Natal, in keeping with the challenge it issued to Natal business at the Literacy Seminar in 1990.

COSTS

Job description - Rosemary Ward

Teaching

- at present an average of 32 hours per month
- when programme extends teaching capacity can extend to 48 hours per month

Administration and co-ordination

- needs analysis
- evaluation of learners into appropriate level
- structuring of classes
- regular meetings with management to ensure commitment to programme
- presentations and reports
- establishment of mini-libraries
- evaluation of programme

Research and development

- academic and educational
- practical "hands-on" research in the plants
- creation and development of a course designed specifically for Umgeni Water

Miss Ward to be employed on a contractual basis by Umgeni Water

- * at the rate of R24,40 per hour
- * a timesheet to be completed each month and authorised by D van Deventer
- * there is to be a guarantee that Miss Ward will work a minimum of 80 hours per month
 - this serves both as a retainer fee and as a guarantee of income should an external event, such as a strike, occur through no fault of Miss Ward's own
- * contract to be on a monthly basis with a period of two weeks notice on either side

Running costs to be met by the company

*** Administration costs**

- telephone, fax, typing pool, photocopying and use of an office.

Transport

- for all trips away from the centre of town
- AA rate at 60c/km to be applied.

APPENDIX 2

LEARN AND TEACH SCREENING TEST

English Assessment Test

Name:.....

Centre:.....

Date:.....

SECTION	TYPE OF TEST	SKILLS TESTED
1	Sight words	Recognizing sight words
2	Matching pictures to words	Understanding common words
3	Match the words	Recognizing words
4	Matching sentences	Recognizing sentences
5	Sentences formation	Knowing simple English structures
6	Reading Comprehension (letter)	Understanding a simple written passage
7	Reading Comprehension (postcard)	Understanding a written passage
8	Original Writing	Writing for communication
9	Reading Comprehension(article)	Understanding a more difficult passage
10	Dictation	Understanding

READ THESE WORDS



South Africa



NO TRESSPASSING



DANKIE

JOHANNESBURG

SECTION
2

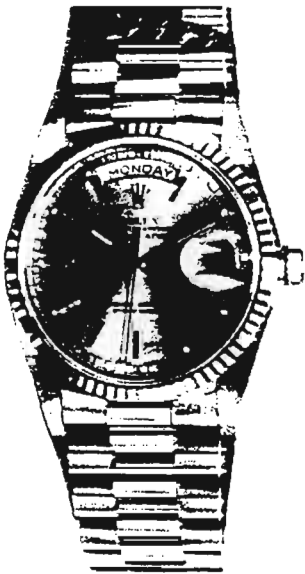
DRAW A LINE FROM THE WORD TO THE
PICTURE



table

bus

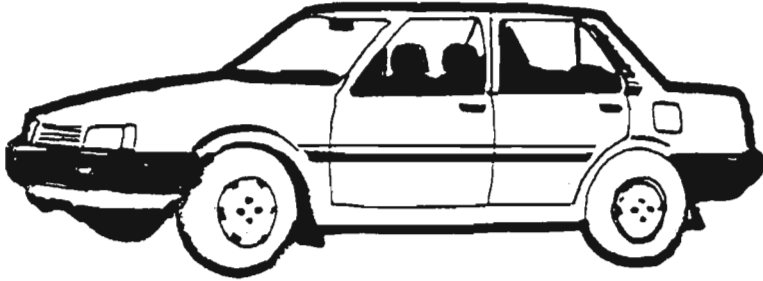
cigarettes



radio

watch

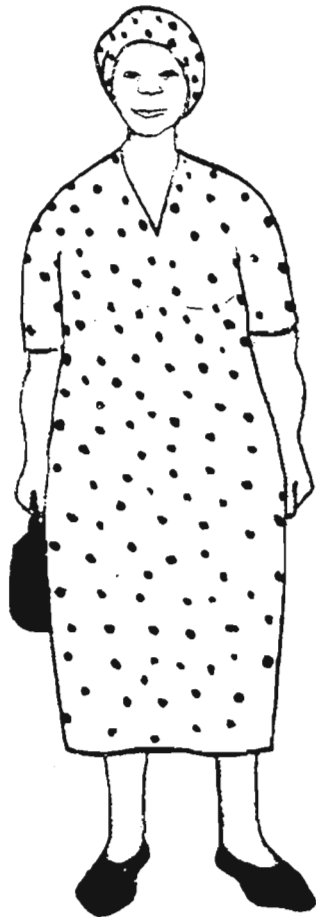
telephone



house

tree

car



woman

chair

dog

SECTION

3

MATCH THE CIRCLE

STOP

SHOP

STEP

STOP

COKE

CAKE

COKE

COOK

STREET

SLEEP

STEEL

STREET

STATION

STATED

STARTION

STATION

PLATFORM

PLATFORM

PLATROOM

PLATROOM

SECTION

4

MATCH THE SENTENCE IN THE CIRCLE

He walks to school every day.

She walks to school every day.

He walks to work every day.

He walks to school every day.

He walked to school every day.

SECTION

5



doctor

he

a

is

EXAMPLE: He is a doctor



a

driver

is

He



washing

child

her

is

she



buying

a

she

shirt

is

SECTION
6

READ THE LETTER

Melrose Heights

24 4th Ave

Killarney

2196

15 February 1986

Dear Learn and Teach,

I am a night-watchman in a block of flats in Killarney, Johannesburg.

I get R 174 - 12c a month. This is not enough. I need double to look after my wife and children at home.

I spoke to the superintendent of the building about my wages. He said he will try to pay me more in December. I can't wait that long.

What can I do ?

Simon Ncube

NOW READ THE QUESTION

**block of flats
Learn and Teach
Killarney
R174.12
nightwatchman
money
wages**

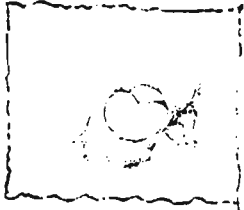
Simon sent his letter to Learn and Teach

- 1. Where does Simon live?_____**
- 2. He is a _____**
- 3. He works in a _____**
- 4. How much does Simon get?_____**
- 5. What did he speak to the Superintendent about?_____**
- 6. He needs more _____**

SECTION

7

READ THE POSTCARD THEN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

<p style="text-align: right;"><u>POSTCARD</u></p> <p>Dear John, I started a new job last week. It is in a shoe factory I will get more money. But I don't like the work. I get very tired. How is your job at the O.K. Bazaars? Please write to me. Love, Mary Dlamini</p>	 <p>Mr. J. Khumalo, 15, Ocean St, Johannesburg Transvaal</p>
--	---

- 1 Who is this postcard to? _____
- 2 Does Mary work in a shoe factory? _____
- 3 Will Mary get the same money? _____
- 4 When did Mary start her new job? _____
- 5 Where does John work? _____
- 6 Why does Mary not like her new job?

SECTION

9

READ THE STORY THEN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

Few people have heard of a place called Lenyenye. Lenyenye is a township in the Naphuno district in the eastern Transvaal.

For many years people called the Naphuno district the 'Valley of Death'. They called Naphuno the 'Valley of Death' because people died there. They died from hunger. They died from sickness. They died nobody cared.

In 1977 a brave and beautiful woman went to live in Lenyenye. Her name is Dr Mamphela Ramphele.

Before 1977 Mamphela had also never heard of Lenyenye. She worked in a clinic in King William's Town. She was happy there. She had lots of friends. And she was helping people.

Then the government banned her. And they sent her to Lenyenye - nearly a thousand miles away from King William's Town. Mamphela did not know anybody in Lenyenye. But she saw how the people were suffering. She wanted to help them. She is a woman who cares.

Mamphela worked very hard. She still works very hard. She works with the people. Together they are working for a better life.

Life is better for the people already. They have built a clinic together. The clinic is called 'Ithuseng'. This means 'help yourselves'. Mamphela is the doctor in the clinic.

The clinic helps about 100 people everyday. But the clinic does not only help sick people. The clinic trains people. The people are called health workers. The health workers work with the people in the villages of Naphuno. Together they learn how to stay healthy.

The people are also working together in other ways. Some women work in sewing and knitting groups. Some people makes bricks together. Other people grow vegetables. And over 300 people are learning how to read and write together. The Learn and Teach organisation helps these learners.

The people are now building a nursery school together. We have lots to do," an old man told Learn and Teach. "We must work hard. Now we are on the right road. The young doctor has done much for us."

AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the clinic?

2. Why did Dr. Ramphela go to Lenyenye?

3. In which district is Lenyenye?

4. What did people call the Naphuno district?

5. Where did Dr. Ramphela live before she went to Lenyenye?

6. Who built the clinic?

7. Where does Dr. Ramphela?

8. What work are people trained to do at the clinic?

9. What groups do the ^{work} women in?

10. How many people are learning to read and write?

11. What sort of school are the people building?

Dr. Ramphela is now unbanned. She has married and left Lenyenye.

APPENDIX 3
MANAGEMENT NEEDS ANALYSIS - SEPTEMBER 1991

ENGLISH LITERACY PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE

A functionally literate person is defined as having the minimum of a standard 3-5 level of education:

People Who Are Literate Can ...

- * Read the labels on cans and boxes of food
 - * Read a bus or train schedule
 - * Look up numbers in a telephone directory
 - * Read a contract, a health insurance form
 - * Read a map when they are lost
 - * Read medical directions
 - * Help their children with homework
 - * Read the menu in a restaurant
 - * Read road signs
 - * Get a job requiring reading or writing
 - * Read the warning labels on poisons and pesticides
 - * Read a letter from a relative or friend and write a response
 - * Keep their own accounts
1. In the workplace, what do you see the greatest disadvantage of a functionally illiterate employee as being:
- limited communication skills leading for example, to misunderstandings and therefore loss of company time and efficiency
 - training for new tasks or jobs is difficult
 - safety
 - makes understanding different cultural backgrounds more difficult
 - lower productivity

2a. The learners have said that they see communication, and being able to talk in English, as the main benefit of this Literacy Programme. Do you agree?

YES

NO

2b. If not, what would you say is the major benefit of the programme?

3. Other benefits of the programme are:

- improved understanding amongst members of the workforce can lead to enhanced Industrial Relations
- improved communication skills and understanding can lead to improved work performance
- literacy is essential as the basis for further skills training
- a sense of belonging and loyalty to the company will be enhanced
- the programme improves the self-respect, confidence and quality of life of people who have been disadvantaged by being illiterate or semi-literate in English

Please rank these benefits in order of importance.

4. At the moment do you mainly talk to your Grade 17 and 18 employees in:

ZULU

ENGLISH

HALF ZULU / HALF ENGLISH

AFRIKAANS

HALF ZULU / HALF AFRIKAANS

FANAGALO

5. If you speak little or no Zulu do you intend taking Zulu lessons in future?

YES

NO

6. The syllabus is flexible in structure consisting of a number of modules which may be included or excluded according to the learners' particular needs. The basis of the programme is obviously "Language" and "Communication". However, there are various other proposed modules. Please rank these in order of importance.

- Form Filling In
- Information and Instruction
- Signs and Notices
- Tools
- Safety
- Numeracy
- Money Management
- Health
- The Environment
- Civic/Community Life
- Information about Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment Works

7a. Regarding the evaluation of the Programme, do you consider it advisable to have the Programme formally evaluated?

YES

NO

7b. We will award attendance and progress certificates to candidates who have completed the programme. Are you satisfied that these certificates give recognition, within the company, of further training on the part of the learners?

YES

NO

8a. Research has shown that it takes a minimum of 120 hours to take a person from a position of functional illiteracy to one of literacy. There are no "get literate quick" schemes.

The length of the programme is difficult in terms of production needs. The compromise we have agreed on is to have on three hour session a week for forty weeks.

Are you satisfied with this arrangement?

YES

NO

8b. Would you consider a shorter programme, for example twenty weeks, but with two, three hour sessions a week?

YES

NO

9. Are you experiencing, or do you foresee experiencing, any problems in terms of the practicalities of the programme?

YES

NO

10. Do you have any suggestions to make or points to raise about the Programme?

11a. I have suggested regular meetings with you to keep you informed of the progress of the Literacy Programme. Are you satisfied, with this arrangement?

YES

NO

11b. Would you like more communication links with the Training Department?

YES

NO

11c. Would you like more information on the Literacy Programme and Literacy in general in terms of regular reports?

YES

NO

12a. Have you noticed any progress in English communication skills in the learners since the programme has started?

YES

NO

12b. Can you give any specific examples? _____

APPENDIX 4
LEARNER NEEDS ANALYSIS - 1992

ENGLISH LITERACY CLASSES

WELCOME!

**I would like to understand how English classes can help you at work and at home
- your NEEDS.**

- * In your job, do you use English most
- To Read
 - To Write
 - To Speak

Please tick the correct box.

- * When you are not at work, do you use English most
- To Read
 - To Write
 - Speaking

OR

- All Three

- * I have some ideas about how English can help you in your Job at Umgeni Water
- (1) Filling in company forms.
 - (2) Reading Signs and Notices.
 - (3) Communication: being able to understand and speak to other people.
 - (4) Reading *Flowmeter*.

- * Do you have other ideas about how English Classes can help you at work?
-

* I want my classes to be very Useful and Practical for you so that you can communicate and manage better in everyday life. Please tick the boxes if you want to discuss:

- (1) Writing a letter to family or friends
- Writing a business letter
- (2) Using the Post Office:
 - How to send a Registered Letter
 - How to Insure a Parcel
 - How to use a Postal Order
- (3) Using the Telephone:
 - How to telephone a person
 - Answering the telephone
 - Telephone directory
- (4) At the Clinic or Hospital:
 - How to tell the doctor or nurse "where you are sick"
 - Reading instructions on medicine bottles
- (5) - How to read a Timetable
- How to read a Map
- How to give a person directions to find a place
- (6) The bank or Building Society:
 - Using Autobank
 - Filling in Bank Forms
- (7) Shopping:
 - Speaking to Shopkeepers
 - Choosing groceries in English
- (8) - How to certify a Document
- How to Photocopy
- How to find Employment

* At the moment do you:

- Watch TV
- Listen to the Radio

- Read the Newspaper
- Read Magazines
- Read Books

* Which Magazines and Newspapers do you read often?

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Upbeat | <input type="checkbox"/> | Natal Witness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bona | <input type="checkbox"/> | Echo | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drum | <input type="checkbox"/> | You Magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Thandi | <input type="checkbox"/> | Personality | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fair Lady | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tribune | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pace | <input type="checkbox"/> | True Love | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ilanga | <input type="checkbox"/> | New Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| UmAfrika | <input type="checkbox"/> | City Press | <input type="checkbox"/> |

* In our classes, would you like to Read Information about:

- TV Programme Guide
- Sport
- Music
- Other People's Lives
- The New South Africa
- Nature & Animals
- Other Countries
- Health
- Aids
- The Community
- Umgeni Water

* We can have **Conversations** in English where we:

(Please tick the box you like)

- Greet People
- Ask them how they are

- Tell them about our job
- Tell them what we do everyday
- Tell them about our weekends and holidays
- Tell them about our family
- Tell them about our community
- Tell them our likes and dislikes

APPENDIX 5
WARD'S PROPOSAL TO MANCO FOR PROGRAMME EXPANSION
SEPTEMBER 1992

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE UMGENI WATER LITERACY
PROGRAMME

1. PRESENT POSITION OF UMGENI WATER LITERACY PROGRAMME

Following requests from our employees for Zulu literacy and English language classes, Umgeni Water began classes in 1989/90.

Looking at the programme in September 1992 we see that:

1. It is small, low-key, low-budget.
It consists of 3 part time teachers and a co-ordinator who works three quarter time (120 hours per month).

2. It is a good adult education programme.
 - it has a strong practical focus giving immediate benefits and skills.
 - communication and life skills are the cornerstones, giving the individual the ability and confidence to cope in everyday work and home life.
 - it is learner centred (respecting and using the knowledge of learners as the foundation for teaching).
 - it has mini-libraries, run by the learners themselves in order to support and maintain the skills taught.
 - it is needs-orientated: both the needs of the learners and those required by Umgeni Water.
 - material is customised and relevant to the learner; thus the programme links in with the work, projects and personnel of Umgeni Water.

3. It has achieved good internal public relations and a good support context - vital in order to create the correct support atmosphere for literacy.
4. it has achieved good external public relations.

Conclusions

The programme has gone as far as it can go with the present resources. There are clear indications that the demand for more classes and a large scale expansion of the Programme will be required in the near future, for example at the new Darvill Works.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Needs Analysis

It is recommended that research is carried out throughout Umgeni Water in order to determine the Zulu and English literacy levels of our Grade 13-18 employees. This would be to quantify the current status and the scope of the total training need. So far literacy evaluation tests and needs analyses have concentrated only on employees enrolled in classes.

The research is more involved than simply establishing how many of our employees do or do not have a particular standard of school education, for example standard 5. People who were at school twenty years ago may have a certain standard of education but may not have retained many literacy or numeracy skills. Also, a particular standard from one school may be inferior or superior to a standard from another due to the lack of standardisation at DET schools.

Information from Eskom, the Centre for Adult Education and the Municipality suggests that detailed tests are carried out. The tests can be done in groups of twenty individuals for forty minutes.

2.2. An Adult Education Policy and an Adult Education Forum

To date there has been no formal policy for the Adult Education Programme. As the Programme expands it is clear that an Adult Education Policy will be required to deal with critical issues such as:

- criteria for selection of candidates
- duration of Programme
- venue and time of classes
- the Programme's budget
- evaluation to determine whether the needs of Umgeni Water are being met
- content of the Programme being taught

It is recommended that a working group for Adult Education is formed. This Adult Education Forum would represent the full spectrum of the Umgeni Water departments and personnel who would be affected by the Programme. This would include managerial and supervisory staff, potential learners, union representatives, the Training Department, Information Services, Industrial Relations, Public Relations and other interested personnel. The Forum would be chaired by the Manager of Training and Development.

- * It is vital that the Forum be fully representative of Umgeni Water.
- * The forum would be mandated to make proposals for an Adult Education Policy which would then be submitted to MANCO for approval through the Director Human Resources.
- * The Forum would also closely monitor the progress and workings of the Literacy Programme and ensure that it is meeting the needs of Umgeni Water.

- * By creating such a Forum we would be following the example of companies such as Genmin and Eskom who are two of the leading companies in the field of Workplace Literacy.

2.3. Standardising the Umgeni Water Programme

The lack of a National Policy on Adult Education and Literacy in South Africa has created a situation where there are many programmes but little standardisation among them. This makes the professionalisation of the field very difficult.

In 1990 the HSRC conducted an evaluation into literacy and found the following:

- * Literacy is best achieved if mother tongue literacy is first established. To achieve this, the **language experience approach** (Breakthrough) has been found to be most effective.

- * The programme that best follows onto this **language experience approach** to establish literacy in English is the English for Adults programme. The company marketing these programmes is Basic Education and Skills for Adults (BESA).

The English for Adults course developed out of the Genmin Programme which is the largest in South Africa to date.

The advantages of buying the BESA Programme are the following:

- * BESA's client list is extensive. By using their course we would be standardising our Programme as much as possible in South Africa.
- * The BESA Programme is competency based. The competency system of training is increasingly favoured in South Africa and is used by our own Training Department.
- * The BESA Programme concurs with Umgeni Water's criteria for good adult education practice:
 - it is learner centred, active, experiential
 - it has a mother-tongue literacy Programme which is a bridge to the English Programme

- it teaches work related English and functional English for general life skills
- * It offers a numeracy course as an adjunct.
- * It has a high credibility with the Unions.
- * By adopting the BESA Programme Umgeni Water would move to a fully operational phase with the Literacy Programme.
- * The BESA Programme has been customised for the specific needs of different industries: it could certainly be customised for the water industry.

APPENDIX 6
THE UMGENI WATER ADULT EDUCATION POLICY
(LITERACY, NUMERACY AND LIFE SKILLS)

Mission statement:

The Umgeni Water Adult Education programme shall be part of the wider mission of Umgeni Water:

“We shall endeavour to ... provide our employees in return for their efficient, productive and loyal service, **with opportunities for personal development**, stable employment and appropriate compensation, all on a non-discriminatory basis.”

The Adult Education Programme shall form an integral part of Umgeni Water’s General Training Policy and will link in with existing education and training programmes at Umgeni Water.

The **purpose** of the Adult Education Programme is to provide literacy and numeracy development courses to meet the training and development needs of Umgeni Water and ultimately the needs of all our employees.

The **objective** of the programme is to ultimately make literacy and numeracy courses available to all employees irrespective of grade or job classification, and to develop all interested employees to a level of functional literacy competency, by the end of 1998.

Note: **Functional Literacy** being defined as the ability to read, write and speak with understanding at a level that enables one to cope, perform and contribute confidently in daily life. The basic skills required include literacy, numeracy and life skills that are of immediate benefit to the learner.

A person is regarded functionally literate once they have successfully completed level three, on the Basic Education and Skills for Adults continuum of language development, of the Conversational English course.

Principles of the Adult Education Programme:

- Courses** : The courses to be implemented are:
- Mother Tongue Literacy
 - English for Adults
 - Numeracy
 - Zulu as a second language
- (all Basic Education and Skills for Adults)
- Voluntary** : Adult Education is voluntary. However, employees requiring job related literacy, numeracy or language development, will be required to attend the appropriate course/s as part of their in service training.
- Selection** : The Adult Education Forum will select learners, giving priority to employees who need job related literacy or numeracy development. Nominations will be accepted from employees themselves or from managers and supervisors. Managers and supervisors will be required to comment on their worker's nominations.
- Learners** : Once a learner is accepted for a course, attendance is compulsory. Promotion to the next level will depend on attendance and performance in the course and the learner's work requirements.

- Supervisors** : Supervisors will be obliged to release learners from work to attend classes. Supervisors may only withdraw a learner from a class in the case of an emergency or non-routine circumstances.
- Recognition** : Attendance certificates will be issued to learners who attend a minimum of 80% of the course. Certification will also be made of learning achieved.
- Time** : Classes will be held in Umgeni Water time. When planning class times, an effort will be made to accommodate the learners and their supervisors. However, shift workers who are not scheduled to work when a class is scheduled, will not be paid overtime for attending a class in their own time.
- Venues** : Wherever possible courses will be held at suitable Umgeni Water venues at stations where the majority of the learners are stationed. Learners from other stations will need to be transported to a course venue closest to them. A minimum of five learners will be required for a course to be implemented.
- Transport** : Transport to classes, if required, shall be provided by Umgeni Water.
- Costs** : The costs of facilitator training, salaries and literacy materials shall be met by Umgeni Water. Learners will pay the cost of the course workbooks if they wish to retain them after completing the course, otherwise all workbooks and readers must be returned at the end of the course.
- Reports** : Monthly reports on the progress of the courses will be submitted to the relevant managers. Results of screening and end-of-course tests will be reported to the Adult Education Forum.

Adult : The Adult Education Forum is representative of all levels of
Education : personnel involved in the Adult Education programme. It will
Forum : meet as required, to select learners; resolve problems and to
monitor the Programme to ensure that it meets the needs of the
learners and Umgeni Water in accordance with the needs of
production.

APPENDIX 7
PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL
SIYATHUTHUKA LEARNER MAGAZINE

AYANDE!



A D U L T
E D U C A T I O N

SIYATHUTHUKA

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1 AUGUST 1996

THE I.E.B. CEREMONY - 30 MAY 1996

Reported by **ELLIOT ZONDI**, Mkondeni

This was the most interesting ceremony I have ever had during my service at Umgeni Water. There were many people who joined the ceremony. The Chief Executive was one of the top visitors at the ceremony, then the Director of Operations.

Sally Frost thanked all who participated in the ceremony and told everyone about the adult education. The Chief Executive congratulated all who had succeeded in the exams. The Director of Operations issued the certificates. Some people passed with Merit and some with Credit.

After the ceremony there was some tea and refreshments. We took some photographs together although we did not sing. The people were all happy.



Durban Heights learners proudly show their IEB certificates.

DEVELOPMENT AT PINESIDE

Reported by **MICHAEL MLABA**, **MORRIS NJILO** and **JOE NXUMALO**, Pineside

Umgeni Water decided to organise Coleman Construction to build new offices at Pineside. This construction started on 1st of October 1995. The reason for extending these offices is to be bigger. There are many educated employees, and they are supposed to have their own offices. Coleman Construction didn't extend the offices only. They also extended the changing rooms so employees have enough space to place their lockers. The other job they did was to extend the electrical workshop and instrument workshop so that they are bigger, because they are supposed to have their own offices and the place to keep the material. It is confidential company information to know how much they pay Coleman Construction to do the job.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?
LEARNERS TELL US WHAT'S HAPPENING AT UMGENI WATER.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



O Miss baseMgeni emdlalweni webhola

UMGENI WEBHOLA 22 JUNE 1996

Ibhalwe ngu

EDWARD ZITHA ZUMA, Darvill

Mhlaka 22/6/96 ngathokoza kakhulu ngalomdladlo owawukhona. Sadlala kahle ngoba akubanga khona msindo. Sadlala ibhola labafana and no Miss baseMgeni Water badlala kahle nabo. Ngiyabahalalisela ngoba alikandi ibhola lezinyawo elidlalwa abesifazane.

JOB FOCUS

DO YOU KNOW THE JOBS PEOPLE DO AT UMGENI WATER?
THIS MONTH WE LOOK AT ... JEREMIAH MLOTSHWA -
ARTISAN ASSISTANT - MKONDENI WORKSHOP

Written by **Linda Radebe**, Mkondeni

I am writing about Jeremiah Mlotshwa. He is an ARTISAN ASSISTANT for Umgeni Water. He works at Mkondeni Workshop. He is 38 years old and married with five children.

In 1985 Jeremiah was employed at Umgeni Water as an Artisan Assistant. He assists the artisan by digging furrows for laying pipes. He uses a pick and shovel and helps the digging machine. He also fixes burst pipes by welding them. He also takes metre readings. He was advised by Umgeni Water to change the old metres and put new metres, and change the air valves and put new gate valves.

The position of Artisan Assistant needs:

- * a strong and physically built person
- * minimum Std 6
- * 2 years experience with pipes
- * to be able to read metres, change old metres and put new metres



Jeremiah Mlotshwa and Linda Radebe

- * to be able to change air valves and put new gate valves.

Jeremiah Mlotshwa has worked for Umgeni Water for 11 years. He works 42 hours per week. He starts at 07h00 and ends at 16h00. His peromnes grade is grade 16.

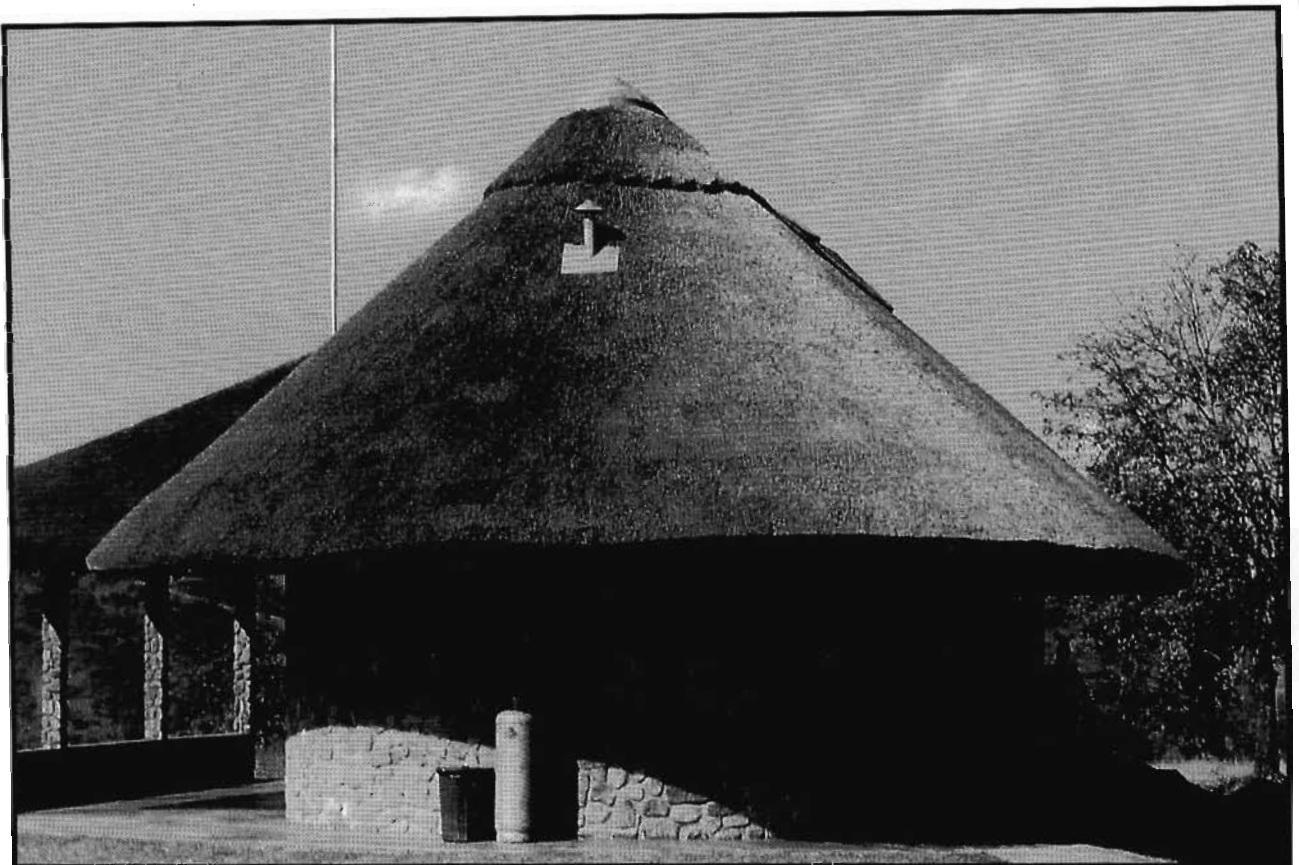
Jeremiah likes his job. The job suits him very much, that is why he has worked for 11 years. He can maintain the whole job himself because he has worked for Umgeni for so many years. I wish Jeremiah good luck.



EARLY UMGENI

JABU NGCOBO remembers what it was like to work at Nagle Dam,
when she first joined Umgeni Water in 1983:

There were no staff quarters at that time. There was one house without rooms. The whole staff had to lie down on the concrete even in Winter. They had to collect fire wood when they wanted to cook food. They had to make the fire outside the house because there was no kitchen.



The conference Centre at Nagle Dam

Mr Taylor was the superintendant in 1985. He decided to build the new staff quarters. He decided that one person should have one room. The room must be filled with a bed, table, chair and wardrobe. He organised the stove with three big plates in the kitchen.

In 1989 he decided to build the cottage and the conference centre on the island. He built these two buildings nicely with stone and cement.



STORIES WE HAVE WRITTEN

IKHAYA LAMI

Ibhalwe ngu **SIPHO XULU**, umfundi wesigaba 2 Zulu, Darvill

Ikhaya lami lise Eastwood. Nginezingane ezinhlanu -nonkosikazi. Umuzi wami unamakamelo amane. Ikhishi, idaning room nezindlu ezimbili zokulala. Umuzi wami ubiyelwe ngocingo.

Ngaphambili komuzi kukhona izimbali ezinhle. Ngaphambili kwekhishi kukhona utshani obuhlaza bokuhlala uma lishisa ilanga. Kukhona izihlahla ezimbili zama fuluthi. Esisodwa esika lamula esinye esikamango.



Sipho Xulu uxoxa ngekhaya lakhe

Ngaphakathi ekhishini kukhona isitofu, nama bhodwe okupheka, kitchen skim nefridge. Edaning room kukhona osofa abane bokuhlala izivakashi netafula lakhona elincane. Kukhona iroom divider ehlala umabonakude.

Ezindlini zokulala kukhona imibhede yokulala. Owami wokulala uyidouble bed elinye ikamelo line bedroom suite ne kist. E Khistini kuhlala amaphilo emicamelo, amashidi nezingubo zokulala. Ikamelo lilinye linesivalo esisodwa. Ngaphambi kwesivalo kukhona isango namafasitela amabili. Emafasiteleni wonke kukhona amabhedilagasi. Wonke amakamelo anamawashi.

Ngiyalithanda ikhaya ngoba lihle futhi lihlanzekile.

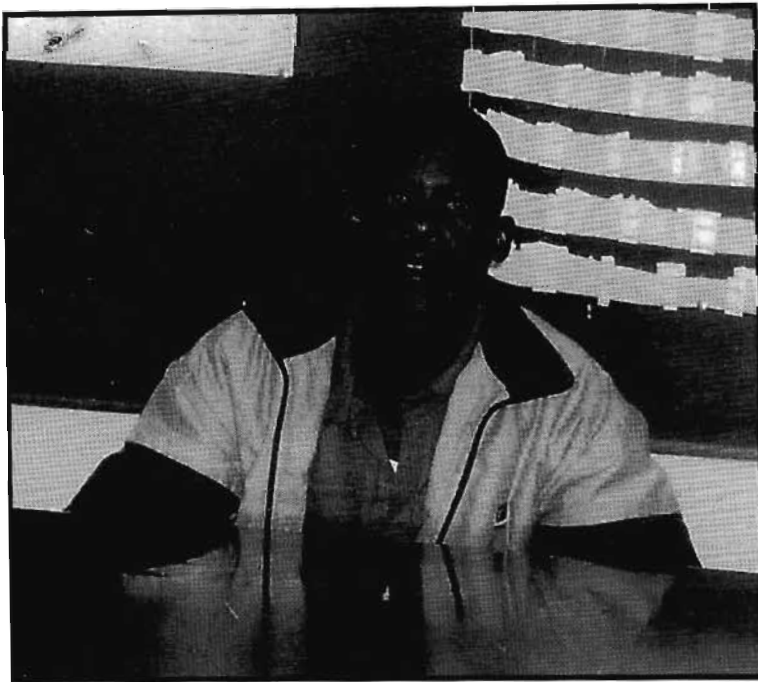


STORIES WE HAVE WRITTEN

OUR DREAM HOUSE

Written by **VINCENT CHILIZA**, English level 3, Park Rynie

My name is Vincent Chiliza. I come from Mistake Farm. I was born in 1962. I left school after doing Std 4 at Ekubusisweni School.



Vincent Chiliza

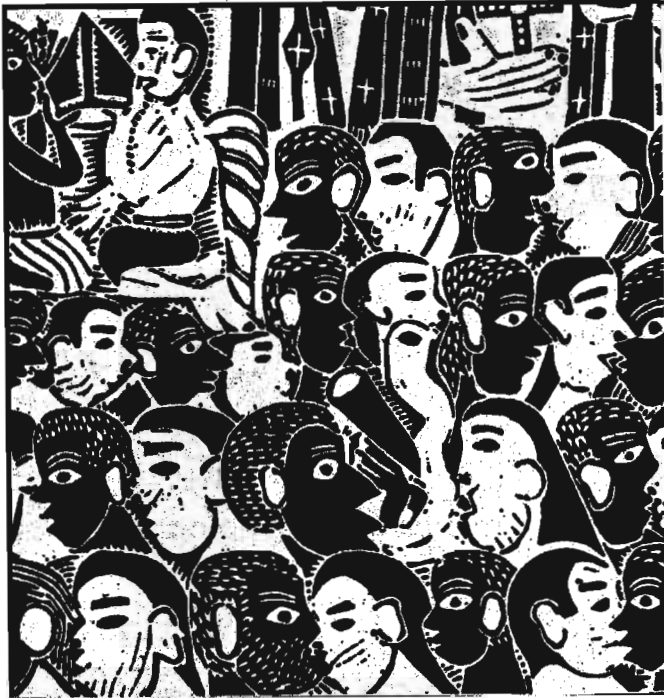
One day I saw something like a dream, a graceful and big house my father had built. The house had a grass roof.

One Sunday evening on the 3 April 1978, I was coming home from visiting my uncle. I saw that my father's house was on fire. My parents were in the garden trying to put out the fire with the hose pipe, but the fire kept on spreading. I quickly helped my parents to carry out some furniture and clothes. After some time it became too dangerous to go into the house. By this time the crowd was surrounding the house.

Suddenly part of the burning roof fell as the smoke and flames shot high up in the air.

I saw that nothing could be done to save the house. The crowd also helped in fighting the fire with the sand and tree branches. Slowly the flames died and all that was left were bare walls. My parents spent the night with the neighbours and I used my room because it wasn't damaged.

My father replied to the neighbours with a small voice when they asked about the fire. That made my father really sad for a long time. He eventually built another dream house just like the old one.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mhleli,

Ukubaluleka kwemfundo

Umgeni Water Amanzi unohlelo lwemfundo ingcono imfundo engathi inganhu thuka iye phambili emsebenzini siphankamisa ukuthokoza ukubongo ngemfundo yesikole.

Ngizizwa ngingco no uma ngifunda. Ngicela ukuba singayenki sekuseduze lasiyakhona imfundo ibalulenkile kwezentu thuko. Uma sizithambisa silahla ithuba lethu

Z.M. GWALA - Mkondeni

Mhleli,

Drinking on school trips

There is a problem especially when we have to go on trips or have class braais. This takes place during class time and during working hours and it is therefore surprising to see someone emnandi or enswanswa.

This is a problem because this person becomes unmanageable, causes disorder and fights with colleagues. Something should be done about this.



CONVERSATIONAL ENGLISH CLASS - Mkondeni.

INTERVIEWS

LEARNERS AT PARK RYNIE
INTERVIEWED THEIR WORKS
MANAGER, BRUCE BOYERS

Mr Boyers, please tell us about your childhood, home and school.

I was born in Germiston and my uncle had a farm in Park Rynie. I grew up in Durban and I used to go to the Beach to catch fish.

When did you start working for Umgeni Water?

I started in May 1995 as a Works Manager.

What do you think about adult education at Umgeni Water?

It is very good because all the people can read and write. It will benefit safety and it is good for the company.

I understand this is the first time there have been classes in the south coast. Is there any change?

Definitely there is change. Staff morale is very high.

What do you think should be the focus of learning?

Effective communication.



Simon Mbele interviewed Bruce Boyers

CLASS TRIPS

T.C. Sithole from Darvill, writes about his class trip to Durban.

On 17 May 1996 our teacher took us to Durban. I was so happy because this was my first time to go to Durban.

Our teacher took us at 10h30. I was sitting next to the window because I wanted to see everything on the road. We arrived at Durban at

11h30. The first things I saw in Durban were the big roads and the many people.

Our teacher took us to Sea World first. At Sea World we saw many kinds of fish. I saw the big one which is the shark. Sharks eat other fish. At Sea World we saw the Dolphin. The Dolphin was playing with the ball, and it was jumping in the pool, and it



Mkondeni learners go on a trip to Sea World in Durban

was dancing and swimming. When it was finished it needed fish. If you gave it small fish it cried. If you gave it enough fish it was happy and danced again.

We finished at Sea World and went to the beach. At the beach we

washed our faces and hands with sea water, and we collected some sea water for ourselves. I wanted to swim but I was afraid because other people said you must not swim at the beach if you are not a Christian.

Only one thing was wrong. We went to Durban when we had no money!

COMPETITION:

A NAME FOR OUR NEW MAGAZINE



The winner of R100, Phillip Dlamini

The winning name for our magazine comes from P.K. DLAMINI of Darvill. This is his suggestion: **SIYATHUTHUKA.**

P.K. Dlamini has won himself R100.

Well done! Other names we liked were:

UBUHLE BEZWE

M.B. SHEZI, Henley Dam

KHANYISA PHAMBILI

D.K. NDLOVU, Mkondeni

ZAMUSIZO

B. NGCOBO, E&C Mfula

ZAMUK'KHANYA

M. KHUMALO, Nagle Dam

AGONY COLUMN

CAN YOU HELP THESE PEOPLE WITH THEIR PROBLEMS?

Please help,

I am 42 years old. I have a problem of forgetting. No matter how much I try to learn I am not even able to remember what it was all about. Now this seems to be a growing thing and it is very frustrating. I was wondering if you could help me because I would really like to learn.

Wanting to learn.

Please help,

I am a married man but I am caught between a single and a married man's life. I am seeing quite a few women and this has made my life at home a misery. Things between my wife and I are getting bad lately. What must I do?

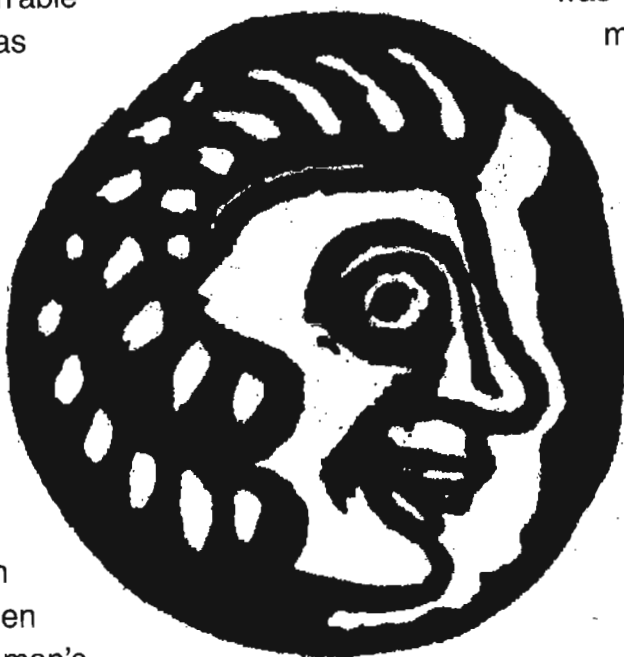
Unhappy man.

Please help,

My problem is this. I was living with my family when I was not married. I was singing. I was pushing my brother and my sister through school. That time there was a good family, my mother, my brother and my sister.

When I said I wanted to marry they were not happy. When I married the family separated one by one. What must I do?

Worried family man.



COMPETITION

Help these people. Write your reply to their problems. THE BEST ADVICE WILL WIN R100.

OPINIONS

LEARNERS WRITE AND TELL YOU WHAT THEY THINK:

ISIKOLE

Isikole Ngisithanda ngoba sengikwazi ukubona ibhasi ukuthi iyaphi futhi sengivuleke nengqondo noma ngiya ebhange sengiyazi sayinela nasemsebinzini.

LOBOLA

In fact my opinion is that we must not pay lobola, because we are not following our procedure, checking ladies until they get married. In fact their parents should look after them, or their grandmother.

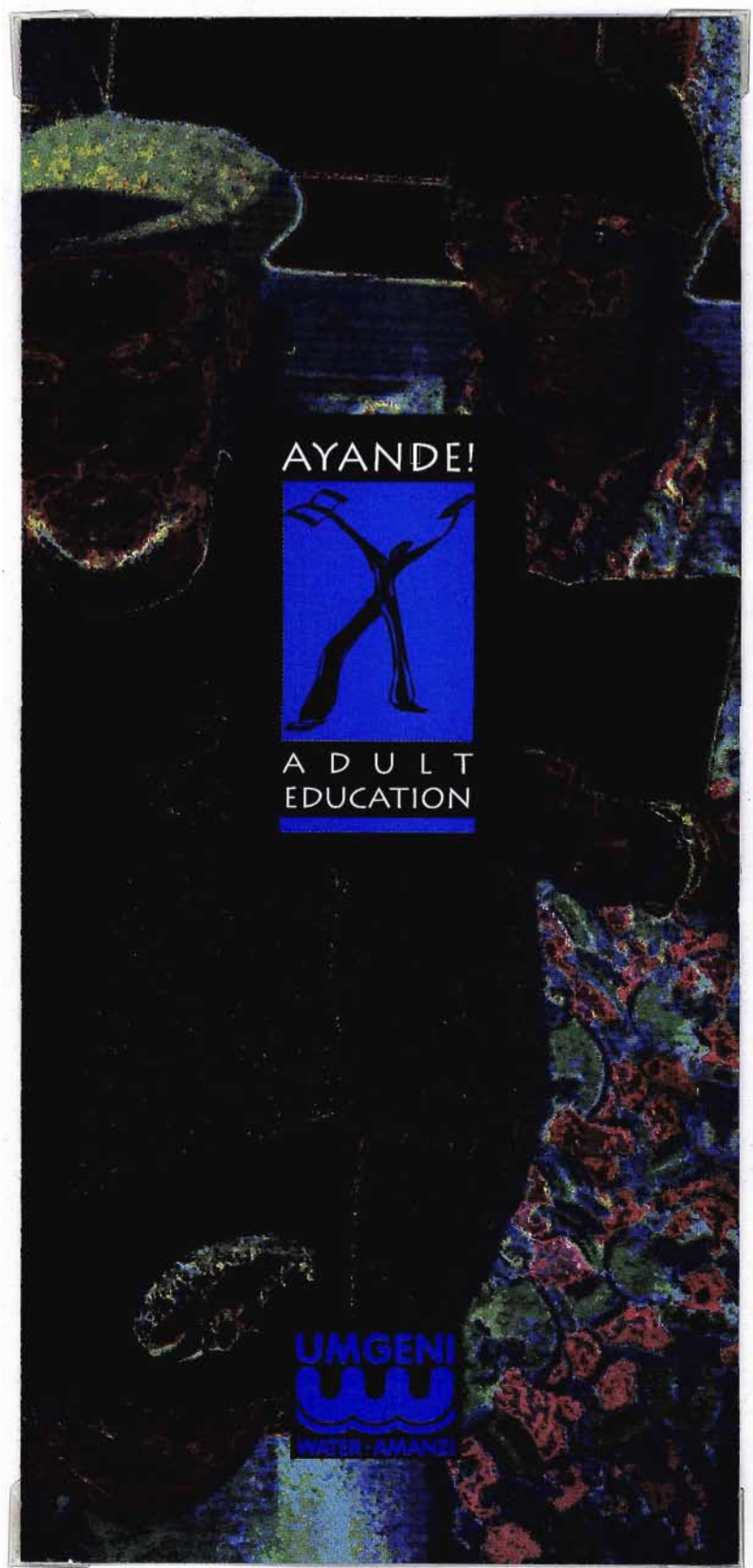
NEW SOUTH AFRICA

S'PHIWE NYATHI

MKONDENI

Because we got a new government people become helpless and they wait for something from the government. People lose the belief that they can do any development work themselves.

APPENDIX 8
PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL
AYANDE PAMPHLET



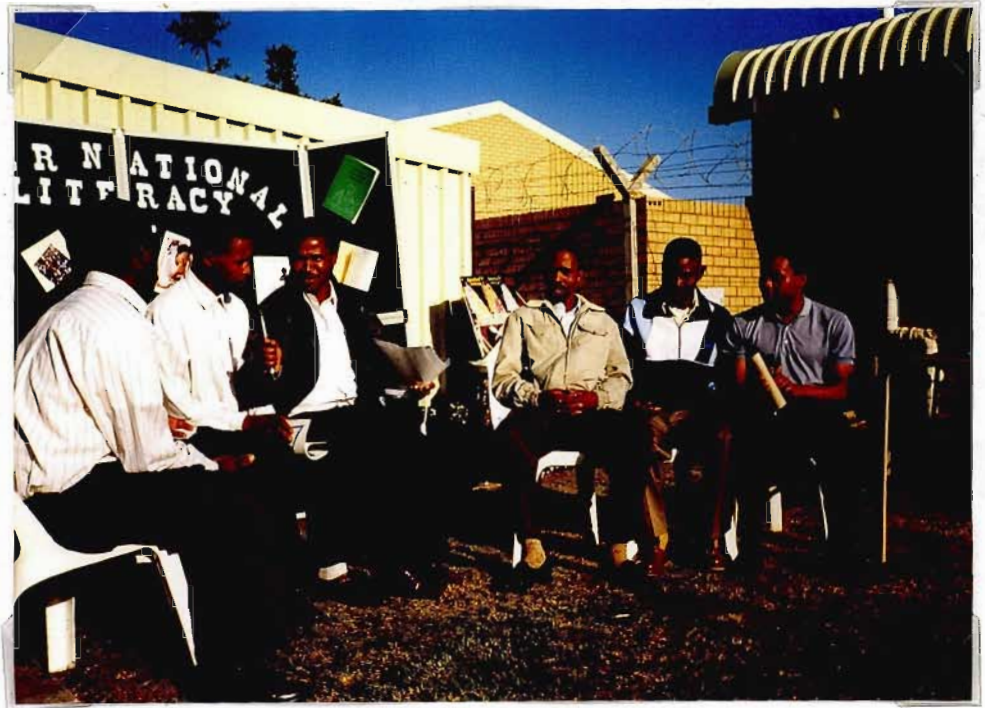
APPENDIX 9
UMGENI WATER ABE



Mother tongue class



English level 2 class



International literacy day celebrations - 1994



IEB prizegiving - 1995

BIBLIOGRAPHY

List of categories into which the bibliography is divided:

- I) Umgeni Water Holdings
 - i) BESA Materials
 - ii) Brochures
 - iii) Human Resource Services Department Records
 - iv) Independent Examination Board Materials
 - v) In-house Magazines
 - vi) Learn and Teach Materials
 - vii) Learner Booklets
 - viii) Lectures, Seminars and Workshops
 - ix) Literacy Data Base
 - x) Policy Statements
 - xi) Posters
 - xii) Proposals
 - xiii) Questionnaires / Needs Analyses
 - xiv) Reports
 - xv) Safety Services Department Records
 - xvi) Unpublished Typescripts
 - xvii) Videos

- II) Unpublished Sources
 - i) Lectures, Notes and Papers
 - ii) Other Records

III) Published Sources

- i) Articles in Academic Journals
- ii) Articles in Periodicals
- iii) Books
- iv) Newspapers
- v) Pamphlets
- vi) Policy Statements
- vii) Television Programmes

IV) Oral Sources

I) **UMGENI WATER HOLDINGS**

i) **BESA Materials**

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