

**ABET PROGRAMMES AT COMMUNITY LEARNING  
CENTRES IN THE WESTERN CAPE**



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# **ABET PROGRAMMES AT COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

## **KEY WORDS**

Adult basic education and training

Night schools

Globalisation

Human capital

Recognition of prior learning

National Qualifications Framework

Outcomes-based education

Qualifications

Education for All



## **ABSTRACT**

The problem that gave rise to the study was to determine how Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) was implemented in the Western Cape and to find answers to the question of “what exactly is the nature of the relationship between adult education and training”?

Within international literature Adult Education and Training (AET) is considered a contested concept that has different meanings and origins, and the study looks at contemporary global influences that shaped this field. In this regard the writings of Paulo Freire were looked at to better understand the role of adult education as a humanising process. The human capital theory and the debates around globalisation also had a significant influence on how adult education was linked to the economy. Two initiatives of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the 1990s were studied as possible responses to the growing evidence of the failure of education systems world-wide to reach the poor and disadvantaged.

The rise of the term Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) in South Africa was the result of national processes taking place in the early 1990s to develop new policy frameworks for all aspects of education and training. The study presented an overview of the provision of adult education by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the apartheid state prior to 1994 and the formalisation of ABET within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) after 1994.

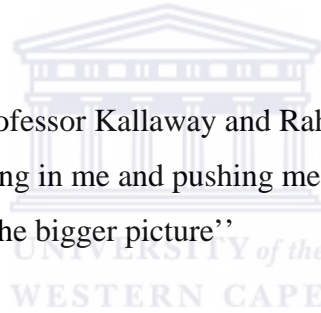
The implementation of ABET in the Western Cape was explored at two levels. The first level explored the implementation of ABET policy at provincial level between 1996 and 2006, while the second level explored the provision at the institutions responsible for delivering the programmes. In the Western Cape, these institutions are known as Community Learning Centres (CLCs).

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To my colleagues at work and to my fellow students for their interest and motivation.

## DECLARATION

I declare that “ABET programmes at Community Learning centres in the Western Cape”, is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

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REDEWAN LARNEY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Title Page	ii
Keywords	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Declaration	vi
Table of contents	vii

### CHAPTER 1: **INTRODUCTION**

1.1	Background to the study	1
1.2	Context of the study	3
1.3	Significance of the study	6
1.4	Personal motivation	8
1.5	Clarifications of terms	8
1.6	Conceptual framework	9
1.7	Conclusion	13

### CHAPTER 2: **WHAT IS ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING?**

2.1	Introduction	14
2.1.1	Defining adult education and training	15
2.2	Paulo Freire	17
2.3	The impact of globalisation on adult education and Training	20
2.3.1	Human Capital Theory	21
2.4	The impact of UNESCO	23
2.4.1	Education for All (EFA)	24
2.4.2	The DeLors Commission	25
2.4.3	The Dakar Forum (2000)	26
2.5	Concluding remarks	27

<b>CHAPTER 3:</b>	<b>ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA</b>	
3.1	Introduction	29
3.2	A brief history of Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa	30
3.2.1	The role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) prior to 1994	32
3.2.2	The Apartheid state as adult education provider.	33
3.3	Macro-economic policy context 1990-1997	36
3.3.1	The move to Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) and its impact	37
3.4	The National Qualifications Framework(NQF) and the formalisation of ABET	38
3.4.1	The convergence of education and training	39
3.4.2	ABET and the NQF	40
3.5	Concluding remarks	43
<b>CHAPTER 4:</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	
4.1	Introduction	45
4.2	Research approach	46
4.3	Research questions	46
4.4	Data collection procedures	47
4.4.1	Structured interviews	48
4.4.2	Written documents accessed at Community Learning Centres (CLCs)	50
4.4.3	Quantitative data sources	50
4.5	Sample	52
4.6	Data analysis	53
4.7	Ethical considerations	54
4.8	Limitations of the study	55

<b>CHAPTER 5:</b>	<b>ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE WESTERN CAPE</b>	
5.1	Introduction	56
5.2	The implementation of ABET in the Western Cape	58
5.2.1	The establishment of ABET (1996-2000)	59
5.2.2	ABET in the Educational and Management Development Centres (EMDCs) from 2001 onwards	63
5.3	A statistical overview of the implementation of ABET in the Western Cape	66
5.4	The impact of assessment on ABET programmes	69
5.5	Concluding remarks	71
<b>CHAPTER 6:</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS?</b>	
6.1	Introduction	73
6.2	A profile of Centre A	73
6.3	A profile of Centre B	79
6.4	The picture emerging from the two sites	81
<b>CHAPTER 7:</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		<b>94</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>		<b>107</b>
Appendix A - Interview questions for Centre Managers and educators		107
Appendix B - Interview questions for learners		108

Appendix C – Summary of interview schedules	109
Appendix D - Permission letter to Western Cape Education Department (WCED) for conducting research	110
Appendix E - Permission letter to Centres for conducting research	112
Appendix F - An example of a consent form to participants in study	113
Appendix G - Adult Courses of the Apartheid State since 1976	114
Appendix H - The National Qualification structure	115
Appendix I – The formal outcomes-based curriculum for Community Learning Centres	116
Appendix J- Skills-based training courses offered by CLCs in 2005	117
Appendix K- An example of a summary sheet for centre managers And learners	118
Appendix L – Summary of the documents accessed at the two sites in the case study	119

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the study

Adult basic education was declared a constitutional right in the new democratic South Africa. It was thus firmly placed in the hands of government with the understanding that it would be the major driving force of adult education as a vehicle for social change. To achieve their goals the National Directorate for Adult Education and Training was established in the Department of Education in 1995, and at the time was seen by adult education stakeholders as a meaningful development in providing political legitimisation to the sector that in the past “offered pitifully inadequate outputs at astronomical cost per learner.” (Aitchison 2001:53).


During the early 1990s the development of adult education policy formed part of the national processes that took place to develop new policy frameworks for all aspects of the education and training system. The outcome of these processes was the policy of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). The new integrated ABET system was intended to provide the adult learner access to various formal, non-formal and informal courses, which would be integrated by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In keeping with the new democratically elected government’s Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the NQF, as a framework was intended to achieve redress and provide access to all learners whose education and training opportunities had been blocked in the past. The consequences of the placement of ABET into the integrated framework is discussed in Chapter 3.

In South Africa prior to 1994, the worlds of education and training barely communicated with one another (Walters 1997:19). Edward French argues that education and training, in the NQF, were now to be considered recognised forms of learning on an equal footing.

In the early days of thinking about a qualifications framework for education and training in South Africa nearly everyone agreed that there should no longer be two entirely separate national systems, one for academic education, the other for vocational training. There was a drastic separation of hands and minds in this separation. Learners could only move between the two separate systems with difficulty, and educators and trainers knew very little about one another's work (SAQA 1997:18)

After 1994, adult education was conceptualised as broader than basic adult literacy. It now included post-literacy. ABET was seen as consisting of four different levels where the first level (ABET Level 1) is considered the most basic level and ABET Level 4 as the level which will give learners access to the first qualification on the NQF. The inclusion of training, the "T" in ABET, sealed the connection between the literacy and basic educational needs of the adult learner with their training needs linked to income generation.

The institutions entrusted by government for delivering a variety of ABET courses were the Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) in the various Provinces.



Public Adult Learning Centres are centres established and maintained by the State to offer education to adults...Tuition is offered in courses defined by the National Qualifications Framework as well as courses aimed at community development and personal enrichment (DoE, 1997:125)

All other ABET providers which include non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and providers in industry, were classified as Private Adult Learning Centres which did not receive any form of funding from government but still needed to register with the Department of Education. They had to comply with the new quality assurance mechanisms and inspections as prescribed by government. Failure by private providers to adhere to the regulations could result in their "registration being reviewed and withdrawn" (DoE, 1997a:126).

This mini-thesis aims to explore the nature of and the relationship between adult education and adult training within an integrated ABET system as provided by two CLCs in the Western Cape between 1996 and 2006.

## **1.2 Context of the study**

The investigation will focus on the Western Cape where the provincial government, in view of the above changes, was expected to develop the required infra-structures and delivery programmes from 1996 onwards to operationalise the new adult education and training system developed by the National Directorate for Adult Education and Training.

ABET was introduced in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) when the ABET Sub-Directorate was established in 1996 to coordinate ABET delivery in the Western Cape and to transform the apartheid-era Night Schools into effective PALCs. ABET fell under the jurisdiction of the Directorate: Non-school and Community Education (now known as the Directorate: Institutional Management and Governance Planning) and the Chief Directorate: Educational Support and Development. The directive given to the sub-directorate was to develop ABET policy and co-ordinate and facilitate ABET provision (DoE, nd:88).

The WCED was now the provincial implementer of the national vision adopted in 1997 of

...a literate South Africa within which all its citizens have acquired the basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation (DoE, 1997a:23).

With the adoption of a new vision the challenge to the Western Cape (and all other Provinces) was how to balance the realities of reconstruction, transformation and development needs of the Province and the local community

with that of global trends in the field of adult education and training that emphasise training, lifelong learning and the use of technology as set out in the national vision. In its new role the ABET sub-directorate in the Province had to address four, often divergent, areas within the new national framework

1. developing the capacity of adults and out-of-school youth to understand the complex reality in which they live so as to enable them to identify and apply the most relevant and appropriate ways of responding to this reality;
2. creating critical and participative citizens. This requires that the learning system has to incorporate areas of learning which address ethics, autonomy, participation, administration and control, information management, local and cultural development, human rights and the environment;
3. opening up and laying the foundations for further education and training at every level and aspect of personal and social life and development;
4. improving the quality of life of the large numbers of people who are not able to satisfy their basic needs (by enabling them to access or create employment opportunities)  
(DoE, 1997a:23).

Adult education centres, as the leading implementation agents, now had to respond to diverse social, economic and personal issues facing communities and adult learners in the new democracy. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) implemented ABET at institutions known as Community Learning Centres (CLCs). These centres use facilities from a variety of institutions and conduct classes that range from ABET Level 1 to 4 to high school subjects from Grade 10-12 and can be considered semi-autonomous with their own governance structures.

According to provincial policy, a CLC is defined as

an institution such as a school, technical college, community college or any public or private institution that provide ABET/GET and/or FET as part of the institutional activities to all persons sixteen (16) years and older in need of GET/ABET. Such institutions are only partially funded by the Western Cape Education Department to provide access to the GETC and the FETC.  
(WCED, 2003:2)

The implementation of ABET in the Western Cape did not happen in a vacuum and the study should be seen in the light of the changing policy environment in the Western Cape since 1996 that impacted on how ABET was interpreted by CLCs.

The aim of the study is not to critically analyse these policies, but reference to the respective policies is made in order to contextualise and better understand the implementation process.

The policy document that is considered central to the field of ABET in the Western Cape is the *Procedure Manual For Centre Managers of ABET Centres* (2003). The policy document intended to guide Centre Managers on how education and training programmes are delivered and funded at CLCs. The legal status of the document is unknown as it has never been formally gazetted by the Western Cape government.

The second policy document is the *Transversal Policy for ABET Delivery to Employees of Western Cape Provincial Departments* (November 2004) that intends to guide CLCs on how to develop partnerships with other government departments. The policy text sketches the key policy shift in ABET in which the ABET sub-Directorate became a mediator in the adult education service provided to employees of other government departments in the Western Cape.

The final policy document is: *A Human Capital Development Strategy of the Western Cape* (WCED: 2006) that is seen as the

“ point of departure for education planning for many years to come as we seek to build a Learning Home for All. (Cameron Dugmore, MEC for Education, Western Cape, in *A Human Capital Development Strategy: A focus on youth*. WCED 2006:1). The launch of the Human Capital Development Strategy: A focus on youth (HCDS) by the WCED in March 2006 is a key development which is likely to impact on future delivery models of ABET in the province. The Strategy aims to make education more responsive to the economic needs of the Western Cape and within the strategy ABET is seen as a key contributor to the development of

skills in the Province. A key emphasis in the HCDS is the shift away from the school-based curriculum content in ABET to a more skills-based ABET L1-4 that will meet the needs of the youth who drop out of the formal school system.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

Prior to 1994, during the struggle against apartheid, and since then, there has been a great emphasis on the significance of adult education in the struggle for equity and human rights. In countries that have undergone major changes, such as South Africa, the role of adult education can be seen as a key element of an expression of national reconstruction in progress (Freire 1987). The study will argue that ABET has moved away from adult education as a collective activity that strives for social and political transformation towards one that is geared towards meeting the needs of the economy.

The significance of this particular study firstly should be seen in a context in which a number of questions are being raised about the appropriateness of the educational content of ABET programmes. Secondly, questions are raised as to how ABET programmes can contribute to developing skills in South Africa in light of the expectation from President Thabo Mbeki (stated at the President's Injunction of 21 May 2004) that ABET align its training programmes with the objectives of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

In relation to the educational content of ABET programmes, questions are also being raised on whether the move towards an integrated adult education and training system has led to a narrow perspective of adult education being taken. In her address at the Ministerial roundtable on adult basic education and literacy held at the Eskom Conference Centre in Midrand on 29 April 2005, the National Minister of Education, Mrs. Naledi Pandor remarked that

... I have heard an argument being made that the implementation of basic education and literacy is utilitarian and narrow, thus undermining true transformation in adult education.

She further warns that

we should be careful that progressive rhetoric should not be a cover for de-contextualised programmes that have minimal impact. Sometimes beneath progressive rhetoric and “noble” principles lurks the real danger of forgetting the legacy of apartheid and its attendant complexities (Pandor, 2005:1)

Running parallel to the programmes offered by the Department of Education, and within the broader context of the Skills Development Act (SDA) of 1998 driven by the Department of Labour, an ABET system emerged with the aim of raising the basic education levels of the workers in the workplace.

On 20 March 2000, 25 Sector and Training Authorities (SETAs) were established as the key promoters of training in the different sectors through various learnerships and skills programmes. According to the Department of Labour, skills are defined as “the knowledge and ability to do something ” where the term “education” (the E in ABET) is narrowed considerably to meet the needs of industry in that it refers only to language and mathematics skills needed to meet the demands of the workplace (Department of Labour, 2001:26). The “T” in ABET within the context of a learnership offered by SETAs refers to specific skills that are needed for a particular occupation or sector.

Although the scope of the mini-thesis does not include the implementation of ABET in the various SETAs and other industry based delivery, it is important to highlight some of the consequences of the rise of the SETAs. There are adult education scholars such as Baatjes and Mathe (2004:404) who argue that the rise of the SETAs with their strong financial backing can be seen as small-scale ABET provision in support of instrumentalist orientation which has displaced the vision of mass-based ABET provision for emancipation. The Department of Education itself is critical of the delivery of ABET in the workplace, where despite the strong financial base of the Department of Labour, the potential of ABET has not lived up to expectations:

...many SETAs have left the process of ABET engagement to individual companies in their constituencies with SETAs playing the role of paymaster...

(Source: DoE 2006:10)

A key focus of this particular study is to gain insight into the types of ABET programmes offered and to determine the extent to which the education and training policy is implemented at CLCs in the Western Cape.

#### **1.4 Personal Motivation**

I have been involved in adult education since 1992 in varying roles that include being an educator, centre manager, curriculum advisor and since 2002, Senior Curriculum Planner for ABET at the Western Cape Education Department. As an adult educator I was greatly inspired by “my learners” who despite their hardships and day to day struggles took it upon themselves to “change their lives” through a systematic engagement with ABET programmes. My experience as a centre manager and curriculum advisor brought me into direct contact with adult educators who made every effort to make sense of the many changes and challenges in the adult education sector since 1994. As a policy developer the investigation provided me with an opportunity to look at “the bigger picture” and develop a deeper understanding of the new policies in adult education and training as they unfolded internationally and in South Africa.

#### **1.5 Clarification of terms**

There are a complex variety of definitional discourses in the international field of adult education, which are subject to fashion and development which sometimes results in a distorted view of adult education. The concept of ABET has given rise to a number of contestations and debates in South Africa after 1994. It is with this in mind that Chapter 2 explores the roots of adult education and training within the international arena.

In the mini-thesis the conceptual basis underlying the investigation should be seen within the definition that the Department of Education (DoE) has given to the term. Thus, when discussing ABET, it refers to

...the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally, provides access to nationally recognised certificates (DoE 1997b:5).

In describing the types of programmes in ABET, different interpretations are attached to formal, informal and non-formal programmes. In the mini-thesis formal programmes refers to the unit standards-based learning areas or subjects assessed and certificated by the relevant authorities. Informal programmes refer to programmes that are largely unplanned and arise out of a specific need and are not linked to any unit standards. Non-formal programmes refer to programmes that are planned at a CLC but are not certificated. Non-formal programmes can be linked to existing unit standards and are normally shorter courses.

In the mini-thesis, Department of Education (DoE) refers to the national office responsible for educational policy development and Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to the provincial department of education which is responsible for implementation of national policy. DoL refers to the Department of Labour, the national office responsible for the implementation of training.

## **1.6 Conceptual framework**

The research is intended to develop and share knowledge within a context where many questions are asked about the ability of ABET to deliver on its constitutional mandate. The field of adult education in South Africa has been badly neglected and the sector is facing many challenges such as poor funding, lack of opportunities for adult educators and the inability of ABET programmes to contribute to the skills needs of the country. The neglect of ABET and the challenges faced by the sector has been emphasised by writers such as Aitchison (2001; 2002) and Baatjes (2004).

It is within this context that the study was conceptualised so as to contribute to the growing debate within the field. In attempting to locate the study within a theoretical orientation a number of challenges were faced due to the complex variety of definitional discourses in the field of adult education and training. This can lead one to conclude that the concept of adult education is a ‘‘chameleon term’’ (Youngman 1996:198) that means different things in different contexts and periods. It is these tensions that gave rise to the study of ABET in the Western Cape area in an attempt by the researcher to make sense of what the policy means in practice

The study is based on the assumptions that the integration of adult education and training is essentially a union between education and economic policy. In this study I briefly explored the work of Paulo Freire, as one of the most influential theorists of critical approaches of adult education in modern times to gain answers to what adult ‘‘education’’ means. The approach views adult education as a collective activity that should, as a goal, strive for social and political transformation. In contrast the ‘‘economic’’ view, assumes a direct link between education and the economy where any form of learning is viewed as an economic opportunity. The second theoretical framework explored in the study is human capital theory, where ‘‘training’’ is seen as a vehicle to achieve economic growth. In Western developed countries these two main strands are dominant and divided adult education between ‘‘a liberal education view and the social change view’’ (Rogers 1992: 34).

As South Africa emerged from years of isolation the country began to integrate itself into the global political economy in the early 1990s and ‘‘was caught in the maelstrom of the global shift’’ (Groener. 2000). The study draws attention to the impact globalisation had on changing the transformative views of adult education from focusing on the collective good to a highly individualised form of learning that is geared to the needs of the economy.

The study cannot only assume that the current challenges facing the implementation of ABET is due to global shifts in adult education without exploring the historical roots of adult education in South Africa. The study has not

provided a detailed historical analysis of adult education and training in South Africa as the role of Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers is beyond the scope of the study. The focus of this particular study is to examine to what extent both adult education and practical training was implemented by night schools of the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the NGO sector after 1976. The purpose of the historical exploration was not to engage in a detailed comparative analysis but to show how past tensions between education and training have spilled over to the new democracy.

ABET in the Western Cape is explored at two different levels. Firstly, at policy level where the study concentrates on the activities of the WCED, specifically that of the ABET sub-Directorate. The study attempts to provide a description of how the ABET system has evolved between 1996 and 2006. At the policy level the study focused on the types of programmes being delivered and the different influences that impacted on the implementation of “training” in the Province.

The second level explored was to understand which institutions delivered the programmes. In the study the focus is essentially the public providers, known as CLCs. A constraint of the study is that very little information exists on who the private ABET providers are, especially in relation to the role SETAs are playing in providing ABET at the different workplaces. At institutional level the study focuses on gaining an understanding of the ABET courses offered and how learners gain access to the different courses. The study also attempts to find out what motivates the learners to attend ABET classes. At the CLCs the study attempts to determine if there is a need for training programmes, what the challenges are and how the CLCs link with other education and training providers.

Through the study a series of key themes emerged that become evident in the different chapters. These themes are introduced below:

The first theme, as introduced in Chapter 1, is that the introduction of the concept of training to the field of adult education resulted in new ways that adult learners

were encouraged to learn. Is the sole purpose of adult education to meet the needs of the economy as emphasised by human capital theorist, or should it strive to cultivate a deeper and more harmonious form of human development in which to address the different social, political and cultural inequalities facing adult learners?

When looking at the history of South Africa, the consequences of past neglect by the apartheid state resulted in the new democratic government inheriting a fragmented system for adult education, where no linkages between the different state departments or between the state and the private sector or non-governmental organisations or education and training, existed. The study, in Chapter 3, looks at the different contestations immediately prior to 1994 that saw adult education forming part of the national processes that took place to develop new policy frameworks for all aspects of the education and training system. The result of these processes was the introduction of the ABET policy. The introduction of training to the field of education was based on the belief that the promotion of education and training is the key to economic prosperity and the development of human resources.

The changing macro-economic policy in South Africa after 1996, together with the formalisation of ABET in the NQF, saw the adoption of a new policy vision that was not only geared to meeting the needs of the economy, but to achieving equal status with the school system. The result was that ABET adopted an outcomes-based curriculum with a strong focus on the importance of formal knowledge and the attainment of qualifications instead of adopting a broad vision for adult education that emphasised formal, non-formal and informal adult education delivery.

Chapter 5 discusses how the ABET system has evolved in the Western Cape between 1996 and 2006 and shows that the ABET sub-Directorate focused on emphasising formal approaches to ABET. The courses and actions were largely restricted to the formal academic courses rather than giving the adult learners access to broad range of formal and informal programmes and skills.

Chapter 6 focuses on the implementation of ABET programmes at the two CLCs and shows that the majority of the learner population are not ABET learners, but FET learners. There is also a general lack of integration between education and training offered.

Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the study.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

Chapter 1 has provided a background to the study and presented the underlying problems, which gave rise to the study.

In Chapter 2, the researcher aims to highlight the difficulties in defining the concepts of adult education and training. The chapter will look at the influence of Paulo Freire on adult education as an approach that promotes the empowerment of learners to change the various tensions they experience in their daily lives. The chapter will examine different literatures which look at how adult education has evolved in recent times and the impact that globalisation, international agencies and human capital theory had in shaping adult education and training. Within the chapter Education for All (EFA) and the work of the DeLors Commission will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **WHAT IS ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING?**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter explores different debates on the concepts of adult education and training to aid ABET practitioners to achieve a better understanding of global trends and approaches in the field. A key question that ABET practitioners in the field may ask is “what is the history of adult education and where does it come from”? There are different views on where and when adult education started (Hely, 1962; Hillard III, 1992), and the debate is beyond the scope of this mini-dissertation. However, the answer to the question posed has fundamental implications on how the history of adult education story is told and understood both by those in the field and by various policy-makers.

In framing the arguments the chapter will firstly make the assertion that there are a complex variety of definitional discourses in the field of adult education, which are subject to fashion and development and sometimes result in a distorted view of adult education. The chapter will argue that the integration of training, into adult education have given rise to different interpretations of “what is adult education”? Before examining the role played by globalisation and human capital theory that gave rise to new interpretations of adult education which emphasised its economic functions, it is important to remind ourselves of the empowering role and aspect of adult education that helps people to gain a critical understanding of their social and material reality. In doing so, the chapter will look at the influence of Paulo Freire’s writings in promoting adult education as a humanising process.

Through an examination of human capital theory, it is possible to understand how training has become linked to the field of adult education as a means to satisfy the needs of the capitalist economy and the skills needs of the individual in the economy. The chapter will argue that this change has led to a shift in emphasis

from that of Freirian views of adult education which emphasised individual empowerment, to views which highlight human resource development. The chapter will conclude by discussing the role of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in influencing major policies of countries all over the world. The role of Education for All (EFA) and the work of the DeLors Commission will be investigated as responses to the growing evidence of the failure of education systems world-wide to reach the poor and disadvantaged.

### **2.1.1 Defining adult education and training**

Adult education can take many forms and in this investigation, in exploring the concept of adult basic education and training, a number of questions were asked, each having its own complexities and definitional discourses. Some of the questions posed include; how is basic education different from basic literacy and/or functional literacy? What is meant by the term “basic”? What distinguishes “basic education” from “basic training”? What makes adult education different from other types of education? Some of the debates about these questions lie far beyond the scope of this research, but are worth mentioning in order to highlight the different interpretations in the field and its impact on this investigation.

Defining adult education is not an easy task and this is made more complex by the various debates internationally on demarcating adult education from other types of education. What is adult education? Is it a type of practice or a particular programme? Is it a specific method that is used to teach adults or is it an organisation or institution that works with adults? Is it a profession or a scientific discipline? Is it a system? The concept adult education can be considered a “chameleon term” (Youngman, 1996:198) and that it suggests different things in different contexts and periods is widely acknowledged (Jarvis 1987, Lyster 1992, Tight, 1996; Youngman, 1996). Internationally adult education has been shaped by the activities of different organisations and social movements that include worker organisations, political parties, trade unions and religious groupings as

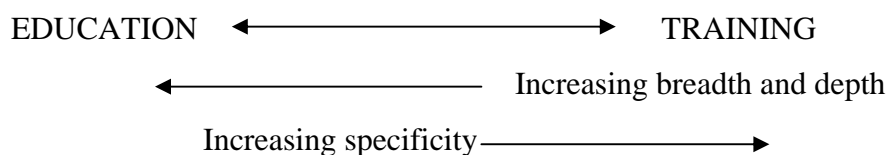
well as women's movements and anti-colonial movements. The complexity of defining it has led some to conclude that adult education

...is not a seamless robe of integrated knowledge but rather a variety of combinations of sub-disciplines and those thinkers who have contributed most to the construction of this amorphous body of knowledge have drawn from a variety of sources and applied their findings to this complex field of study, which is the education of adults.  
(Jarvis, 1987:312)

In recent times the focus of adult education as a specialised body of knowledge, profession, or a scientific discipline has shifted in the global arena to adult education and training as a preparation of the adult learner for the world of work. The introduction of the concept of training to the field of adult education resulted in new ways adult learners are encouraged to learn where the individuals achievement of qualifications has become an end in itself. The result was that adult education was now divided into two types of education, vocational education and training on the one hand, that attempts to provide answers to the individuals strategy of material survival, while education on the other hand attempts to give answers to the individuals personal or community development (Finger, 1989:19).

A similar view is put forward by Tight (1996:29) who argues that one may make a distinction between the two terms on two grounds: Firstly, Tight sees education as a broader and deeper learning activity that engages more with general levels of understanding than training does; secondly training is more likely to be involved with the development of narrower skills such as mastering a task or role (See diagram below). Tight however concedes that the distinction is not conclusive and that there are many overlaps between the two terms.

Distinction between the concepts of adult education and training



(Source: Tight, 1996:29)

Where did the concept of adult education and training originate? There are many (Ottoson 1995; Tight 1996; Usher 1989; Finger 1989) who trace the origin of the concepts of adult education and training to positivism and the technical- rational approach theory that became dominant with the rise of science and technology.

The origins, it is argued, have a long history and can be traced to

...the last three hundred years of the history of Western ideas and institutions...as an account of the rise of science and technology and as a social movement aimed at applying the achievements of science and technology to the well-being of mankind

(Schön 1983 as quoted by Ottoson, 1995:20).

What has been shown is that for adult education practitioners in the field, the lack of a clear definition allows for different interpretations and sometimes misinterpretations in the field. It is not simply the case that adult education is difficult to define, or that very bad definitions traditionally have been constructed (Stanage, 1989: 275) but that in contemporary adult education, more and more people have simply given up the task of trying to define the key terms. What is meant by adult basic “education” and adult basic “training”? In this study the researcher aims to understand the concept of adult basic education and training since its introduction in South Africa and its interpretations (or misinterpretation) when implemented in the Western Cape.

## **2.2 Paulo Freire**

To understand the role that adult education can play as a tool for transformation one needs to understand the role played by Paulo Freire. His contribution to the field of literacy is widely acknowledged (Mayo, 1997; Giroux, 1987; Mayo, 1999) as perhaps having been the most influential theorist and practitioner of critical approaches to adult education in modern times. The work of Paulo Freire in adult education should be seen within the context of the popular culture movement in Latin America in the 1960s. His work reveals two dominant strands: Marxism and Liberation Theology and he is widely regarded as the leading figure in the area of critical pedagogy. A key purpose of the Freirian method

...is to lead students to recognise various tensions and enable them to effectively deal with them.  
(Freire and Macedo, 1987:49)

What makes the Freirian approach unique is the great value it puts on *conscientisation*, in other words, developing in the learner a self awareness of his or her own power to articulate the various tensions within their specific social realities. The process of *conscientisation* focuses on the learner's ability to develop both literacy skills and cognitive skills such as critical thinking that enable the learner to generate solutions to the problems facing them in everyday life. Education becomes a revolutionary activity as it sees that the outcome of learning will be "authentic human beings who will be able to transform the world and humanise it" (Freire, 1972:51). Freire thus sees people as the makers and remakers of their own world and sees a learner's own knowledge as a critical component of understanding his/her material reality, which is constantly moving and changing:

Nothing about society or language or culture or the human soul is simple: wherever there are human beings, there is activity; and human acts are processes, and processes are dialectical. Nothing simply unfolds, either in nature or in history...  
(Giroux in Freire and Macedo, 1987: xii)

The Freirian approach sees the role of adult education as being a collective activity that as a goal strives for social and political transformation. Freire argues that literacy cannot be approached as a mere technical skill to be acquired, but should serve as a basis for "cultural action for freedom", a central aspect of what it means to be a self, and socially, constituted agent. Literacy is seen as part of the process of becoming self-critical about the historically constructed nature of one's experience. According to Freire, when an individual has the ability to name his or her life and social experiences it empowers them to understand the broader complexities of the political world.

For Freire education has one major purpose which is to enable learners to reflect on their own learning and to put this knowledge into practice. This combination of

reflection and action is termed “praxis” (Mayo, 1999:63). It is through praxis that learners are able to make sense of advancements in society and deal effectively with its consequences. Within a world where technological advancement is dominant, Freire (1987:55) argues that literacy programmes generally give people access to predetermined and pre-established discourse while silencing their own voices resulting in a “culture of silence” by the majority. Within a world dominated by technology, the role that adult educators play and the methods they use are critical for enabling learners to make sense of the changing environment. Educators are asked never to deny the importance of technology, but advised that they should not reduce learning to a technological comprehension of the world. Freire alerts adult educators to the fact that technological advancement has given birth to a series of myths, including the myth that technology and science provides all the answers to human development and educators should assume a “scientific position that is not scientific, a technological position that is not technologic” (Freire 1987).

The Freirian approach has enjoyed global appeal especially from organisations involved in the struggle for liberation, such as the progressive literacy organisations in South Africa. The role of these organisations in adult education will be discussed in Chapter 3. However at times, there were also misrepresentations of his work where liberation rhetoric was used to disguise the shift towards a narrow, individualistic and market-driven perspective. Some argue that Freire and his work has been thoroughly studied, institutionalised and grossly compromised by academe (Zacharakis-Jutz 1988:42). Zacharakis-Jutz further argues that this resulted in the distorted use of the term empowerment:

...the misuse and misunderstanding of the word “empowerment” is widespread in the Post-Freirian era. The opiate of our profession is the belief that we possess the ability to empower individuals or groups, and that we do this under the guise of theory building and science. Such statements unfortunately, have been incorporated into theoretical discourse, which justifies and legitimises adult education (Zacharakis-Jutz, 1988:45).

The value of the Freirian approach is that instead of taking a narrow perspective of modern societal change, it reinforces the role education should play in supporting learners to develop a critical understanding of major modern problems and the changes that go hand in hand with the goal of achieving a just society. In stressing the importance of relating education to real life scenarios, the learning process links the context and struggles of the adult learner with education and action. Adult education was greatly inspired by this tradition both as an instrument of social mobilisation and in developing political consciousness in revolutionary states such as Cuba and Nicaragua (Torres in Baatjes and Mathe, 2004:398).

### **2.3 The impact of globalisation on adult education and training**

The previous section showed the role of adult education in empowering individuals to transform their lives. Historically, many contemporary adult education movements and organisations in Western countries started with a concern for social justice and radical change. The rise of globalisation, especially after the 1970s petroleum crisis, went hand in hand with the implementation of neo-liberal policies in some Western countries which led to a shift in adult education. In Western countries the result was that it led to a breakdown of consensus around the viability and value of the welfare state (Burbules and Torres, 2000:5). In practice it meant that less money was now allocated to previous welfarist priorities such as the education of adults as the rise of the market ideology exerted strong pressures on governments to minimise regulation by the state, and to transform social welfare sectors such as public health and education systems into areas of commercial activity. The emphasis was now on “doing more with less”.

The complex nature of globalisation and the forces involved in the process is a matter of considerable debate. It is therefore no surprise that the impact of globalisation on societies and education is widely acknowledged and written on (Welton, 1997; Mukasa 1996; Jarvis 1996 and 1997; Korsgaard 1997; Tett 1996; Pietrykowski 1996). There is general consensus between the writers that

globalisation has done much to change the traditional role of adult education from a focus on the collective good to a highly individualised form of learning that is geared to the needs of the economy. The shift effectively resulted in a form of adult education that focuses on “having” rather than “being” as advocated by the Freirian approach.

Adult education has taken on a new identity in a global environment where “the agenda is now being set for rather than by adult education” (Griffins, 1987:32). This was largely due to forces from above and below that directly impacted on how adult education is being offered and structured in different countries both in the developed and developing world. As forces exerting pressures from above, the role of international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank with its Structural Adjustment Policies and UNESCO have shaped the educational thinking of many governments around the world. The role of UNESCO and in particular two major initiatives of the organisation in the 1990s, namely *Education for All (EFA)* and *Learning: The Treasure Within: Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century* chaired by Jacques DeLors is discussed in section 2.4 of this chapter.

### **2.3.1 Human Capital Theory**

Globally, human capital theory has done much to narrow the scope of adult education where the theory assumes a direct positive relationship between education and the Gross National Product of countries. Human capital theory was developed by economists such as Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964) from the 1960s onwards (Griffin, 1987; Cunningham, 1996; Tight, 1996; Rubenson, 1992). What made human capital theory so attractive to governments? For governments globally human capital theory provides a framework for incorporating the economics of education, the economics of discrimination, and the economics of poverty into an applied branch of microeconomics termed the “economics of human resources” (Rubenson, 1992:5).

The theory is fuelled by the belief that people with more years of formal schooling or training in specific learning fields will achieve higher status jobs and higher wages than people with fewer years of schooling. The result was a shift, especially after the 1970s, towards attainment of qualifications and away from the liberating emphasis of entering into a learning process. The implication of this was that individuals needed to invest more and more in their own education, training and development, to keep up with, or stay ahead of, competing individuals.

The unintended consequences of the focus on qualifications is that instead of easy access to the education environment, learning was now characterised by

- (i) an excess of gate keeping and credentialising and
- (ii) instrumental rationality where the worker must be effectively and efficiently prepared to produce, and
- (iii) a content of instruction emphasising techniques and a method of instruction that tended to be behaviouristic or at least “outcomes orientated” to ensure competency and skill (Cunningham, 1996).

Another critic of human capital theory, Baptiste (2001:196) argues that human capital theorists see education and training as a “cure for all and view adult learners as educational consumers” and that they treat people as “*homo economica* (radically isolated, pleasure seeking materialists who are born free of social constraints or responsibility, who possess no intrinsic sociability) who are solely driven by the desire for material happiness and physical security”.

Human capital theory in the 1990s has evolved from previous models in three important respects, in that firstly technology became the mediator between human capital and productivity and secondly, it integrated elements of the screening hypothesis where education’s role in the provision of qualification is seen as a selection opportunity for employers and, thirdly, the human capital theory now advocates private over public investment in education (Baptiste, 2001:196).

Human capital theory has largely reduced adult education to an apparatus of economic productivity with its one-dimensional view of humans as economic

beings in a competitive global economy. Total faith is put in developing humans as an investment through education, where training on the other hand is seen as a vehicle to achieve economic growth.

The concept of learning has changed. Where previously, in Freirian terms, it was seen as a process of personal empowerment for those in search of it, any form of learning is now viewed by economic planners as an economic opportunity. The result is that the more the concept of learning is equated with the needs of the economy and the marketplace, the more it has become commodified and alienated from the learner (Morjab and Gorman, 2003). Within the theory the learner has become the consumer, who can make choices regarding his or her best educational opportunities. Adult education institutions, already suffering from inadequate funding, now had to “sell” their programmes in easily identifiable packages and modules so that the consumer, the adult learner, could achieve the desired outcomes more easily. The result has been a move towards the adoption of internationally standardised teaching models. The emphasis was now placed on the advancement of the individual consumer rather than on the development of the broader community and achievement of social justice and equity.

## **2.4 The impact of UNESCO**

Adult education has been shaped by various international role-players, none more significant and influential than UNESCO and, it is argued, that the organisation had become the world’s conscience keeper as the nations around the world moved towards implementing the ideals of universal literacy (Bhola, 1992). UNESCO was founded in 1946 with the aim of promoting peace and security through international collaboration in education, science, culture and communication. UNESCO influenced major policies in countries all over the world and to understand the historical trends within education one needs to understand the influence of international agencies, such as UNESCO, the World Bank and UNICEF, on the thinking of governments across the world, both in developed and developing countries (Watson, 1994:1). During the 1990s two major initiatives by

UNESCO shaped the way adult education is viewed and implemented at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century namely Education for All and the recommendations of the DeLors Commission which provided broad guiding principles for the implementation of a “new” adult education system in South Africa after 1994.

#### **2.4.1 Education for All (EFA)**

The Decade of “Education for All” (EFA) was launched in Jomtiem, Thailand, in March 1990 in response to the growing evidence of the failure of education systems world-wide to reach the poor and the disadvantaged. The Conference, organised jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank, was held in a context where increasing attention was given to the fact that more than one-third (960 million) of the world’s adult population could neither, read, write nor count, and feelings of discontent were growing regarding the growing disparity between rich and poorer nations.

Expectations were raised at The World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) for the future of education, since it implied that extra resources would have to be allocated for the provision of basic education. EFA provided countries with a broad vision of basic education where EFA was meant to assure that the basic learning needs of *all* –children, young people and adults- throughout life, within and outside the formal school system, were to be met (Hallak, 1991:1). EFA showed consensus on the necessity of providing education for all both on ethical and economic terms which, in contrast to prevailing neo-liberal stances, further reaffirmed the obligation of governments to provide EFA as a societal objective. EFA also adopted an inclusive and broad concept of education from early childhood through to continued learning throughout life. In contrast to human capital theory, as highlighted by Baptiste earlier in the chapter, EFA adopted and promoted all kinds of delivery systems whether they offer formal, non-formal or informal education.

To African countries the prospect of eradicating illiteracy through EFA was an opportunity not to be missed.

...Africa is thus offered an opportunity it simply cannot afford to miss. The means to eliminate illiteracy are now within its grasp, and it can and it must eradicate this scourge with the active and united support of the international community, provided, that is that it can devise and implement a strategy of action based on effective will and adopting a methodological and rational approach (Thiam, 1990:503).

According to Hall (1996:119) the unintended consequences of EFA are that policy making in adult education has become increasingly centralised where fewer persons have a say as to how adult education or basic education policies are developed. Hall further argues that this has led to the marginalisation of a variety of flourishing social movements, including the literacy movement itself. Hall highlights that

...with tactics and timetables more like a military campaign, the Education for All campaign rode roughshod over all other independent educational initiatives including UNESCO's own long-planned International Literacy Year in 1990.  
(Hall 1996:119)

Section 2.4.3 in this chapter further highlights the successes and failures of EFA based on the findings presented at the Dakar Forum in 2000.

#### **2.4.2 The Delors Commission**

Jacques Delors' contribution to the field of education is especially relevant in the context of the global dominance of neo-liberalism and post-modernist fragmentation, in providing answers to the role of education in meeting the challenges and various tensions facing it in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. As the former European Commission President, Delors chaired the independent International Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century set up by UNESCO in 1993.

What was unique regarding the Delors Commission? A feature of the Delors Commission is its admission that globalisation has resulted in disappointing results both economically and socially for the poor and marginalised in a world

that is increasingly characterised by rising unemployment and inequalities between rich and poor countries.

The truth is all-out economic growth can no longer be viewed as an ideal way of reconciling material progress with equity, respect for the human condition and respect for the natural assets that we have a duty to hand on in good condition to future generations.  
(UNESCO, 1996:15)

The Delors Commission reaffirmed the fundamental role of education as an important lever for socio-economic and cultural-ideological changes and as a means to cultivate a deeper and more harmonious form of human development in which to reduce inequalities. In contrast to the individualised focus of education within neo-liberalism, the Commission emphasises the primary role education should play.

...while education is an ongoing process of improving knowledge, it is also-perhaps primarily –an exceptional means of bringing about personal development and building relationships among individuals, groups and nations  
(UNESCO, 1996:14).

The criticism lodged against the Delors Commission was that the values promoted were too idealistic and difficult to realise in modern society (Wielemans, 1997:69).

### **2.4.3 The Dakar Forum (2000)**

Did EFA live up to expectations for the adult education sector? At the Dakar Forum on *Education for All* in 2000, organised by the International Consultative Forum for Education for All, a body created in 1991 to monitor the implementation of EFA, it was clear that the goals set out in Jomtiem had not been met. The forum met with a feeling of failure where ten years after Jomtiem, there has been an unprecedented growth in poverty throughout the world. To those in the field of adult education the various Reports contrast the differences between the rhetoric and realities of EFA.

...many countries admitted in their reports that they have ignored adult and non-formal education, while regarding Education for All as *Primary Education for All* (Torres, 2001:58).

The reports further show the belief, still held by different governments, in the market as the saviour. Between Jomtiem and Dakar, not only were goals set by governments not fully met, but the original ideas of EFA were not realised.

...trust is still placed in economic growth as the solution to social inequity, what was reaffirmed in the 1990s is that growth is not enough, that the distribution of income remains unchanged and wealth is becoming ever more concentrated in a few hands (Torres, 2001:59).

It was clear that the campaign for *Education for All* did not live up to its expectations for those in the field of adult education and the question was being asked: Why, if adult education was so important and offered so much potential, is it not given more support by governments and international organisations? The question posed by practitioners in the field is “Does EFA stand for – Except for Adults? (Wijetunga, 2003:91).

Did UNESCO live up to its reputation as conscience keeper of universal literacy? It is felt by those who supported UNESCO's role in promoting universal literacy that although at its inception in 1946, UNESCO rightly proclaimed itself to be an adult education organisation for the world,

half a century later, the passion seems to have cooled and indeed leadership for adult education has shifted to others relatively rich in resources but lacking in commitment to adult education (Bhola, 2004:19).

## **2.5 Concluding remarks**

The chapter, in exploring the nature of adult education and training, asserts that there is no consistent ideology or body of knowledge and practice that can provide answers to the inherent complexities of the field. The chapter has

provided a brief overview of the work of Paulo Freire to illustrate the radical, liberating and transformational effect of adult learning with the aim of supporting the adult learner to achieve a greater awareness of his or her political, social and material reality. Human capital theory was shown as a key global shift to formalise the link between education and the economy. In spite of the ideals set out by EFA and the Delors Commission that reaffirmed the role that education should play as an important lever for socio-economic and cultural-ideological changes, what the Dakar Forum in 2000 showed was that very little has been done by governments to implement adult education as a societal objective.

To what extent was adult education and training in South Africa in the period of transition influenced by the international discourses, if at all? Who and what shaped the activities adult education prior to 1994? In mapping a new path for adult education, how did South Africa deal with the “chameleon term”? Did it follow a path that enabled the adult learner to develop his or her power within a new democracy or did it promote individualised form of learning that is geared towards the needs of the economy?

Chapter 3 will investigate the development of adult basic education and training in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In the struggle against apartheid and since then great emphasis has been placed on the significance of adult education in the struggle for equity and human rights in South Africa. However, more than a decade after democracy was achieved in South Africa the concept of adult basic education and training has come to cover a wide variety of practices while its content and meaning has shifted and changed many times. To some, refers to literacy and numeracy only, while others see ABET as part of work-related training that needs to ensure that adult learning links to skills demands of the particular industry or sector. Another viewpoint is to see ABET as lifeskills training in dealing with issues such as HIV and AIDS. The chapter will explore adult education both before and after 1994 in South Africa.

Adult education immediately prior to 1994 was offered by a wide range of providers that ranged from literacy projects by different religious groupings, to university students, worker organisations and political parties, state night schools as well as training provided by different mining companies. Formal technical and vocational training was largely the preserve of former whites-only Technical Colleges and selected Schools of Industries for Coloureds and mission schools for African students. It is beyond the scope of the mini-thesis to investigate fully the impact of the different vocational training providers in shaping adult education and training in South Africa after 1994. The mini-thesis, in tracing the shaping of ABET, will focus on provision by the NGO sector and the apartheid state in the period after 1976.

The chapter makes a number of points regarding the history of adult education and training in South Africa. The first point is that within the history of adult

education there was a lack of integration of the concepts “education” and “training” by both the NGO and state sector. While the NGO sector mainly focussed on traditional adult education methodologies, the focus of the programmes offered at State night schools was usually academic with the main aim being the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy.

The second point is that within the changing macro-economic policy context emerging during the transition to democracy and especially the period after 1996, the new democratic government shifted away from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) towards the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). The adoption of GEAR led to a shift away from seeing adult education as a tool for the national reconstruction of South Africa, to an approach focussing on meeting the skills demands of the economy.

After 1994, the conceptualisation of ABET formed part of the national processes that took place for all aspects of the education and training system. The third point made is that within the newly formed National Qualifications Framework (NQF) adult education and adult training converged for the first time in South Africa. The chapter will highlight the changes in adult education due to the policies on the integration of education and training.

The last point made is that the tensions that existed at the present time, especially the need of ensuring equivalence with the school system, resulted in ABET replicating most of the practices of the school. The new approach now meant it was “back to school for adult learners” and the unintended consequence was that ABET replicated many practices of the former state night school system.

### **3.2 A brief history of adult education in South Africa**

As noted in chapter 1 the emphasis on adult basic education and training in South Africa emerged strongly after 1994. The critical question is what types of programmes did adult education providers offer prior to 1994? Much has been written on the education and training environment that has been shaped by

apartheid policies which built divisions within the country and advantaged whites both educationally and economically at the expense of other groups (Kallaway, 1997; Badroodien, 2004; and Akoojee, Gerwer, and McGrath 2005). This section will investigate the extent to which adult education met the “training” needs of the adult learner.

Where did adult education originate in South Africa and what types of programmes were on offer prior to 1994 and by whom? Adult education has a long history in South Africa and as far back as the 1920s and 1930s the South African Communist Party started night schools on the Reef, where the focus was on improving workers’ English communication skills and providing political education. There was a surprising variety of adult education being provided prior to 1990, but in many respects the sector could be described as a marginal, if not “invisible” one due to its small scale of provision. According to the *National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) on Adult Basic Education* (1992) and *Adult Education* (1993) before 1990 less than 1% of adult illiterates were undergoing literacy training of any sort. The investigations further revealed that adult education prior to 1994 was mostly characterised by low demand levels and high dropout rates with no central co-ordination of adult literacy work and as a whole could be described as being “chaotic and uncoordinated” (NEPI, 1992).

Literacy organisations in South Africa under the apartheid state operated in a generally hostile environment where the organisations had to register to be considered “legitimate” and receive subsidies from the state. The problematic nature of the registration processes required by the Apartheid state apparatuses in terms of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Education Act of 1979 resulted in many adult education providers being considered illegal by the Apartheid state (French, 1992; Aitchison, 2001).

The choice given to literacy organisations, and other organisations providing schooling opportunities to black learners in the 1960s were either to register and adopt “Bantu education” policies or forfeit all state subsidies. The implications of the registration process led to much frustration for literacy organisations and were

seen as causing a constant struggle against the harsh and bureaucratic apartheid system. For literacy providers, the process was characterised by “endless letters, complicated questionnaires, frequent interviews with government officials and articles and statements” (Wilson, 1991:113).

### **3.2.1 The role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) between 1970 and 1990**

In South Africa although there were a multitude of different literacy providers, which included literacy classes conducted by different church groups and worker organisations, a distinction in this research is made between non-state provision, which includes those offered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and adult education made available by the apartheid state from the 1970s onwards.

According to French (1982) literacy work done by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) sector could be divided into three main groups namely the non-aligned literacy organisations, the non-aligned training agencies, which mostly provided their services to industry, and the non-profit alternative progressive literacy organisations who played an important role in emancipatory and liberation politics.

The non-aligned literacy organisations include organisations such as the Bureau of Literacy and Literature (BLL/Litsa) which offered highly structured courses and focussed on individualised learning where learners had to write examinations to reach a literacy level of Standard 4 (French, 1982). Other organisations such as Operation Upgrade (established in 1966) focussed on teaching practical skills, health and religion. The main criticism against Operation Upgrade and other non-aligned organisations according to French was that their programmes were often criticised for lacking political focus and that many of them failed in their literacy classes to “empower” and “liberate” the adult learner. Other organisations followed during the 1970s such as the Molteno Project, Project Literacy and in the 1980s the establishment of “Word to Africa” which mainly worked with church groups and whose content were mainly biblical and evangelical based.

The progressive literacy organisations, according to French, involved themselves in liberation and emancipatory politics, played a significant role in the struggle against apartheid especially after the 1976 Soweto uprising and the emergence of the strong anti-apartheid resistance in the 1980s. In contrast to other literacy organisations, most progressive organisations were aligned to the National Literacy Cooperation (NLC) that was formed in 1986 with their main aim being to keep adult education on the agenda of liberation movements. The first alternative progressive literacy organisation in South Africa was the Learn and Teach organisation that based their teaching on the literature of Paulo Freire. Another progressive organisation in the field of adult education at that time was Use, Speak and Write English (USWE) that “combined a modified Freirian approach with services to trade unions and United Democratic Front groups” (Aitchison, 2001:139).

According to French (1992:70) although these organisations only provided literacy classes on a small scale, their strength lay in their identification with “the needs and suffering of the oppressed”. Criticism made against progressive organisations, according to French, were that their literacy classes often degenerated into clichéd political rhetoric. Other contributors in the field of adult education included the role played by university students in promoting Paulo Freire’s process of conscientisation among those in the anti-apartheid movements. According to Aitchison (2001:139) the students had a huge impact on movements such as the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s, the independent black trade union movement and the United Democratic Front in the 1980s.

### **3.2.2 The Apartheid state as adult education provider**

The state’s adult classes, after 1976, were conducted at night schools (in contrast to school children who attended classes during the day) for adult learners who were considered to be at “primary level” and continuation classes for learners at secondary level. The classes were strictly academic in nature (see Appendix G that gives a breakdown of the different courses offered at night schools) and

strictly time-based (in most cases 40 weeks) and consisted of different courses that depended on the literacy level of the adult learner. The classes were located in existing school buildings and managed by adult centre principals. Most of the teachers employed were teachers of the day school who were, in most cases, not trained in the field of adult education.

In an HRSC survey in 1982 conducted by Edward French, it was found that the courses with their academic and examination requirements were widely thought to be unsuited for meeting the needs of adult learners. Teaching was basically prescriptive (as in formal schooling) and success in tests at the end of the academic year led to the attainment of literacy certificates and certificates equivalent to lower primary school standards. The courses further paid little attention to the practical training needs of the adult learners. The survey also revealed the attitude of the Department of Education and Training (DET) towards the implementation of “training” at night schools:

...others have expressed a desire to introduce courses with a practical orientation, but the proponents of the academic approach claim that this is beyond the scope of this section (DET) or is impracticable, and feel it would be rejected by a majority of learners

(Department of Education and Training official as cited in French, 1982:25).

What the above suggests is that, historically, very few examples of practical training opportunities for adult learners were provided by either the NGO sector or the Apartheid state. The reason for this relates to what French (1992) describes as the absurd sensitivity about the legal territory between the (then) Department of Manpower and the Department of Education and Training, a condition that has unfortunately spilt over to the new democratic South Africa.

The consequences of past neglect by the apartheid state resulted in the new democratic government inheriting a fragmented system for adult education, where no linkages between the different state departments (such as the Departments of

Education and Training and Manpower) or between the state and the private sector or non-governmental organisations existed. Prior to 1994 there were also no nationally agreed standards for adult education provision. Adult education that was provided by the apartheid state night schools from 1976 onward also had a strong academic focus where very little effort was made to link adult education to social transformation, development and training.

According to the Human Science Research Council (1994:105) the apartheid job reservation policies before 1979, together with the deficiencies of the apartheid schooling system, resulted in a lack of training culture developing which had profound implications for the new democratic government, where in 1994, although 80% of the economically active population was black, 60% of the mostly black labour force was regarded as unskilled. Furthermore the situation is worsened by the lack of a strong general education foundation crucial for successful training in vocational training, in a large part of the black worker corps. The result of this for training providers in the field was that large numbers of workers were illiterate and innumerate and this made “training very difficult because methods have to be found to teach skills without resorting to writing” (Kraak, 2004:57).

ABET, as a form of non-formal education, was considered to be especially relevant taking into consideration the enormity of the task facing formalised schooling in 1994. According to the survey conducted by the HSRC on South African youth immediately prior to 1994 it was found that:

...between 1, 5 and 2 million children of school-going age cannot be accommodated in schools and have to fall back on non-formal education. In addition, approximately 2.5 million black youth dropouts from the formal school system and between five and seven million unemployed adults are in need of non-formal education and training that will improve opportunities for employment  
(Human Science Research Council, 1994:105)

The challenge for the new ABET system was thus how to address both the needs of those already in the workplace, youth who dropped out of the school system, and those unemployed in the communities.

### **3.3 Macro-economic policy context 1990 – 1997**

Those involved in adult education greeted the early 1990s with much optimism as the likelihood of a new democratic government created a climate in which the development of policy became crucial, especially in the adult education sector where policy development was almost non-existent. In addition, for the adult who in the past was denied access to education, 1990 was a significant year as two important things happened. Firstly, the United Nations declared 1990, as International Literacy Year, with the aim of wiping out illiteracy by the year 2000, and secondly the unbanning of the people's organisation that resulted in the release of Nelson Mandela heralding the end of Apartheid (A Learn and Teach/ ELP/ LACOM publication, 1991:1).

From 1994 to 1996 the policies of the new government were driven largely by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that promoted the principles of social justice and redistribution. Within the RDP adult education was seen as a societal objective that was linked strongly to other social policies such as the provision of adequate housing, poverty alleviation, fighting unemployment and the promotion of health. It is widely agreed that after 1994 the need for the new government to move away from the legacy of the apartheid past towards a policy environment that championed redress and equity was obvious (Soudien, Jacklin, and Hoadley 2001; Mahomed, 2001; Oldfield, 2001). Soudien *et al* however argue that restructuring within the country was not without its problems, contradictions and paradoxes.

In 1996 the government abandoned its RDP programme in favour of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. This had significant implications for the goals and provision of education and training policy, in general, and adult education in particular.

### 3.3.1 The move to GEAR and its impact

That GEAR had a narrowing effect on education and training policies and practices is widely acknowledged ( Fataar 2000; Baatjes and Mathe 2004; Mahomed 2001; Adams 2000; Oldfield 2001; Rule 2003). With the acceptance of GEAR education and training policies were now strongly linked to the economy and the global markets. According to Mahomed (2001:117) the move to GEAR was an indication that the new South African government had taken on board the fundamentals of human capital theory which argue for policy priorities that promote “education and training to link to education and economic growth”.

For many critics, and especially for those on the ground, the majority that were unemployed and illiterate, saw the shift to GEAR as an indication that government had abandoned them in favour of the interest of local, mostly white, employers and global foreign investors. The critics of the new policy shift have pointed to how GEAR impacted on services delivered to people on the ground

... Gear’s impact is all pervasive; fiscal restraint and underfunding is the policy on the ground as its impact bites where it hurts in the bellies, hearts and minds of the working class and the poor  
(Lorgat as cited in Adams, 2000:89).

The effect of the shift to the GEAR policy led to decreased spending on education. According to Mr. Elias Masilela, senior manager in Macro Planning of the National Department of Finance, there is

... little fit between what the government says about the importance of ABET and the budget that it allocated to ABET. I was embarrassed to look at the numbers when they were given to me (i.e. less than 1% of the education budget allocated to non formal education in South Africa)  
(Project Literacy, 2000:24)

The adoption of GEAR led to the perspective of adult education as a vehicle for reconstruction of South African society being shifted away from a “political-revolutionary position” (ABE for emancipation) to what Baatjes and Mathe

(2004:401) call a “social-gradualist position” ( ABE for economic growth). The shift of focus towards meeting the needs of the economy meant that ABET centres had to implement a new curriculum, adopt different teaching approaches and subjected to different quality assurance systems. New learning areas, such as Economic and Management Science (EMS), Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME), Technology and Tourism were now introduced alongside the teaching of literacy skills at ABET centres. Another view put forward is that with the adoption of GEAR adult education was now being replaced “by skills training and reskilling for a minority of (largely unionised) workers” (Oldfield, 2001: 43) at the expense of the unemployed or informally employed individuals.

### **3.4 The NQF and the formalisation of ABET**

The issue of the integration between education and training as promoted by the ANC-COSATU Alliance in 1992 was considered as one of the most hotly contested points of early debates on a proposed NQF. The debate was between two schools of thought, namely the view, favoured by the ANC and organised labour, which advocated for an integrated system which saw basic adult education linked to a more generic form of skills training. The other view, favoured by the Department of Manpower and the Department of Education, wanted education and training to exist in parallel tracks, joined by some kind of umbrella body (DoE, 1996: 18).

The enactment of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (Act No.58 of 1995) in October 1995 signalled the first step in the development of the NQF, aimed at redress, and the provision of opportunities for people whose careers were blocked due to past policies. The NQF is defined as a framework for providing lifelong learning opportunities utilising nationally recognised levels (DoE, 1996:15). The key assumption of the NQF is that the adult learner can move through an integrated system from non-literacy to accessing general and further and higher education. Appendix H gives an outline of the NQF structure.

According to the DoE (1996:18) the notion of the NQF could be seen as a compromise position between the Department of Manpower and Education to allay fears within the education sector that it would lose its “soul” and that it would become narrow in focus. At the centre of their concern was the fear that education standards would decline. The training sector on the other hand, was afraid that the integration of education and training, would lead to unreasonable demands for “high” academic standards in the training world. (DoE, 1996:18)

The consequence of this “compromise” for those involved with adult education was the development of two parallel ABET provisioning systems (as discussed in section 1.3 in Chapter 1) one that is driven by the Department of Labour and the other by the Department of Education. The two systems rhetorically would be held together by the NQF through providing collaboration between different parties on areas such as the designing of qualifications, reviewing of the unit standards as well as the quality assurance and monitoring of the implementation of the qualification.

### **3.4.1 The convergence of education and training**

The increasing significance of training within the formal system is based on the belief that the development of education and training is the key to economic prosperity. It is argued that the training rhetoric is fuelled by international debates and can be seen as a form of “structural adjustment of training” (McGrath, 2005; Akoojee, Gerwer and McGrath, 2005). The result is that all forms of training and training providers such as Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) and Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges are increasingly required by governments to become more open to the needs of the labour market.

Much has been written about the move towards an integrated education and training system (Lugg, 1997; Christie, 1999; Mahomed, 2001) that was designed to integrate programmes for learners from various institutions, which include formal schools, adults, workers in industry and out of school children and youth. Christie (1999:280) referred to the shift as a “paradigm switching policy vision”

based on a “systemic umbrella agenda”. Another view taken is that the NQF is a form of redress to enable the adult learner to transfer learning credits across previous system divides in education and training, thus making them more mobile, resulting in diverse learning and career pathways opening up (Lugg, 1997:131). This study will investigate to which extent the different education and training has been implemented in the Western Cape.

### **3.4.2 ABET and the NQF**

Within the NQF adult education and training now converged and the vision for the new ABET system went beyond the learning of basic literacy and numeracy and the introduction of new “learning paths” was emphasised. The aims of ABET according to Dr. Ihron Rensburg, the Deputy Director-General: General and Further Education and Training, was now on

...preparing our adult population for lifelong learning and development...  
(and) we will work together for practical and relevant skilling, appropriate  
and lifelong learning, clear occupational careers and paths, ...  
(DoE, 1997a: v).

Education and training for adults was now brought together in formal policy statements that distinguish between the two terms on the basis of their intended purpose.

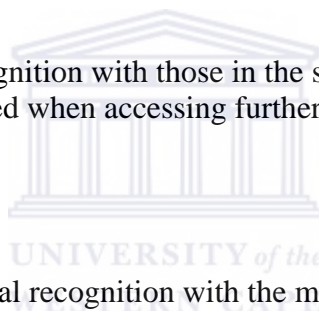
...Adult Basic Education refers to the educational base which individuals require to improve their life changes. Adult Basic Training refers to the income-generating or occupational skills which individuals require for improving their living conditions. Together, ABET implies the foundational knowledge, skills understanding and abilities that are required for improved social and economic life  
(DoE, 1997a:13).

Former state night schools and other literacy providers after 1994 had to move away from only offering literacy and numeracy towards integrating skills training and academic school-based core learning areas. Night schools were now known as Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) and to qualify for registration and funding from the DoE, they had to offer programmes that met the requirements of

the nationally set standards (DoE, 1997a:126). Former night schools and NGOs who failed to comply with the regulations would be restricted in their right to be recorded on the national register as a PALC and as a consequence they would not receive any subsidies from the DoE. For the NGO sector, already suffering from a reduction of funding from foreign donors, it signified a step back to practices used by the restrictive apartheid state structures as discussed in Section 3.2.2 of this chapter.

The location of ABET alongside the formal school system in the NQF structure as shown in Appendix H, saw PALCs replicating most of the formal outcomes-based school curriculum of the schools. According to DoE, the reason for moving to the school curriculum is to achieve equivalence so that adults and out of school youth will be able to

...enjoy equal recognition with those in the schooling system and thus will not be disadvantaged when accessing further learning or seeking employment  
(DoE, 1997a:25)



The tension of seeking equal recognition with the mainstream schooling system signalled a shift away from transformative approaches promoted by progressive literacy organisations and trade unions in the 1980s and early 1990s. The ABET system now adopted a more formal curriculum that strongly focused on the achievement of qualifications, which in effect meant it was “back to schooling for adults” (Aitchison 2002:63).

Within the new broad curriculum framework, the rhetoric of outcomes-based education (OBE) was that adults, out of school youth, and school children, would be able to follow different curricular content which would be articulated through outcome statements. The learning for ABET was now packaged within a unit standard system that consisted of specific outcomes and related assessment criteria against which the adult learner would be assessed. In South Africa OBE has been linked with the tradition of progressive adult education approaches

because it aims to promote learners rather than holding them back and to put education and training on an equal footing. According to the DoE (1997a:11) a “key service” to be provided to adult learners would be the introduction of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a means to accredit evidence of previous learning that has been acquired formally, informally and non-formally.

The reality however is that with the adoption of a formalised approach ABET was exposed to the same assessment and accreditation requirements as schools. The unintended consequences for the adult learner were that learning has become an increasingly individualised activity where the events of everyday life and the roles the learner play as a member of a social group are largely ignored. The focus is now on achievement of a specific qualification that can be registered and awarded in terms of NQF criteria and SAQA standards. This in effect meant that the curriculum offered at PALCs seldom varies from the formal school curriculum.

The assumption that the NQF will be a vehicle that would permit adult learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point was not without its problems and,

...“from sweeper to engineer”: the catch phrase of the NQF signalled not only its strength but also its weakness...  
(Christie, 1997:118).

There was a general concern that within the NQF, the ideals of the integration of education and training have not been achieved. These concerns according to the DoE and DoL (2002:22) include,

- the inability of the current framework to align education and training;
- the contradiction in policies emanating from the split responsibility in government for education and training; and
- the difficulty of including the academic stream of formal education in the current framework.

(DoE and DoL, 2002:22).

### 3.5 Concluding remarks

The chapter has explored adult education in South Africa from its Apartheid past, towards highlighting key developments during the transition to democracy and the implementation of ABET from 1996 onwards.

The NGO sector prior to 1994 operated in a generally hostile environment and focussed on providing learners access to basic literacy skills. The programmes offered varied from very structured courses to teaching basic literacy skills. A few, such as Operation Upgrade implemented practical skills together with literacy and numeracy. The progressive literacy organisations and university students involved in adult education exposed the learners to the value of self empowerment and often based their courses on the Freirian approach to adult education.

In order to counter the NGO presence and international pressure to improve black education, the apartheid state, at night schools offered classes at schools. These were largely thought to be unsuitable for the personal developmental needs of the adult learner. Very little integration between the academic and practical training needs of the adult learner occurred because the provision of the academic belonged to the Department of Education and Training and all practical training was the responsibility of the Department of Manpower.

The chapter further illustrated the consequences of the division between the academic and vocational education where large parts of the population in 1994 were considered illiterate or semi-literate. The new ABET policy was seen as key strategy to preparing the section of the population, denied of educational opportunities in the past, for lifelong learning and development within an integrated NQF structure. Within the global context, questions were being asked about the viability of a narrow view of education linked to economic growth. As shown in the previous chapter, EFA and the DeLors Commission during the 1990s highlighted the importance of education as a force for socio-economic and cultural-ideological changes so as to cultivate a deeper and more harmonious

form of human development in which to reduce inequalities. These principles were central to the RDP where adult education was seen as a societal objective that was strongly linked to eradicating poverty and preparing citizens to participate in the new democracy.

However, with the adoption of GEAR as a macro-economic policy in South Africa and the formalisation of ABET in the NQF, the new policy vision was strongly geared to meeting the needs of the modern globally defined economy. The tension of the achievement of equivalence with the school system also saw ABET adopting an outcomes-based curriculum with a strong focus on the importance of qualifications. The unintended outcome was that ABET was increasingly characterised by practices associated with the school system.

Chapter 4 will focus on the research methodologies used in the study.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

The creation of knowledge is the main purpose of any research. In the field of adult education, as in other social sciences, knowledge refers to information that helps the researcher to understand and predict phenomena. According to Cohen and Manion (1980:29) research can be seen as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. As the senior curriculum planner for ABET in the Western Cape my key concern is how the adult education and training policies affected the programmes offered at Community Learning Centres in the Western Cape and how these programmes in turn impact on the ability of educators to deliver in ways that meet the social, political, personal and economic needs of adult learners.

The aim of understanding can be considered the driving force behind all research, but the understanding we seek depends on the type of questions we ask and the methodologies we use to explore these problems. The selection of a suitable methodology distinguishes research from a casual observation, assumptions or opinions held and selecting the most appropriate method for a particular study is one of the most important and difficult responsibilities of a researcher (Shulman 1988 as cited in Garrison and Shale, 1994:25). In this case, the choice requires that the researcher makes a judgement that is based on the knowledge of different research methodologies and an understanding of the field of adult education. On deciding which methodology to apply in this particular research, it was important for the researcher to note that the choice of methodology is task specific and that different studies use different methods, but the overriding rule was clear: “the techniques must be appropriate for the task at hand” (Mouton, 1996:38) .

## **4.2 Research approach**

A qualitative approach was used in the process of carrying out the task of investigating adult education and training policies, trends and implementation in the Western Cape. In addition some quantitative analysis was also done.

What is qualitative research? Those involved in qualitative research seek answers to questions that emphasise how social experiences are being created and given meaning. Qualitative research stresses the

socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape enquiry  
(Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:8).

In other words, the aim of qualitative researchers is to gain an insight into the context being studied. Researchers such as Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) argue that apart from the holistic data obtained from qualitative data, other strengths of qualitative research is that it focuses on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, it is powerful for studying any process when data is collected over a sustained period, is fundamentally well suited for meanings people place on events, process and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them.

## **4.3 Main research question**

- (i) How has Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes implemented at Community Learning Centres in the Western Cape?

### **Subsidiary questions:**

- (ii) How does adult education and training exist as an international field of education endeavour?

- (iii) What is the historical context of adult education and training provision in South Africa by NGOs and the Apartheid State?
- (iv) What was the impact of GEAR on adult education?
- (v) What was the effect of the integration of adult education and training within the National Qualifications Framework?
- (vi) How did formalised assessment impact on the implementation of adult education and training programmes at CLCs in the Western Cape?

#### **4.4 Data collection procedures**

The data collection procedures selected must be appropriate for answering the research questions. As mentioned before, the study uses both qualitative and quantitative data and while the selection of the method often reflect perspectives and values of the researcher, using qualitative and quantitative methods should not be seen as opposing paradigms, but as a means to present the researcher with different kinds of information ( Garrison and Shale, 1994: 17). According to Rosman and Wilson 1984 and 1994 as cited in Miles and Huberman (1994: 41) there are three broad reasons to link quantitative and qualitative data that include (a) to enable confirmation or corroboration of each other via triangulation; (b) to elaborate or develop analysis, providing richer detail; and (c) to initiate new lines of thinking through drawing attention to surprises or paradoxes.

To better understand the implementation of ABET programmes at the two CLCs structured interviews were conducted. The quantitative data obtained from the Western Cape Education Department was used to assist the researcher to gain a better understanding of the extent to which ABET programmes are implemented in the Western Cape. The data was also used to support, elaborate on, and verify the information received from the two sites being investigated.

#### **4.4.1 Structured interview**

This study in particular made use of face-to-face verbal exchange in the form of interviews. Interviews can be seen as the transaction that takes place between those seeking information and supplying information on the part of the other (Cohen, Marion and Morrison, 2005:268). In the study, structured interviews were conducted with Centre Managers, educators and learners at the two CLCs to gain inside information on ABET implementation at their particular sites. Appendix A lists the interview questions for the centre managers and educators and Appendix B shows the questions posed to the learners interviewed.

There are strengths and weaknesses to using structured interviews as a data collection tool. Criticisms made against using a structured approach is based on the predetermined and inflexible nature of the interview tool (Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 53 and Miles and Huberman 1994: 34) that leaves little room for variation in individual responses and capturing the context within which the study is being conducted. It is therefore critical that the interviewer shows an awareness that the interview does not occur in a vacuum and the interview process is influenced by the social context in which it takes place.

Another limitation to using the interview as a data collection tool is that only surface level analyses may occur due to a lack of in depth knowledge and insider perspective of adult education and training policies by participants at the two CLCs. This is especially applicable in the context of ABET where there is a high turnover in staff at CLCs due to a lack of permanent employment opportunities available. Another disadvantage of using interviews as a data collection tool is that it is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer (Cohen, Marion and Morrison 2005:269).

The strengths on the other hand is that using a structured approach allows the interviewer to focus on collecting the relevant information only and it allows for in depth information to be obtained. The structured approach assisted the researcher who was known to the educators and centre managers being

interviewed in a number of ways. Firstly, it assisted both the researcher and the interviewees to focus on the questions and issues at hand and not to discuss other unrelated issues pertaining to the researcher's role as Senior Curriculum Planner at the WCED. Secondly, many of the interviewees faced time constraints, especially the learners who mainly relied on public transport, and the structured approach allowed the interviewees to respond to a pre-determined number of questions in a specified amount of time.

### **The interview process**

After permission to conduct the research was obtained from WCED (see Appendix D), the two CLCs were contacted telephonically and in writing to request permission to conduct the research (see Appendix E). No objections were received from the two CLCs for the research to be conducted. The dates and times were determined by the participants at the two CLCs and each interview was allocated a specified amount of time. The importance of arranging the schedule outside the formal teaching time was stressed by the researcher so as not to negatively impact on the activities of the centres. The dates and times of the interviews are tabulated in Appendix C.

At the start of each interview the researcher explained the reason for the interview and provided a general background of the aims of the study. The purpose of the consent form was explained and given to the interviewee to complete. The researcher explained that the interview would be considered to be confidential and no names will be mentioned in the study. The interview was conducted after written permission was granted.

Overall the interview process went well at both centres. One learner, (learner 2 at Centre A) however, experienced problems understanding some of the questions as his mother tongue was not English. The questions were then explained in isiXhosa although the learner continued to respond in English. This specific interview took longer than the allocated time set aside for the completion of the process.

#### **4.4.2 Written documents accessed at CLCs**

In the process of compiling information on the two sites through the interviews, certain documents were requested by the researcher to gain a better understanding of the centre's operational context. According to Hodder (1998:111) documents and other texts are important for qualitative research because access can be easy and low cost, the information provided may differ from the spoken form and/or may not be available in spoken form and give the researcher an insight into the site being investigated. The type of documents obtained at the two sites include the timetable of the centres, brochures, newsletters, needs survey forms and a summary of learners registered at the CLC. Appendix L gives a summary of the documents accessed at the two sites and spell out the significance of these to the study.

#### **4.4.3 Quantitative data sources**

The key focus of the research is on the implementation of ABET programmes in the Western Cape and specifically at two community learning centres in the Western Cape. In this study quantitative data was used to provide a background and context to the implementation of ABET in the province as well as the two CLCs.

The quantitative data obtained include

- (1) The number of CLCs in the Western Cape;
- (2) the total number of learners accessing education and training in the Western Cape;
- (3) the number of learners accessing the different ABET levels;
- (4) the number of learners being offered some form of training programmes;
- (5) the number of learners participating in the formal assessment;
- (6) the number of learners in various programmes at the two different sites being investigated.

The quantitative data assisted the researcher in finding out information overlooked at first (for example the role of assessment in the new education and training environment) and to provide a context to the interview process. During the interviews, the role of assessment largely emerged as a key theme that shaped the type and form of adult education and training programmes at the two CLCs.

The method mostly relied on the existing data, which was accessed from the Research Directorate: Management Information System (EMIS) of the WCED. The Provincial data on ABET in the Western Cape was obtained via the Annual Survey for Community Learning Centres conducted by the Directorate: Research, as part of their Education and Management Information System (EMIS). However, no data was available on one of the centres, namely Centre B, and no reason was provided for their exclusion from the EMIS. The EMIS

...is a formally structured data collection, verification, storage, processing, retrieval and dissemination system aimed at improving management. The EMIS supports improved decision-making to the extent that it provides administrators, planners, researchers, policy analysts and decision-makers, centre managers and governing bodies with essential statistical information.”  
(WCED, 2003:48)

Further statistical data was also obtained from the Directorate: Curriculum Development of the WCED, to inform the study on assessment trends within ABET. Key data needed for the study sourced from this specific directorate related to the types of education and training programmes being offered to adult learners, the type of support for implementation of these programmes, how, when and how many learners are accessing the different assessments of the WCED.

The reason for using this data is that it is cost effective and easily accessible and assists the researcher in determining the extent to which ABET is implemented in the Province. However, there are also several limitations to using the provincial data as supplied by WCED. Firstly, the learner totals submitted to the Research Directorate through the annual survey are largely unverified. Secondly, from studying the data, it was observed, that a number of CLCs were not reflected on

the official list provided. In the study, for example, Centre B is not reflected on the database of CLCs. Lastly, the accuracy of the data provided is also questionable. At Centre A, for example, through the interaction with the CLC, the interviewing process and the documents supplied by the CLC shows that a considerable number of learners are doing “training” and other enrichment courses. However, none of the courses (and the participating learners) was reflected on the provincial Centre database. The provincial data thus gives the wrong impression that learners at Centre A are only involved with academic programmes.

#### **4.5 Sample**

A key activity in the study involves decisions on which people to interview and how to locate them within the overall provincial setting. According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 27) sampling in qualitative research involves two actions that sometimes pull in different directions. The first action includes the setting of boundaries. The key question I had to ask as researcher was; what can I study within the limits of time and means available to me that directly connects to my research questions? The second action was the creation of a suitable sample to help uncover, confirm or qualify the basic questions asked in the study. The study will make use of a generic, funnelling sampling sequence which according to Miles and Huberman (1994: 28) allows the researcher to work from the outside (provincial analysis) in to the core of the setting (the implementation of education and training at the two sites).

The two CLCs in the study are in Metropole Central, one of seven Education Management and Development Centres (EMDCs) of the Western Cape Education Department. The total population of Community Learning Centres in the EMDC will not be included in the study. Only two CLCs were selected. The reasons for choosing the EMDC and the two sites in particular are due to the following:

- The CLCs selected in the EMDC can be considered as diverse and information rich. On the one hand, there are centres that have a long, night school tradition (such as Centre A) and newer centres (such as

Centre B) which were established in 2003, as a response to the shift in the focus of the ABET sub-Directorate;

- The issue of convenience, as the two sites were easily accessible to the researcher in terms of distance.

At the two different sites attempts were made to interview an equal number of men and women, and to have comparable ages and social backgrounds of people forming the sample. This was however difficult because the data relating to educators and background information on the individual learners was not available to the researcher beforehand and was randomly supplied by the Centre according to which participant was available on the days of the interview. A further challenge for the researcher was that the two CLCs investigated had different histories, area of operation and also target groups across a range of levels, both in ABET and in the FET band. As the scope of the study is small only learners in ABET Level 4 formed part of the study. The rationale was that all learners at that particular level had a common motivation, namely to complete their first qualification.

#### **4.6 Data analysis**

According to Huberman and Miles (1998:180) data analysis can be seen as an interactive process that contains three sub-processes namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/ verification. They further elaborate that *data reduction* involves choosing a conceptual framework, research questions, cases, and instruments. *Data display* is defined as the organisation, compressing of the information that permits conclusion drawing and/or action taking. *Conclusion drawing and verification* involves the researcher in interpretation which entails drawing meaning from the displayed data.

The interview questions and documents obtained were summarised, coded and clustered around main themes in an effort to understand the implementation of ABET at the two sites. In an attempt to analyse the data in a logical way that would assist the researcher in explaining the “how” and “why” of the implementation of education and training at the two CLCs, the data was

sequenced according to when the CLCs were established, its target group, the learners motivation for coming to ABET classes, how learners gain access to education and training programmes, available structures at the CLCs for the guidance of learners, the courses offered by the CLC, the need for training programmes and challenges faced when implementing the programmes, linkages between the two ABET centres and other education and training.

In this case, immediately after the interviews were conducted, the reviewing and writing up of the rough initial notes and summaries were made of the different documents provided by the centre manager. The advantage of writing up of the initial rough notes was that when reviewing the notes and the interview, it stimulated the researcher to remember things mentioned at the time that were not in the notes. Summarising the documents also assisted the researcher to see the different linkages, emerging patterns and sometimes inconsistencies, between what was said during the interviews and how it was written down in the day-to-day operations of the CLCs. The writing up process also enabled the researcher to see patterns and themes emerging. After the initial field notes were reviewed and corrected, the relevant data was translated on to a summary form (see Appendix K) and encoded. The advantage of using a summary form is that it is a rapid, practical way to do first-run data reduction without losing any of the basic information, it captures the thoughtful impressions and reflections of the interviews and finally it pulls together data and makes them available for further reflection and analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994: 52).

#### **4.7 Ethical considerations**

Permission to conduct the research was sought via the Directorate: Research of the Western Cape Education Department and the management of the two CLCs (see Appendix D and Appendix E). All participants were further requested to complete a consent form that outlined the reasons and aims of the research (see Appendix F). The following statement aims to address the ethical challenges in the research.

All participants were informed of:

- The aims, purpose and methods of the research.
- The maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity through eliminating any kinds of materials or information that could lead others to identify the subjects involved.
- Their right to refuse to take part in the research.

Interviews were also scheduled and conducted outside formal teaching and learning time so as not to negatively impact on already limited contact time between educator and learner.

In the reporting of the data the names of the CLCs and interviewees were omitted to ensure confidentiality is maintained throughout the research process.

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#### **4.8 Limitations of the study**

Because only two sites from one of the seven Educational and Management Development Centres (EMDCs) in the Western Cape were selected, it is difficult to generalise the findings to the rest of the Province. Other limiting factors include the fact that no rural sites were selected due to time and proximity constraints.

The study is further limited by the basic limitations of qualitative research. Most data sources reflect the views of an individual's perspective and perceptions, which are inherently subjective. The reliability of data and the validity of the analysis may still be compromised by the desires of the individual participants to present their Centre in the best possible light to the researcher due to his position as a Curriculum Planner at WCED.

## CHAPTER 5

# ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE WESTERN CAPE

### 5.1 Introduction

ABE is one piece of a puzzle, which does not have much value unless it engages with other social needs: employment; income; solidarity; community upliftment ...  
(Rule, 2003: 12)

For the adult population in the Western Cape, ABET has many benefits and can bring much value to their lives if it enables them to deal effectively with their social, economic and personal realities. According to the *National Household Travel Survey 2003 Technical Report* of the Department of Transport (2003:33), the Western Cape with a population of 4,7million people, has 634 222 persons (13, 4%) who have had no access to formal education while 1 017 595 people (21, 5%) across all age groups did not have access to a general education.

The role of adult education was seen by adult education practitioners such as Paulo Freire, especially in countries that experienced major changes, such as South Africa, as a collective activity that should strive for social and political transformation. Where previous chapters have drawn attention to the major global and national policy shifts that include the integration of “training” into adult education and thus formalising the links to the needs of the economy, this chapter explores how this change has influenced the implementation of ABET in the Western Cape after 1994.

Key to the implementation process was the integration of “training” into the new unit standards-based ABET L1-4 curriculum (see Appendix I). Within national policy, the rhetoric of the “T” refers to a broad range of activities that is considered to be

more than technical skills or employment skills that include a variety of programmes such as plumbing, dress making and the like, through to specialised skills such as conflict management and negotiation, to creative skills such as dance and praise-poetry (DoE, 1997a:14).

This chapter notes key points since 1996 to argue that there were key factors that impacted on the implementation of “training”, the “T” of ABET in the Western Cape. The first point is that the introduction of ABET in the Western Cape with the establishment of the ABET sub-Directorate faced budgetary constraints when implementing national policies and the emphasis was on “doing more with less”.

What type of basic education and training delivery programmes were promoted in the Western Cape? By looking at the chronology of events between 1996 and 2000, the second point made is that instead of adopting a broad vision for ABET, and emphasising different types of learning (formal, informal and non-formal), evidence suggests that the key focus was on replicating the curriculum and practices of the formal school system.

After 2001, when organisational restructuring occurred within the WCED, control of ABET Centres was placed in the hands of the new district structures known as Education Management and Development Centres (EMDCs). The third point made is that at the implications of handing control over to the EMDCs resulted in a lack of curriculum support to CLCs especially when implementing programmes that did not form part of the formal school learning areas. This compromised the ability of CLCs to implement skills-based training and/or other non-school forms of learning.

The fourth point is that the adoption of a new funding model by the ABET sub-directorate turned over financial control to the governing bodies of CLCs. This led to further marginalisation of practical forms of learning. With the shift the governing bodies were provided with subsidies to recruit and employ educators. For governing bodies, the implementation of practical training programmes was

considered costly as it needed educators with specialised skills and a physical infra-structure that could accommodate the training programmes. However, CLCs were not allocated additional funding by WCED to implement these skills courses.

Contrary to the redress policies and objectives as set out by the DoE, which target the unemployed in rural areas and squatter settlements as preferential groups in need of ABET, the WCED shifted its recruitment strategy to targeting the already employed in the different government departments in 2003. The fifth argument made is that ABET now became a service offered to the “client”, the employer, whose key objectives were to ensure that learners obtain an academic qualification. The study will attempt to show that this shift further strengthened the focus on the formal academic courses to the detriment of “training” implementation.

Lastly, I will argue that the introduction of the national ABET level 4 assessment in 2001, became a marketing tool for CLCs to attract learners in the workplace who were in need of promotion and/or higher wages. This resulted in the marginalisation of other forms of learning such as programmes of an informal nature e.g. basic sewing skills that were not addressed by the ABET unit standards and thus not covered by the ABET Level 4 assessment.

The chapter will focus on the types of ABET programmes delivered at CLCs and provide a statistical overview of the extent of the implementation of the “T” of ABET in the Western Cape to further substantiate its arguments.

## **5.2 The implementation of ABET in the Western Cape**

From 1996 onwards provinces were tasked with ensuring that the public centres offering adult education were obligated to transform into ABET providers that served the diverse and often complex social, economic and cultural needs of adult learners. As mentioned in chapter 1, the ABET Sub-directorate was established in 1996, and was tasked with ensuring that former state night schools implement

ABET Levels 1-4 programmes ( See Appendix I) in line with national policy to the adult population of the Western Cape in need of it.

### **5.2.1 The establishment of ABET in the Western Cape (1996 – 2000)**

With the placement of the ABET sub-Directorate in the formal structures of the WCED, ABET had to compete against schools and FET Colleges for scarce educational resources and funding. Although *A National Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training: Provision* (DoE, 1997a) aimed to set high targets for Provinces to achieve, this was done, according to Baatjes and Mathe (2004:405), with the belief that the state would honour its commitment to adults as stated in the RDP, and commit sufficient resources for ABET. The Department of Education in developing plans for Provincial implementation in 1997, conceded that

...the budget allocated to the sector by the government is insufficient. As a result, implementation and planning becomes difficult and near impossible. Historically, the ABET sector has been neglected in favour of formal schooling. Within the context of competing demands for government resources, an insufficient budget for ABET is likely to be experienced.  
(DoE, 1997a:57)

Facing severe financial constraints and tasked with implementing nationally-set targets as required by national policy, *A National Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training: Provision and Accreditation* a number of national and provincial developments between 1996 and 2000 shaped ABET delivery in the Western Cape. The focus of the WCED implementation strategy was the establishment of public adult education system at CLCs in the Western Cape and excluded any private adult education providers. These developments are detailed below.

1996 – The Ithuteng (Ready to Learn) Campaign was launched by the National Directorate of Adult Education on 11 February 1996 with the aim of speeding up the delivery of programmes in ABET Level 1 and 2 within the Provinces. The

campaign aimed to transform adult education as previously provided by the State, NGOs and the business sector. In the Western Cape the campaign ambitiously targeted 10 000 new learners to be reached at public centres registered with WCED. For educators at adult centres the Ithuteng campaign was also the first encounter they had with the new Outcomes-Based curriculum.

1997 – The introduction and training of governance structures at CLCs occurred to ensure accountability at CLC level. A *Policy and Procedure Manual for Community Learning Centres* was developed to ensure compliance with the new policies and served as a guide for implementation at CLCs. Educators were also trained in the new assessment requirements of the Outcomes-Based curriculum.

1998 – Training of adult practitioners to orientate them towards the requirements of the unit standards-based curriculum took place. However, the training was undermined by the employment of school teachers employed at CLCs (referred to commonly as “double parkers” due to their dual employment) who left the CLCs when their annual contracts ended, resulting in a large number of new teachers having to be trained annually. Another difficulty experienced was that school teachers already burdened with implementing OBE in their day schools were now expected to attend the 40 hours of training (normally presented over weekends and in the evenings) for the year conducted by the ABET sub-Directorate.

A further development was the introduction of a new funding policy that linked the amount of money allocated to CLCs to the number of learners they managed to enrol for the approved unit standards-based programmes. A Management and Information System, similar to the system used at schools, was developed to verify the learner totals as provided by CLCs. Amalgamations, (where two or more centres close to one another were combined) took place with the goal of the Province being able to deliver a more efficient and effective service.

1999 – The ABET sub-Directorate aimed to increase their learner numbers by targeting learners with special educational needs (especially those with physical disabilities e.g. the deaf) as a designated grouping in need of intervention as

required by national policy. In-service training was now provided to educators on developing learning programmes where all learning was packaged for learners into time-based modules where 1 credit is equal to 10 notional hours. CLCs were allocated funds for 108 hours per year (3 hours per week x 36 weeks) to complete a learning programme that consisted of between two or eight learning areas. To CLCs this meant that learners were allocated a maximum of three hours per week to meet the credit requirements of the different learning areas. This resulted in learners remaining in one particular level for a number of years before being able to progress to a next level. A further requirement was that all learning programmes had to be designed using standardised templates provided by the ABET sub-Directorate irrespective of the perceived needs and context of the learner.

2000 – Centre managers were trained in the requirements of the new curriculum. This was in response to problems experienced by the educators who were all employed on a part time basis, in understanding and implementing the new Unit Standards-based curriculum and complex assessment administrative requirements. Assessment pilot programmes were developed where learners wanting to complete ABET Level 4 had to participate in a provincial examination in order to move to Further Education and Training (FET). This was in preparation for the national assessment that was to be implemented in 2001. Districts were tasked with developing examinations for ABET Level 1-3 while the Province moderated and approved the different examinations. Participating learners were provided with certificates of competency at all ABET levels if they met the necessary requirements of the set standards. This trend can be seen as a step back to the old Department of Education and Training model, discussed in Chapter 3 that emphasised examinations and the issuing of literacy certificates before adults were able to progress further in terms of formal qualifications.

(Source: DoE, nd: 91)

The above outlines the key developments in implementing ABET in the Western Cape between 1996 and 2000. Between the period 1996 to 2000, the WCED increased its number of adult learners from 8000 to 26 000. It also increased its

educator total from 667 to 1300 educators over the same period. However, no permanent educator posts were established and the province persisted in using part-time school teachers in most cases. The table below gives a breakdown of the Provincial learner enrolments at ABET centres between 1996 and 2000.

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Learner numbers	8 000	17 500	21 000	23 000	26 000
Educator numbers	667	872	1050	1515	1300

(DoE, nd: 88)

In comparing the implementation strategy with the ‘‘expanded vision’’ of Education for All (Jomtiem 1990) the following contrast can be made. While EFA as a broad framework required of governments to provide sufficient resources to basic education, ABET in the Western Cape, was implemented under severe financial constraints, where funding was only made available to learners participating in the formal Unit Standards-based programmes. No special funding was made available for the needs of the adult learner who wished to enrol in other forms of learning or ‘‘training’’. Unlike EFA, that saw the implementation of adult education happening through various formal and informal institutional processes, ABET in WCED was offered within the existing formal school structures (and in most cases school buildings) and also replicated the practices of schools. These practices at CLCs include employing and using teachers from the schools, subjecting the adult learners to the same learning areas and requirement as learners at schools. The new curriculum learning areas such as include life orientation, economic and management science, human and social science, natural science and technology.

The movement towards a formalised assessment system and using standardised learning programmes removed learning from the everyday context of the adult learner. At Jomtiem calls were made for innovative methods of delivering adult education that requires a shift away from conventional methodologies to

empowering lifeskills oriented methodologies aimed at eradicating poverty. In the Western Cape, as the above chronology suggests, very little, if any, provision was made for the implementation of programmes that were not part of the formal school-based curriculum.

### **5.2.2 ABET in the EMDCs from 2001 onwards**

In 2001 the administrative control over ABET Centres moved away from the ABET sub-Directorate and was now allocated to the seven districts or Education Management and Development Centres (EMDCs) as part of the WCEDs restructuring process. The EMDCs are responsible for bringing services and support to schools and other learning sites in their specific, demarcated areas, and for playing a fundamental role in improving the quality of education in public learning sites in the province. With regard to ABET, the EMDCs are responsible for policy implementation and providing support to adult centres. The EMDCs have four divisions namely curriculum development and support, institutional management and governance support, specialised learner and educator support and administrative services, which are all involved in developing the institutional capacity of the different learning sites.

Four EMDCs are located in the urban parts of the province, namely Metropole Central, Metropole South, Metropole North and Metropole East. Three are in the rural parts of the province, namely: West Coast and Winelands; Breede River-Overberg and Southern Cape-Karoo. The table below gives a comparative picture of the number of learners and CLCs (ABET sites) in the different EMDCs in the Province.

	EMDC	Number of ABET sites	Number of learners
1	Breede River Overberg	55	2904
2	Metropole Central	32	3299
3	Metropole East	27	5554
4	Metropole North	26	2719

5	Metropole South	34	8026
6	Southern Cape Karoo	81	3070
7	West Coast Winelands	101	3259
Total		<b>356</b>	<b>28831</b>

(Source: WCED: EMIS 2006)

The EMDC rhetoric of further support to ABET Centres did not materialise in practice and little assistance was made available for CLCs wanting to implement “training” as no curriculum (or other) support is available for programmes that fall outside the scope of the formal learning areas and/or subjects offered by mainstream schools. EMDCs saw their core function as the big task of providing support to schools also struggling with educational change, and not in relation to the provision of ABET. Those CLCs that do offer “training” do so with very little support or quality assurance mechanisms in place at EMDCs.

With ABET implementation now in the hands of the EMDCs, new funding models were adopted by the ABET sub-directorate that saw it moving away from the requirements of the ABET Act (Act No.52 of 2000) that stipulate that the WCED create a “provincial educator post establishment ...in terms of the Employment of Educators Act” (DoE 2000: 16). Instead WCED now allocated governing bodies of CLCs (co-opted community members) subsidies to employ the educators (instead of only making “recommendations” for the employment of educators as required in the ABET Act) for the different programmes being offered.

The result of the provincial policy shift had a number of implications for the implementation of ABET programmes at CLCs that include:

- Governing bodies employing less experienced, and in many cases unqualified educators, as they can be paid less than their more experienced or qualified counterparts;
- The educators employed by the CLCs were in most cases paid less than the minimum stipulated rates as determined by government legislation. The unintended consequence was a continued high turnover of educators,

that made the training by WCED of the educators at CLCs difficult and financially a less viable option as they leave the CLCs after being trained;

- Governing bodies having to make choices of the viability of the type of programmes the CLC can afford to offer. The dilemma facing governing bodies and centre managers of CLCs was that when choosing any other programme than the formal outcomes-based curriculum for ABET level 1-4 as prescribed in provincial policy (see Appendix I), they did not receive financial support from the WCED. Furthermore, recruiting educators for specialist fields, both formal such as technology, science and ancillary health care etc. or informal skills programmes as needed by the particular community was considered costly.

The result was that all non-formal and training programmes were relegated to the margins. This marginalisation is further reflected in the Provincial policy that emphasised to governing bodies and centre managers the importance of implementing the formal unit standards-based curriculum that gives learners access to a qualification.

The main purpose of any community learning centre is to provide learners with access to the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC). Therefore the most important priority any centre manager has to attend to is the implementation and offering of relevant curriculum that will lead to acquiring a GETC (WCED, 2003:6).

With the importance of the GET qualification entrenched within the system, a new recruitment strategy was launched in 2003 by the ABET sub-Directorate that targeted different government departments and businesses as key partners in its drive to attract more learners. In the strategy the ABET sub-Directorate assumed the new role of mediator between the different government departments as potential funding sources and the CLCs who needed to find additional funding sources. Adult education now became a “service” offered to the client. With the shift CLCs now became the “service provider” and the different government departments became the “clients who provide learners for ABET” (WCED

2004:1). Employees of the different government department accessed various programmes that ranged from ABET Level 1 to Grade 12. For the study, no data was available on who the learners were (age, sex or educational level) as the learners were not reflected on the EMIS system.

The unintended consequence of this shift was that very little effort was being made to access the illiterate learner within the community who was usually invisible in society either because of his or her highly marginal status for socio-economic reasons or because the individual has successfully hidden semi-literacy or illiteracy (Limage, 1993). The key focus was now on the provision of opportunities to access qualifications to ensure that

...employees of the departments of the PGWC (Provincial Government of the Western Cape) who do not have a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) and/or Senior Certificate (SC) are given the opportunity to obtain such qualifications.  
(WCED, 2004:1)

The programmes and actions of the ABET sub-Directorate focus mainly on meeting the needs of the workplace and the provision of credentials for those in need of advancement in the different government departments. These practices raise a number of questions relating to the demand for “training” programmes in an environment where the need for access to formal academic qualifications is increasingly considered a priority by the “client”. A key question is “what alternatives are there for learners, other than the formal academic learning areas, to meet their diverse needs whether it is social, cultural, economic or personal”? The question is especially relevant as key to the implementation of what is considered “relevant” ABET programmes is meeting the divergent needs of the learners according to national policy as highlighted in Chapter 1, section 1.2.

### **5.3 An statistical overview of ABET programme implementation in the Western Cape**

The previous section outlines the various trends evident at CLCs since ABET were introduced in the Western Cape. The argument made above was that while

there were a number of responses to the provision of formal educational programmes, there were many factors that impeded the implementation of “training” at CLCs. These factors include fiscal constraints, the cost of offering practical subjects, shortage of qualified educators and the lack of support from the EMDCs in implementing training programmes.

The data for 2005 was obtained from EMIS with the aim of the researcher gaining a better understanding of the extent to which both adult education and training programmes had been implemented across the Province as required by national and provincial policy. The table below shows the number of adult learners in the Western Cape according to the different levels of enrolment.

Total number and percentage per level of learners at CLCs in the Western Cape in 2005

ABET LEVEL 1	ABET LEVEL 2	ABET LEVEL 3	ABET LEVEL 4	GRADE 10 (NQF 2)	GRADE 11 (NQF 3)	GRADE 12 (NQF 4)	“OTHER”	TOTAL
3106	1845	1381	3931	2597	585	13 756	1630	<b>28 831</b>
11%	6%	5%	14%	9%	2%	47%	6%	

(Source: WCED EMIS 2006)

It is important to note that the information supplied showed that all programmes that were not part of the formal academic programmes were classified under the category “other”. The “other” includes a range of practical, informal and non-practical areas that include flower arrangement, computer literacy, brick making, leather work and beginner Xhosa classes. Appendix J gives a summary of the “other” courses offered by CLCs in the Province in 2005. What is significant, and directly impacts on the viability of offering “training” programmes by CLCs, is that few of the “other” courses meet the criteria for continued financial and curriculum support from WCED as it is not considered part of the “relevant and approved curriculum” (WCED, 2003:26) as indicated in Appendix I. No information could be obtained from WCED on how the “other” courses are linked to the formal academic programmes, whether they are accredited programmes and

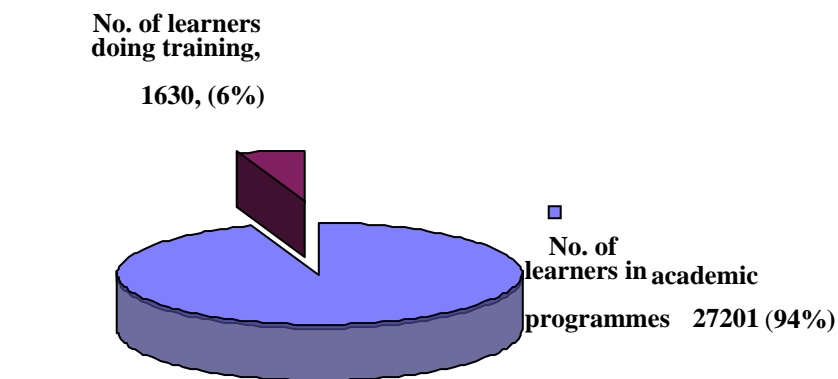
if the training programmes are integrated, or are they running parallel to the formal academic programmes?

According to the 2005 information obtained there was a total of 28 831 adult learners at CLCs in the Western Cape. The highest number of learners is found at the two qualification levels (ABET Level 4 and Grade 12) What is significant is that that the majority of learners (58%) at CLCs in the Western Cape cannot be considered ABET learners, as defined in national policy documents, as they are in Grade 10 to 12, which falls within the FET Band. The table above shows that out of a total of 28 831 learners, 16 938 are being offered courses in FET. The questions which need further study are

- (1) why are the adult learners seeking formal academic courses from Grade 10 onwards at CLCs rather than opting for various education and training programmes offered at FET Colleges?
- (2) Considering the mandate of ABET, why are CLCs accepting FET learners above the General Education and Training band?

How does the provision of “education” compare to the provision of the “training” at CLCs? The figure below provides a comparative look at learners doing ABET and FET programmes at CLCs in the Western Cape and those doing some form of “other” training.

Comparison between academic and training programmes in the Western Cape for 2005.



(Source: Adapted from WCED EMIS 2006)

What is significant is that only 6% of the almost 29 000 adult learners were provided with access to various forms of training at CLCs in the Western Cape in 2005. Within ABET in the Western Cape the provision of the “academic” (as indicated in Appendix I) far outweighs the provision of the “training”. Other questions for further investigation include: Who are the learners? What are their perceptions, objectives and needs? Why did they choose to enrol for the “other” programmes?

#### **5.4 The impact of assessment on ABET programmes**

The National ABET level 4 examination was introduced in 2001 by DoE, and is one of three means available for adult learners to gain access to the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC). Another means is via the Examinations set by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) which sell their services to private ABET providers in the different workplaces. The other options is to gain access to the qualification through learnerships offered by the different SETAs.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the SETAs main target groups are employees of the different sectors that they represent. The structure of their qualifications include a “training” part (as identified by the specific sector ) that is offered in conjunction with the fundamentals ( literacy, numeracy and life skills). Learnerships are provided by private, well resourced ABET providers that meets the stringent accreditation requirements of the different SETAs. What is significant, and to be considered for future studies, is that very little opportunity exist for adult learners to transfer credits across the three examination and/or quality assurance bodies as intended with the conceptualisation of the NQF. Learners at CLCs, wishing to obtain a GETC have to register for the DoE examinations conducted in June and October. Furthermore CLCs were not considered accredited to offer any of the learnerships and/or skills programmes available at the various SETAs. In spite of many meetings held between different SETAs and WCED, with the hope of developing memoranda of understandings to assist CLCs in achieving accreditation, none has materialised thus far.

The introduction of the National ABET level 4 examinations from 2001 onward enabled CLCs to market themselves in the different workplaces and communities as providers of the NQF 1 (ABET Level 4) General Education and Training (GET) qualification. The quality assurance of the ABET qualification is done by Umalusi (established by the GENFETQA Act No.58 of 2001) through their monitoring and verification processes in the different Provinces.

The national examinations are conducted in the 15 learning areas shown in Appendix I. Adult learners have to complete a minimum of 8 learning areas, according to the different rules of combinations to achieve 120 credits and obtain a GET qualification. CLCs also had to comply with the quality assurance demands such as moderation, verification and portfolio development, to meet the requirements of the qualification. Training programmes at CLCs are excluded as part of the DoE determined learning fields for ABET Level 4 needs were largely ignored as they are considered the domain of the different SETAs.

The table below shows the increase of learners for the ABET Level 4 assessment in the Province. Between the years 2001 and 2005, the number of learners writing the assessment more than doubled from 566 learners in 2001 to 1393 in 2005. Furthermore the table suggests an increased demand for the qualification but that almost a quarter of the learners in 2005 did not write the examination.

The number of learners registering and writing the ABET Level 4 assessment in the Western Cape

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
No. of learners registering for the ABET Level 4 examination	943	1274	1396	1688	1855
No. of learners who wrote the ABET Level 4 examination	566	852	1039	1313	1393
% who wrote	60,02%	66,88%	74,43%	77,78%	75,08%

(Source: WCED 2005:1. Adapted from *ABET Level 4 October 2005 Assessment Report* )

However, looking at the year 2005 as an example, it is important to note that according to the official data obtained from WCED a total number of 3931 (see page 67) learners were registered at ABET level 4. Taking this into account it shows that only 26% (1393 out of 3931 learners) of the learners enrolled actually participated in the assessment. It is not the purpose of the investigation to speculate on the reasons for the low participation rate, but it can be considered a problem that needs further analysis in a future study.

## **5.5 Concluding remarks**

The chapter has attempted to provide a critical analysis of the implementation of adult education and training programmes at CLCs in the Western Cape.

The chapter shows that between 1996 and 2000 there is a clear trend that suggest that the key focus of ABET offered by WCED was on replicating the practices and curriculum of the formal school system. This include the move towards orientating educators towards implementing an outcomes-based school like curriculum; the use of school teachers on a part-time basis; decentralised control provided to centre governance structures; new funding models based on learner numbers and a strong focus on formalised assessment at the four ABET levels rather than an integrated education and training programme as envisioned in the original national policy texts outlined in Chapter 3.

The chapter further shows that after 2001 the ability of CLCs to implement training programmes and other non-formal courses was constrained by the handing over of control of the CLCs to the EMDCs where little curriculum support was provided to them when offering non-academic courses. The key focus of the national ABET level 4 assessment was on the achievement of a formal qualification based on the 15 formal academic learning areas. The evidence tends to suggest that learners are increasingly demanding access to the formal, academic GET qualification. The data further shows that most of the learners are accessing CLCs at the two qualification levels (ABET Level 4 and

Grade 12). Of the 28 831 learners in the Western Cape in 2005, 62% (17 687) of the learners at CLCs are found at these two levels. An interesting finding of the investigation, and which require further study, is that most adult learners are registered for FET programmes, rather than in the mandated ABET programmes.

The chapter also drew attention to the introduction of the *Transversal Policy for ABET delivery to Employees of Western Cape Provincial Departments* (2004) to highlight the shift of the WCED where ABET now became a “service” offered to the “clients”. The shift shows that the concept of adult learning in the Western Cape has changed to “developing human capital” for those in search of further opportunities in the workplace rather than ABET as a form of personal empowerment. The forms of ABET as provided to the government departments are inconsistent with the human capital theory as discussed in Chapter 2 and a number of questions are raised for further study. These questions include: While Human Capital Theory sees a strong link between education and training, why are the employers in the Western Cape emphasising GET as an “academic” qualification, and why were there not more pressure from these public sector employers for the “T” in ABET? Is this part of a broader redress agenda on the part of employers in the public sector, considering the criticism made against the SETAs? Is this an attempt by employers to bring to raise the levels of basic education of their employees to create a platform for further training?

In the Western Cape the data suggests that since 1996 the WCED has increased its learner enrolment. However, the study found that the programmes offered are largely restricted to the formal academic courses rather than giving the adult learners access to broad range of formal and informal programmes and skills. The quantitative data supplied by the Western Cape Education Department, when analysed, suggests that education and training policy has not been implemented at most CLCs in the Province, and that only 6% ( 1 630 out of a total of 28 831) of the learners had access to practical training programmes in 2005.

Chapter 6 will investigate the implementation of ABET at two CLCs in the Western Cape.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS ?**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter has highlighted the gap between policy goals and policy implementation in relation to ABET in the Western Cape since 1996 that resulted in only 6% of the learners having access to “training” at CLCs in the Western Cape in 2005. This chapter intends to examine how education and training policy at two WCED CLCs were implemented. The chapter first aims to provide a general profile of the two centres before providing an analysis of education and training implementation at the two individual ABET centres.

#### **6.2 A profile of education and training provision at Centre A**

Centre A has a long history and classes were first initiated in 1971 in one of the oldest black townships in the Western Cape. The Centre moved into the existing complex in 1985 with funding supplied by the Roman Catholic Church. Their main target group comprise of adult learners who are mostly unemployed or underemployed, from the local community, as well as learners from other townships in Cape Town.

According to the timetable provided by the Centre Manager, classes in 2006 were conducted from Monday to Thursday between 18:00 and 21:00. There are 68 teachers employed on a part-time basis at the Centre, the majority whom are school teachers during the day. According to the centre manager, the CLC aims to provide holistic education to its learners who all come from disadvantaged areas and therefore offers a range of academic and training programmes. The Centre can be considered well-equipped and has a total of 30 classrooms, a science laboratory, a library, three computer rooms, an internet café for the learners, three well maintained workshops that have a number of industrial machines, a sewing room, home economics room and an administrative block. Access to the building is controlled by turnstiles and learners are provided with swipe cards that restrict

access to the facilities to registered learners only. The programmes offered in the different levels are shown in the table below.

Different programmes offered at Centre A in 2005

Different levels	Programmes offered
ABET Level 1	Numeracy, Xhosa
ABET Level 2	Life orientation, English, numeracy, Xhosa
ABET Level 3	Technology, English, numeracy
ABET Level 4	English, Xhosa, human and social science, economic and management science , life orientation, technology and mathematical literacy
GRADE 10	Life sciences, business studies, English, civil technology, mathematical literacy, Xhosa, mathematics, life orientation, accounting
GRADE 12	Physiology, geography, mercantile law, entrepreneurship, English, accounting, biblical studies, economics, woodwork, mathematics, biology, business economics, criminology, physical science, Xhosa, home economics and Afrikaans
SKILLS COURSES	Sewing skills, computer practice, music, technology training to primary school teachers, technology and design course
ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMES	Drama club, debating society, art group, a small business centre, magazine centre, choir groups

(Source: Adapted from timetable as provided by Centre Manager 28 March 2006)

The formal academic programmes offered at Centre A include ABET Level 1-4 courses and FET courses for Grade 10 and 12 learners. Apart from the formal academic courses the centre offers a variety of training programmes that include computer classes, sewing skills and fashion design, as well as music and driving tuition. The Centre also offers courses to school teachers in the field of technology and a number of courses that are classified as “enrichment courses” on the timetable that was provided by the Centre Manager. “Skill courses”, as they are classified by the centre, are offered in addition to the formal academic courses

(although at FET level practical subjects also form part of the curriculum). A number of enrichment programmes are also offered to learners, including a drama club, debating society and a business school. A drawback, as expressed by the centre manager, is that the training courses are not accredited courses and for these the Centre gives its own certification. According to the centre manager getting accreditation for their courses from Umalusi and the different SETAs is difficult and they have decided to give up on the process. Funding for the training programmes are obtained from alternative sources such as businesses and fund-raising efforts by the centre, and not from the WCED.

From the data provided by WCED EMIS and the Centre Manager it was confirmed the Centre registered 1302 learners in 2005. Of the 1302 learners 872 are female and 430 are male. The table below shows the number of learners registered according to the different levels.

Total number and percentage (rounded off) of learners according to the different levels at Centre A in 2005

ABET LEVEL 1	ABET LEVEL 2	ABET LEVEL 3	ABET LEVEL 4	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12	TOTAL
8	11	17	534	104	0	628	<b>1302</b>
1%	1%	1%	41%	8%	0	48%	

(Source: Adapted from WCED EMIS 2006)

The statistics show that this CLC mainly caters for FET and ABET level 4 learners, especially those studying for the Grade 12 Senior Certificate. The majority of learners at the CLC (56%) have registered for FET subjects; with 732 learners out of a total of 1302 are either in Grade 10 or 12. Furthermore when comparing the two levels at which qualifications are offered (ABET L4 and Grade 12) it was found that 89% (1162 out of 1302) of the learners are found at these two levels. Very few learners (36 out of 1302) are registered at the three ABET levels that focus on acquiring basic literacy skills which is considered a key target group by the national policy documents for ABET.

According to the manager and educator at the Centre, there is a strong need for training programmes that target the unemployed in the local community such as bricklaying and motor mechanics, as these are skills, according to the educator, which “they can apply in their real life”. It is difficult to establish whether this view reflects real employment opportunities in the community or if it is just a general perception held by the educator. The centre offers a range of training programmes but, as emphasised by the centre manager, most of the training programmes implemented are a result of the centre conducting its own fund-raising efforts and receiving sponsorships and not due to financial assistance from the WCED. The centre manager further indicated that the centre has the necessary infra-structure and educators to implement the training programmes on a larger scale but faces financial constraints.

A number of challenges relating to the implementation of training programmes were mentioned by the centre manager and educator at the CLC that are summarised below:

- Language barriers that learners face because of having to do courses in English that are not in their mother tongue as “students from the township struggle with technical subjects because of language problems” (Educator at Centre A. Interviewed on 28 March 2006);
- The lack of accreditation of training courses offered by the centre impacts negatively on the value learners “looking for papers” (direct quote by educator, meaning a certificate or formal qualification) put on the courses offered;
- The difficulty in getting accreditation from the different SETAs for skills training;
- Time constraints facing the learners who have to attend classes in the evenings.

A major constraint according to the Centre Manager is the pressure being exerted on both teachers and learners at the Centre by the requirements of the academic programmes where the Centre has to ensure that learners are adequately prepared

to write the formal examinations. This, according to the centre manager, leaves little time for learners to participate in non-exam courses. She comments that

we are like a school in disguise, where at the end we are following syllabi to write exams  
(Centre Manager at Centre A. Interviewed on 28 March 2006)

According to the Centre manager, learners come to enrol at the centre because of the “reputation of the centre” (implying that there is a perception from learners that the programmes offered there are of a high quality) and as a result of different recruitment drives in the local communities. The Centre also offers a bus service to learners that need to travel long distances after class. At the Centre arrangements were made to guide and advise learners on both learning and possible career paths. Each level has an educator allocated to give advice to learners, but as explained by the Centre Manager, the career guidance is done on a voluntary basis as no allocation for learner counselling is received from WCED. Despite the arrangements made at the CLC, in most cases no guidance to learners is actually provided as educators are too busy with their teaching duties.

The response from both management and educators at Centre A was that there were no processes in place at the CLC to implement the policy of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). According to them the administrative requirements of RPL is considered a burden to the centre especially in view of the fact that they enrol large numbers of learners at the beginning of the year. Access to the various programmes at the CLC was gained through interviews and learner’s placement test required by Provincial policy. According to the Centre manager “we still use the school system, where the learners have to bring information from the last standard passed and school attended. Not using RPL. It is too difficult to implement” (Centre Manager of Centre A. Interviewed on 28 March 2006).

In assisting learners to gain access to other than the schools-based education and training programmes, the centre networked with a local FET College. According to the Centre manager attempts were made to initiate cooperation between the CLC and a nearby FET College. It was suggested at the time that the CLC

become a satellite campus of the College. According to the centre manager the plans did not work out due to the College serving a “different clientele” (referring to learners that could afford the high fees asked by FET colleges) and the courses were “too expensive for our learners”. The agreement between the two is now limited to one of mutual promotion (advertising the courses of each other at their institutions) and referring learners at the FET College that could not afford the fees to the CLC.

### **6.3 A profile of education and training provision at Centre B**

Centre B can be considered a new centre and was only established in 2003, as a response to the shift in the focus of the ABET sub-Directorate, where partnerships with business and other government departments required Centres to be open during working hours from 8:00 to 16:00 from Monday to Friday. The centre is situated close to Cape Town and is housed in a vacated school building where the former school has moved to new premises. The Centre shares the building with another government department that offers lifeskills programmes for children living on the street. The Centre uses seven classrooms and has a resource centre and two offices.

According to the centre manager and educator interviewed, the community it serves is unique. The centre provides classes predominantly to employees from various government departments. The purpose of the classes was for the “employee to get a qualification”. No learners from the surrounding area are registered at the centre, although the centre manager admitted a need exists for ABET classes in the area, especially from young people that dropped out of the local schools.

The Centre offers programmes in ABET Level 1-4 and Grade 12 and employs 11 teachers on a contract basis. Seven of the teachers are retired school teachers while the other 4 are qualified ABET teachers, who work part-time at the Centre. The Centre manager has been seconded from a local high school and also serves as a full-time curriculum advisor at the EMDC. The Centre has appointed a site-

coordinator to manage the activities of the Centre when the Centre manager is not available. All the courses offered in the ABET levels are Unit Standards-based. The programmes offered in the different levels are shown in the table below.

Table Different programmes offered at Centre B

Different Levels	Programmes offered
ABET L1	English, Numeracy
ABET L2	English, Numeracy
ABET L3	English, Life and Social skills
ABET L4	English, Life Orientation, Mathematical Literacy
GRADE 12	Introduction to Criminology, Ethnology, Biology, Afrikaans, Xhosa

(Source: Adapted from timetable as provided by Centre Manager: March 2006)

The Centre is not reflected on the WCED EMIS (for reasons I have been unable to ascertain) and the relevant information on learner numbers had to be sourced from the Centre Manager and records of the Centre. The table below shows that the Centre has enrolled 176 learners in 2006. Most of the learners at the Centre are female (93 of the 176). Most learners (72%) cannot be considered ABET learners as they are in Grade 12. In comparing the two “qualification” levels (ABET L4 and Grade 12) at the Centre with the learners enrolled at other levels, it was established that 83% (147 out of a total of 176) of the learners are enrolled at these two levels.

Total number and percentage of learners according to the different levels at Centre B

ABET LEVEL 1	ABET LEVEL 2	ABET LEVEL 3	ABET LEVEL 4	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12	TOTAL
10	9	10	19	0	0	128	<b>176</b>
6%	5%	6%	11%	0	0	72%	

Source: Totals as provided by the Centre Manager at Centre B (28 March 2006)

Although the Centre does not currently offer any training programmes, both the centre manager and educator drew attention to the lack of suitable venues and educators and financial constraints as possible future challenges. With regards to providing the learners' access to alternative education and training programmes, there are no linkages between the CLC and any FET colleges and/or SETAs. No referral systems are in place to advise learners on other education and training opportunities available. No reasons could be provided for the lack of cooperation with other education and training providers, although respondents agreed there was a need for it.

Learners are made aware of the ABET courses through the human resource sections of the government departments in which they are employed. Employers are informed through notices and awareness campaigns at their workplace. The two learners interviewed at the centre became aware of the classes at a Careers Exhibition held by the government departments, where they were encouraged to attend the classes.

RPL at Centre B is not implemented and the learners have to write a placement test at the time when they are admitted at the Centre for the first time. Based on the scores they achieve in the test, they are placed at a particular level.

Sometimes, as the Centre Manager at Centre B explains, "learners score very low on the mathematics assessment" resulting in them being placed at a lower level in mathematics than literacy programmes. This is reflected in the case of Learner 1 interviewed at Centre B who was placed at a lower level than when he originally left school 21 years ago. He left school halfway through Standard 8 (now Grade 10), but is attending classes in ABET level 4 (equivalent to Grade 9 or Standard 7). As only two learners were interviewed at the particular Centre, no conclusions can be drawn as to whether this was a widespread occurrence or an isolated incident.

No specific structures are in place at the Centre to guide learners on different learning opportunities. However, as emphasised by the Centre manager, guidance on education and training opportunities is done by the respective Human

Resource sections of the different employers as part of their Workplace Skills Plans. The responsibility thus lies with the employer and not the CLC.

#### 6.4 The picture emerging from the two sites

Although tasked with implementing both adult basic “education” and “training” programmes, the picture that emerges from the case studies reflects a different reality. The table below compares the enrolments at the two centres and it shows that

1. The majority of the learner population are not ABET learners, but FET learners. Of the 1478 learners at the two centres, **59%** are FET learners and only **41%** are ABET learners;
2. Most learners (52%) are at Grade 12;
3. There are only a few learners enrolled at ABET Levels 1-3 (**4%** percent of all the learners). It is not within the scope of the present of the present study to explain the low enrolment at the lower levels, but critical for future studies.
4. The majority of the learners (**89%**) are at the two qualifications levels (ABET Level 4 and Grade 12).

Table: A comparison between the total enrolments per level at Centre A and B in 2005

	ABET LEVEL 1	ABET LEVEL 2	ABET LEVEL 3	ABET LEVEL 4	GRADE 10 (NQF 2)	GRADE 11 (NQF 3)	GRADE 12 (NQF 4)	TOTAL
Centre A	8	11	17	534	104	0	628	<b>1302</b>
Centre B	10	9	10	19	0	0	128	<b>176</b>
Total no. of learners (overall % in brackets)	18 (1%)	20 (1%)	27 (2%)	553 (37%)	104 (7%)	0	756 (52%)	<b>1478</b>

Who are the learners? What motivates them to come the classes and what type of ABET programmes are offered to them at the two CLCs? The study found that there is a significant difference between the target groups at Centre A and B. At Centre B, the target groups are those already employed at the workplaces of the different government departments who can pay to have their employees access the ABET services. The ABET service at that Centre can be offered at convenient days and times that suits the employee and the employer. In contrast, Centre A targets the employed and unemployed learners from disadvantaged areas.

### Learner motivation for attending ABET classes at Centre A

#### Learner 1

She was 24 yrs old and left school in 1997 in the middle of grade 9. At the time of the study she was living with her boyfriend and has a young child of three years old. She is attending classes for the first time and has enrolled for ABET Level 4 classes and has registered for English, Human and Social Science, Economic and Management Science and Mathematical Literacy. She works at a fish factory on a contract basis and is looking for more permanent employment. She is interested in helping people and when at school aspired to be a nurse.

#### Learner 2

He left school in 1983 when he was in Standard 2 [*Grade 4*] in the former Transkei. He moved to the Western Cape 7 years ago. He left Transkei because he could not find work there. He has been doing ABET for the last three years where he started in ABET L2. He is now doing ABET Level 4 and has registered for English, Xhosa, Human and Social Science, Technology and Mathematical Literacy. He is employed at a local supermarket chain as a baker.

Learner 1 saw coming to class as a means “to improve herself” as she has a young child to take care of. She only recently found work at the fish factory and wanted to make sure she “gets her matric.” The second respondent remarked that he has been attending ABET classes for a number of years. He started at ABET Level 2 where he learnt how to read and write. He now works in a supermarket as

a baker where he is in line for promotion and is being “pressured” by his supervisor to finish his schooling.

The reasons for coming to ABET classes the following responses were given:

“Hardship, and I decided to better myself” (1<sup>st</sup> learner respondent interviewed on 28 March 2006)

“There is a lot of pressure at work [*from his supervisor*] to get a Standard 10 certificate”

(2<sup>nd</sup> learner respondent interviewed on 28 March 2006)

#### Learner motivation for attending ABET classes at Centre B.

##### Learner 1

He was 38 yrs old and left school in 1985 in the middle of Standard 8 [*Grade 10*]. He is now doing ABET Level 4 and is registered for English, Life Orientation and Mathematical Literacy. He works at a state hospital and is responsible for filing of folders of patients. He has been working there since leaving school and has never been considered for promotion.

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##### Learner 2

She left school in 1974 in Standard 4 [*Grade 6*] because of financial circumstances as her parents had 8 children and she had to help with supporting the family. She was 42 years old. She is currently working as a general assistant at state hospital and according to her, she felt ashamed of not being able to read and write properly. She is doing ABET Level 4 and is also registered for English, Life Orientation and Mathematical Literacy.

Both learners interviewed expressed the view that the main reason for resuming their studies is related to the world of work and the achievement of better qualifications. The first learner respondent related that he worked at the same place for 21 years and, due to his low qualification; he had been overlooked for promotion at work because he does not have a Grade 12 certificate. He further related that in the Life Orientation course he gained valuable knowledge and skills

to “better understand his daughter”. He related that the content of the learning area dealt with understanding family and community dynamics and made him aware of different skills needed when dealing with conflict in family situations.

The second learner respondent has worked at the same government department for over 20 years. She responded that she was tired of doing the same work and “needed to improve” herself. According to her the skill of improving her handwriting was the key motivator for wanting to attend classes and therefore she found the classes useful. She elaborated that the educators helped her a lot in the literacy class as they are very supportive and patient with her. On the reasons for attending ABET classes, the following statements were made

“I needs Standard 8 [*Grade 10*] at least to get promotion but don’t have formal qualifications” (1<sup>st</sup> learner respondent interviewed on 31 March 2006)

“I am currently working at the same place for 20 years. I now want a better job. Want to learn more so that it helps me with looking for another job”.

(2<sup>nd</sup> learner respondent interviewed on 31 March 2006)

Both the Centre manager and educator said that the learners are not at the Centre for any reasons other than to achieve a qualification. They perceive skills training as being too time consuming (according to them skills training needs more time than academic courses). The two learners interviewed shared the sentiments expressed by the centre manager and educator that their biggest need was to obtain an academic qualification that is relevant to their current employment needs. One of the learners (learner 1) felt it would be useful to do courses that are more in his field of work, such as learning how to use the computer and to be able to write reports as this would improve his work performance.

In both these circumstances the research found the key motivation for attending ABET classes was primarily to achieve a qualification at ABET Level 4 with the

belief (untested) that this would provide access to further learning and promotion opportunities at their respective workplaces. The crucial skills as identified by learners were those that would enhance their performance in the workplace. Computer skills were identified by the learners interviewed as the most critical skill to learn.

### The integration of education and training

National policy emphasises an integrated approach for ABET.

In bringing education and training together, individuals are enabled to integrate the full range of their knowledge, skills, understanding and abilities, providing them with a platform for further learning, should they so choose, and with the capacity to bring these integrated understanding to bear upon the improvement and development of their own lives and the lives of those around them.

(DoE 1997a:14)

On the basis of the information gathered at the two CLCs, the integration of adult education and adult training has not been implemented as intended in the policy vision at the two CLCs. At Centre B no “training” programmes are being offered, while at Centre A the implementation of “training” is conducted separately from the academic programmes. Both CLCs instead focus on offering academic programmes leading to Grade 12 certificates.

A number of factors were identified at the two CLCs that impacted on the delivery of “training”. The factors range from inadequate funding, language abilities of learners, infra-structure and the pressures of the formal academic programmes which absorb most of the tuition time available to the learners. The study also found that there was a perception that “training” programmes are considered time consuming and learners need more time to complete it. The educator at Centre A highlighted the limited time for “training” as a challenge that should be seen together with poor language skills of the learners that result in learners struggling to complete the “training” courses. The Centre Manager and educator at Centre B both mention time constraints as a possible factor that they needed to consider if they should implement “training”. Whether skills “training”

take more time to implement than academic programmes is a question to be considered for future studies.

Emphasis is placed on the academic programmes which lead to qualifications or credits, but in contrast the “training” programmes offered are unaccredited which result in learners being unable to accumulate credits (or obtain a qualification) for the different skills learnt if they wish to access courses at FET Colleges. The difficulties in getting accreditation for different skills training programmes from the relevant SETAs were raised by the Centre manager at Centre A. Although the role of different education and training programmes offered by SETAs is beyond the scope of the mini-thesis, it is widely acknowledged by providers in the field that the accreditation process for implementing skills training is a difficult process:

... we would like to see a simplified but rigorous process. Providers go to all the Setas and end up at Umalusi, angry and confused, and communication breaks down. Many argued that there needs to be a closer interface between the regulatory framework, the quality assurance system and the dynamics of provision, so that there is an overall system with different component parts that speak to one another.  
Umalusi (2005:39)

The study also found that there were few linkages with other training providers to enable the learner to access other types of training programmes. According to the centre manager at Centre A, FET colleges are considered “too expensive” for their learners at the centre. Instead both centres offer school-based academic FET courses to the adult learner as prospective courses when learners complete ABET Level 4. With regard to knowledge of the different education and training programmes available on the NQF, none of the learners interviewed were aware of the potential opportunities available.

### Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL can be seen as a key to providing the adult learners accelerated access to education and training opportunities and as a means to accredit evidence of

learning that has been acquired formally, informally and non-formally. However in practice the prior learning experiences, whether formal, informal or non-formal, of the adult learners are being ignored when seeking access to ABET programmes. Both centres admitted that RPL was too difficult a process to implement and instead give learners a “test” to place them at a particular ABET level. Within the provincial policy guidelines no mention is made of how RPL should be implemented and how the process will be supported and it is therefore no surprise that at both Centres there were no documents or policies relating to RPL.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The key aim of the mini-dissertation was to explore the policy implementation of adult education and training at CLCs in the Western Cape. The question asked was “how are adult education and training programmes being implemented at CLCs in the Western Cape?”

#### **7.2 Summarising the problems**

Globally there are a complex variety of definitional discourses in the field of adult education, which are subject to fashion and development. The introduction of training to the field of adult education resulted in adult education being divided into two types of provision, vocational “training” on the one hand, that attempts to provide answers to the individual’s strategy of material survival, while “education” on the other hand attempts to give answers to the individual’s personal or community development needs. Influenced by human capital theory the concept of adult learning has increasingly been equated with the needs of the economy and the marketplace which resulted in new ways in which adult learners were encouraged to learn, where the achievement of qualifications has become an end in itself.

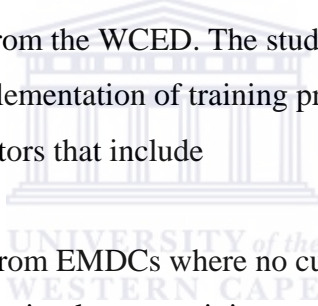
The shift effectively resulted in a form of adult education that focuses on “having” rather than “being”. The Freirian approach in contrast sees adult education as a tool for societal transformation. The value of the Freirian approach is that instead of taking a narrow perspective of modern societal change, it promotes the role of education in supporting learners to develop a critical understanding of major modern problems and the changes that go hand in hand with the advancement of society with the main aim of achieving a just and equitable society.

In South Africa's history the worlds of education and training developed separately and barely communicated with one another. Under apartheid, adult education had operated within a generally hostile environment where little provision was made for practical training opportunities for adult learners by the main adult education providers, namely the NGO sector or the apartheid state. The consequences of past neglect by the apartheid state resulted in the new democratic government inheriting a fragmented system for adult education, where few linkages between the different state departments or the private sector and non-governmental organisations or education and training existed.

Immediately prior to 1994, the issue of the integration between education and training was considered as one of the most challenging points of early debates on a proposed NQF where the development of adult education policy was considered a critical element of the national processes that took place to develop new policy frameworks for all aspects of the education and training system. The outcome of these processes for the adult education sector was a “new” adult basic education and training (ABET) system which was placed in the hands of the National Directorate for Adult Education and Training of DoE. The institutions entrusted by the Department of Education for implementing the structured ABET courses were the Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) in the various Provinces.

The data shown in Chapter 5 indicates that since its establishment in 1996, the ABET sub-Directorate in the Western Cape managed to meet a key goal set by A *National Multi-Year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training: Provision and Accreditation* (October 1997) with an increase in enrolment from 8000 learners in 1996 to 28 831 in 2005. However, unlike the inclusive and broad concept of adult education adopted by EFA that promoted all kinds of delivery systems whether they were formal, non-formal or informal education, ABET at the different CLCs in the Western Cape modelled its practices and curriculum on the formal school system including the move towards a Outcomes-Based curriculum; the use of school teachers on a part-time basis; new funding models based on learner numbers, and a strong focus on formalised assessment at all ABET levels.

Chapter 2 has discussed human capital theory where the concept of training has become strongly linked to the field of adult education as a means to satisfy the needs of the individual in the economy. The statistics obtained from the WCED suggests that there was only rhetorical commitment to the skills needs of the Western Cape when providing ABET. Very little integration of the academic and practical training programmes has occurred between 1996 and 2005 at the various CLCs. The figures from WCED EMIS shows that in 2005 a mere 6% (1630 learners) of the ABET learners in the Province were involved in some form of training. This data shows that training programmes were not considered on equal footing with the academic programmes offered by CLCs in the Province. Unlike EFA that promoted various delivery forms, whether they are formal or informal education delivery, WCED classified all programmes not part of the formal Unit Standards-based curriculum as “other” programmes on their EMIS system. The “other” programmes were initiatives from CLCs that were largely implemented without financial support from the WCED. The study also highlights the lack of financial resources for implementation of training programmes in the Province was due to a number of factors that include

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- A lack of support from EMDCs where no curriculum support is in place for CLCs wishing to implement training programmes.
  - Financial constraints faced by CLCs when implementing training programmes. The dilemma facing CLCs is that when choosing any programmes other than the formal Unit Standards-based ABET curriculum, they will not receive continued or additional funding from the WCED.
  - The lack of funding to employ full-time suitably qualified personnel to implement training programmes. The CLCs depend on school teachers to implement their programmes, few of whom had the necessary technical skills and/or training.

In the tradition of human capital theory the scope of adult education has been considerably narrowed in the Western Cape with the rise in prominence of the national ABET Level 4 (NQF 1) examination after 2001. The objective of

meeting the demands of the nationally determined Outcomes removed learning from the everyday context of the learners. The ABET Level 4 qualifications became a key indicator of the success of a CLC and learners needed to invest more time in preparing their portfolios and other administrative requirements needed from the quality assurance bodies. The study argues that the focus on the achievement of a formal qualification resulted in the marginalisation of other types of non-examinable areas of learning and training programmes. The statistics provided by WCED, suggest that ABET provision is dominated by the needs of learners to have access to a formal academic qualification. The data shows that

- 61% (17 687) of the learners at CLCs in the Western Cape are accessing ABET programmes at the two qualification levels (ABET Level 4 and Grade 12)
- 59% (16 938) of the learners, as defined in the policy documents, cannot be considered as ABET learners. These learners access FET (Grade 10 to 12) programmes at different CLCs in the Province.

The findings at Centre A and Centre B further shows that the two CLCs reflect the provincial situation, and most of the learners at the two Centres are found in the FET Band and/or at ABET Level 4. Very few adult learners are offered programmes at ABET levels 1-3. The finding suggests that at CLCs in the Western Cape there is a shift away from practices that see adult education as a lever for socio-economic and cultural ideological changes as envisaged by the DeLors Commission, where the two CLCs have become “schools for adults”. Taking into account the statistics presented by the Department of Transport (2003:33) in Chapter 5 that shows that more than 600 000 of the Western Cape population have had no access to formal schooling, the above trend suggest that CLCs are not providing programmes to those in the communities most in need of ABET.

The programmes at the two CLCs strongly focus on meeting the requirements of the formal curriculum and the various forms of assessment instead of seeing learning as a “critical process to understanding their material reality, which is moving and changing” (Freire, 1972:51). While Centre B made no attempt to

offer training programmes as their key focus was on ensuring that learners obtain the required qualifications, Centre A offers a significant range of both formal and informal training programmes. The training programmes at Centre A are however run separately with little integration between the academic and training programmes to support the adult learner in developing an integrated understanding of their material reality. The emphasis is placed on the academic programmes only, which lead to qualifications or credits, but in contrast the “training” programmes offered at Centre A are unaccredited, which results in learners being unable to accumulate credits (or obtain a qualification) for the different skills learnt. A key stumbling block identified by both centres was the requirements of the formal academic programmes (specifically the assessment requirements) which leave little time for the delivery of training programmes. The factors identified by both Centres as impeding the implementation of training programmes ranges between inadequate funding, language abilities of learners and the lack of suitable venues.

The study found the key motivation for learners attending ABET classes was to achieve qualification at ABET Level 4 with the belief (untested) that this would provide access to promotion opportunities at their respective workplaces. The most useful skills identified by the learners in the study were those that may help them in the workplace, such as computer skills. At Centre B, education is a “service” to those who can pay to achieve the qualifications. Little of the learners’ prior knowledge is taken into account when seeking access to education and training programmes and access is gained only when learners either provide evidence of previous learning or subject themselves to a placement test.

The study also showed the lack of collaboration between WCED (and CLCs) with other education and training providers such as FET Colleges and SETAs. The study in Chapter 5 showed that an area in need of future studies is the lack of opportunities that exist for adult learners to transfer credits across the different ABET providers, each who have their own examination body and/or Qualification Authority.

The study of ABET in the Province and at the two sites studied, showed that the integration of *education* as the base for learners to improve their lives and *training* linked to the income-generating or occupational skills has not been implemented as intended. Both provincially and at the two CLCs few learners have had access to integrated adult education and training programmes. Instead, the ABET programmes strongly promote the achievement of the individual through its various forms of assessment and largely ignore the role of the learner as a member of a social and/or cultural group. As described by one of the interviewees “we are like a school in disguise, where at the end we are following syllabi to write exams” (Centre Manager A. Interviewed on 28 March 2006).

The problem that gave rise to the study was to determine how ABET was implemented in the Western Cape and to find answers to the question of “what exactly is the nature of the relationship between adult education and training”? Throughout the study the tensions that exist in the relationship between education and training has been highlighted. At CLCs in the Western Cape ABET has taken on the form of the schooling system with little integration occurring between education and training.

A number of questions were left unanswered in the study such as which comes first, “education” or “training” or do CLCs provide “integrated education and training” or “parallel education and training”? What is not considered, and critical for future implementation is that for very poor adults, education and training programmes “need to offer very clear, concrete and immediate reasons to justify enrolment and ensure perseverance” (Thompson 2002:108). In conclusion, I wish to draw on Edward French who argues that

The idea of integration in education and training is rich. As an ideal, it has a long history. But, as a practical reality on a large scale, it is difficult to find examples of completely successful integration.  
(SAQA 1997:17)

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

Name of interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

#### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CENTRE MANAGERS AND EDUCATORS

1. What types of education and training programmes are being offered at the Community Learning Centre?
2. In your opinion, are the programmes based on the needs of the community being served?
3. What other types of programmes (e.g. non-formal courses) does the CLC offer?
4. Do you do needs analysis as learners enter the Centres? If yes, how?
5. How does the Centre take into consideration the prior learning experiences of adult learners?
6. How are the learners learning pathways at the Centre determined and who is responsible for guiding the learners?
7. In your view, what are the main challenges for implementing skills-based training programmes?
8. What relationship does the Centre have with FET Colleges, SETAs or any other training providers?
9. How have the Centre approached the introduction of skills-based training programmes at the CLC?
10. How would you ideally see the implementation of skills-based training programmes at the CLC?

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS

Name of interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

*The researcher starts with a general discussion to obtain a brief background on the learners.*

1. What motivated you to come to adult classes?
2. In your opinion, are the programmes offered relevant to the community being served by the Community Learning Centre?
3. As a learner, what type of ABET programmes do you think the CLC should offer?
4. How were your needs determined when you came to the Centre?
5. Were your prior learning experiences taken into consideration at the Centre? if yes, how?
6. Were alternative education and training learning pathways presented to you?

## APPENDIX C

### SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULES AT CENTRE A and B

#### Centre A

	Interviewee	Date	Time	
			From	To
1	Centre Manager: Ms	28 March 2006	15:30	16:30
2	Educator: Mr.	28 March 2006	17:00	17:45
3	Learner 1: Ms	28 March 2006	18:00	18:30
4	Learner 2: Mr.	28 March 2006	18:40	19:30

#### Centre B

	Interviewee	Date	Time	
			From	To
1	Educator: Mr.	28 March 2006	10:00	10:40
2	Centre manager: Mr.	31 March 2006	09:15	10:00
3	Learner 1: Mr.	31 March 2006	10:15	10:45
	Learner 2: Mrs.	31 March 2006	11:00	11:30

## **APPENDIX D**

**To: Mr. R. Cornelissen**

**SUBJECT: Research studies at two Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in the Western Cape.**

Permission is hereby sought to use information towards my mini-dissertation for the M.Ed degree offered by the University of the Western Cape. The key focus of the research is to investigate the extent to which education and training is being integrated and implemented at Community Learning Centres in the Western Cape.

The study aims to gather data on

- The different type of education programmes being offered by CLCs?
- The different types of training programme being offered by CLCs?
- How recognition of prior learning is being conducted at the different CLCs.
- The type of support and/or career guidance and counselling facilities for learners at the different sites.
- The availability of further education and training opportunities available for learners either at the CLC or at FET Colleges.
- The Centre Managers and educators role in conducting needs analysis and informing learners on different education and training pathways available.
- Links with other education and training providers e.g. FET Colleges and SETAs.

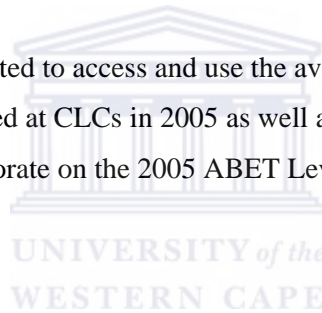
The study will make use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Centre Managers, educators and learners at the two selected sites will be expected to complete a questionnaire and make themselves available for an interview. The dates and times will be negotiated with the respondents at a time that will suit the Centre and not impact on the teaching and learning process. I also give an undertaking to adhere to the ethics codes pertaining to this types of research and assure the WCED that all information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality

All participants will also be informed of:

- The aims, objectives and methods of the research to all parties concerned.
- The maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity by eliminating any kinds of materials or information that could lead others to identify the subjects or subjects involved.
- Participants right to refuse to take part in the research.

## **REQUEST**

- (1) That permission be granted for doing the research at two approved sites in the Province in March 2006 that are offering both GET and FET in Metropole Central. Please note that permission will be sought from the Centre Manager of the CLC once permission has been granted by the Research Directorate of the Western Cape Education Department
- (2) That permission be granted to access and use the available statistics from the Annual Survey conducted at CLCs in 2005 as well as the statistics provided by the Examinations Directorate on the 2005 ABET Level 4 examination



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Mr. R. Larney  
6 March 2006

## APPENDIX E

The Centre Manager

**SUBJECT: Permission to conduct research studies at the centre.**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Permission is hereby sought to conduct research for my mini-dissertation for the M.Ed degree offered by the University of the Western Cape. The key focus of the research is to investigate the extent to which education and training is being integrated and implemented at Community Learning Centres in the Western Cape.

The following participants are needed in the research: Two ABET L4 learners an ABET educator and the the Centre Manager.

The participants are requested to make them available for an interview at a date and time that will suit the Centre and not impact on the teaching and learning process. I also give an undertaking to adhere to the ethics codes pertaining to these types of research and assure the Centre that all information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. The interview questions are attached.

All participants will also be informed of:

- The aims, objectives and methods of the research to all parties concerned.
- The maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity by eliminating any kinds of materials or information that could lead others to identify the subjects or subjects involved.

It is also further requested that the Centre provide the researcher with the timetable of the centre and other relevant information that may enhance the study.

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Mr. R. Larney (Student Number 50478044)

Date: 16 March 2006

## APPENDIX F

### SUBJECT: Permission to be a participant in research studies

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

I request permission for you to form part of the research for my mini-dissertation for the M.Ed degree offered by the University of the Western Cape. The key focus of the research is to investigate the extent to which education and training is being integrated and implemented at Community Learning Centres in the Western Cape.

As a participant you are requested to make yourself available for interview at a date and time that will suit you and the Centre and not impact negatively on the teaching and learning process. I also give an undertaking to adhere to the ethics codes pertaining to these types of research and assure the Centre that all information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Yours faithfully

\_\_\_\_\_  
R. Larney (Student number 8722265)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ a (designation) \_\_\_\_\_ at

(Name of Centre) \_\_\_\_\_ agree to be part of the  
research and have been informed of my right not to take part.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

### Structure of courses offered at State night schools in the 1970s

#### (a) Literacy courses (one year or 40 school weeks)

It was considered as a foundational course, which consisted of mother tongue literacy. Literacy certificates were provided to acknowledge the technique used in becoming literate as well as the language in which it has been achieved.

#### (b) Preparatory courses (one year or 40 school weeks)

This was a further course for 'semi literates', which aimed to take them up to Standard 2 level and consisted of communication and calculation and the introduction of the local environment as a field of study. According to the DET the purpose of the introduction of this field of study was so that the adult learner could embrace the environment in the Province and the Homeland area.

#### (c) Course I

A course of 1-year covering the Standards 3 and 4 school levels.

#### (d) Course II

The Standard 5 course over 1 year after which the first external examination was written.

#### (e) Course III (Standard 8)

This course was aimed to prepare the adult learner for the Standard 8 external examination. The duration of this course depended on the number of subjects taken and completed in one particular year.

#### (f) Course IV (Standard 10)

The course was aimed to prepare the students for the Senior Certificate or Matriculation Exemption Examination

*(Source: Literacy in South Africa. Proceedings of the Literacy '78 Conference convened by the Human Sciences Research Council. Johannesburg. July 1978)*

## APPENDIX H

The table below shows the position of Adult Basic Education in relation to formal schools, Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges and Higher Education and Training Institutions within the NQF.

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATIONS		BAND
5-8	Diplomas, Occupational Certificates, degrees, higher degrees, professional qualifications, doctorates, further research degrees		Higher Education and Training Band
FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE			
4	Schools/ Colleges and Adult Centres		Further Education And Training Band
3	Schools/ Colleges and Adult Centres		
2	Schools/ Colleges and Adult Centres		
GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE			
1	Senior phase	ABET Level 4	General Education and Training Band
	Intermediate phase	ABET Level 3	
	Foundation phase	ABET Level 2 ABET Level 1	
	Pre-school		

*(Adapted from Policy Document ABET: DoE 1997:20)*

## APPENDIX I

### The formal outcomes-based curriculum for Community Learning Centres

ABET Level 1: Language, Literacy and Communication (20 credits)  
Numeracy ( 16 credits)

ABET Level 2 Language, Literacy and Communication (20 credits)  
Numeracy ( 16 credits)

ABET level three: Language, Literacy and communication (20 credits);  
Numeracy results in (16 credits);  
The core learning areas (84 credits)

ABET level four: As indicated below

FUNDAMENTAL CATEGORY	Credit Value	CORE CATEGORY	Credit Value	ELECTIVE CATEGORY	Credit Value
Language, Literacy and Communication	20	Arts and Culture	16	Ancillary Health Care	10
Mathematical Literacy	16	Economic and Management Science	16	Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology	10
		Human and Social Science	16	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	10
		Life Orientation	16	Tourism	10
		Natural Science	16		
		Technology	16		
		Mathematics and Mathematical Science	16		
		Additional Language	16		

Source: Adapted from *Procedure Manual for Centre Managers of ABET Centres*

WCED (2003: 6)

## APPENDIX J

Summary of types of skills programmes offered by CLCs in the Western Cape in 2005

TYPES OF SKILLS PROGRAMMES		
Art	Tiling And Paintwork	Ancillary Health Care
Computer Literacy	Building Work	Domestic Services
Fashion Design	Motor mechanics	Early Child Development
Music	Compu-Typing	Tourism
Needlework	Brickmaking	Bricklayer
Technology Teacher Education	Leatherwork	Home Economics
Learners Driving	Flower Arrangement	Fabric Painting
Educare	Horticulture	General Handyman
Sewing	Candlemaking	Glasswork And Entrepreneurship
Handwork	Electrical	Welding
Xhosa For Beginners	Electronics	

Source: Adapted from EMIS 2006

## APPENDIX K

An example of a summary sheet used for centre managers and learners (original format was in A3)

Name of interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date and time of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Date when summarised \_\_\_\_\_

	Questions	Summary of key points raised
1	types of education and training programmes being offered	
2	The programmes and community needs	
3	Other types of programmes at the CLC	
4	Conducting of needs analysis	
5	The consideration of RPL by CLCs	
6	The provision of guidance to learners	
7	Approached to the introduction of skills-based training programmes	
8	The relationship with other training providers?	
9	The determination of learning pathways	
10	the implementation of skills-based training	

## APPENDIX L

Summary of the documents accessed at the two sites in the case study.

<b>Document Summary Form</b>			
Date Received _____		Centre _____	
	Name of document	Significance	Summary of content
1	Timetable of the centre.	Provide details of classes and programmes offered and on which days schedules	List all classes offered. Indicates operational hours of the CLC Indicate which programmes, learning areas and subjects offered at the CLC. Gives names of educators and their teaching times
2	Brochure or newsletters to learners, employers and potential funders.	Provides a general profile of the CLC	Details when the centre was established and other historical information. Indicate who their target audience is. Their registration status (with the WCED) Courses that they offer Achievements of the CLC.
3	Needs survey forms	Provide a general detail of the surveys conducted by the CLC on which to base their programmes	List the types of questions asked about the local community e.g. their needs and which types of programmes they would find most relevant.
4	Summary of learners registered at the CLC	Provide details of class sizes at the various levels that learners are registered	List the total number of learners registered according to the different programmes offered at the CLC.