

ADULT LITERACY TRAINING IN THE BORDER/KEI REGION OF THE EASTERN CAPE

by

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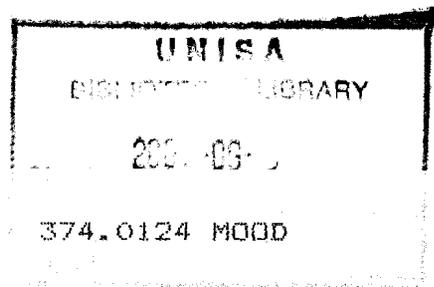
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## SUMMARY

This study concentrates on adult literacy training in the Border/Kei region of the Eastern Cape. The region is a largely rural area characterized by impoverishment. In contrast to the on-going technological progress within the country, is a high level of illiteracy, rendering communities ill-equipped to address socio-economic problems. The research problem addresses adult literacy training in the region, in the context of outcomes-based education (OBE) and other solutions. The second chapter presents a study of some international practices with regard to adult literacy training and competency-based education. General trends in the United Kingdom and Australia are examined, in order to ascertain the rationale for and approaches to, adult literacy training. The findings indicate that some of the international trends are towards competency-based education and training as a practical and relevant approach to the current economic and concomitant educational and training needs. Furthermore, government commitment is identified as essential to relevant adult literacy programmes and to ensuring the continuity of adult literacy training. Chapter three examines the current developments in the South African education system regarding adult literacy training. It also examines the possibility of an outcomes-based approach to enhance the effectiveness of adult literacy training. The findings indicate that the State is primarily responsible for ABET in South Africa. The Department of Education's policy on ABET, and the national multi-year implementation plan currently dictate the approach to adult literacy training. OBE is emphasised in terms of the learning programmes, so as to facilitate flexibility and the potential to provide the wide foundation that is essential for lifelong learning. The fourth chapter examines the effectiveness of adult literacy programmes in the Border/Kei region. The findings indicate that a lack of funding and of physical infrastructure, are two factors which hamper effective adult literacy training within the area. The fifth chapter examines a possible strategic direction for implementing OBE and other solutions, to enhance adult literacy training within the Border/Kei area. The findings indicate that there is a need to encompass an outcomes-based approach. A proposed structure for the implementation of adult literacy training in the region, is presented.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### PROBLEM FORMULATION, AIMS AND METHODS

#### 1. ORIENTATION TO THE PROBLEM

##### 1.1 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC, DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION OF THE BORDER/KEI REGION WITHIN THE EASTERN CAPE

The Eastern Cape, though spatially the second largest province in South Africa, is also one of the poorest. It is situated in the south east of the country and encompasses the former Eastern Province, Border and north – eastern Cape areas, as well as the former “homelands” of Transkei and Ciskei. In terms of population, in 1994 it numbered 7,1 million making it the third largest province. Approximately 85 percent of the population are Xhosa-speaking, who live in a largely rural area (Central Statistics Services (CSS) 1995:6-7 & 25; Erasmus 1996:1-4).

Inclusive of the Border/Kei region are the former “homelands” of the Ciskei and Transkei which are largely rural in nature. This combined region carries the largest as well as second-largest population of the Eastern Cape and is predominantly rural in nature. The population profile within this area is a large African community consisting mostly of young children, women and old people. The disproportionate male/female ratio is due to the subsistence agricultural community (traditionally the work of women and children) and the homeland migrant-labour system where men leave the community in search of employment (Erasmus 1996:1&21; Lloyd & Levin 1996:2).

In terms of functional urbanisation (cf 1.7) in the Eastern Cape, the level has increased by 4,4 per cent per year compared to the South African average of 3,3 per cent. Within the Border/Kei area most of the urban concentration is around East London/King William’s Town and, to a lesser extent, Umtata. In terms of the concentration of people in these areas, it accounts for approximately 15 per cent of the population, emphasising the fact that the majority of the people live in a largely impoverished rural community. These rural areas are isolated with poor economic prospects. They are characterised by features such as high

unemployment, low levels of remuneration, regular droughts and poor access to social and economic services (Lloyd & Levin 1996:6-8; Moodly 1997:1-3).

In terms of human development, research has indicated that South Africa can be placed among medium human development countries such as Peru and the Philippines. Yet levels for human development within the Eastern Cape, including the Border/Kei region, are placed within the low ranks with countries such as Papua New Guinea and Cameroon. This low level is reflected in the level of poverty within the area (Erasmus 1996:4).

The Eastern Cape has the second lowest life expectancy; a measure for access to health facilities as well as a general indicator of well-being. In terms of infant mortality rates, the Eastern Cape has the highest in the country. This reflects the inadequacy of infant care available. Medical facilities are generally inadequate relative to the size of the population, with a dire shortage of medical staff. As previously stated, these conditions are exacerbated in the rural areas, including the Border/Kei region (Erasmus 1996:6 & 28; Moodly 1997:1-6).

In terms of a potential economically active population, statistics indicate that the Eastern Cape was rated second lowest in the country in 1991. This can be largely attributed to the relatively large proportion of women particularly in the former Ciskei and Transkei, who are either engaged in subsistence agriculture or who are supported by workers who have migrated to other provinces (CSS 1996:68-69; Erasmus 1996:7).

The rate of unemployment is high, with many unskilled and semi-skilled migrant workers leaving the Border/Kei rural regions in search of employment in other provinces (Erasmus 1996:49; Moodly 1997:2).

According to the provincial statistics, unemployment in 1994 within the Eastern Cape was at forty-five per cent. The majority of this percentage came from the black sector of the community

(ninety-two percent), within the age group twenty to forty-four (seventy-nine per cent). Within the black sector, the majority of the unemployed were women (fifty-five per cent) with fifty-six per cent falling in the twenty to forty-four age group. Particularly within the age groups of thirty and forty-nine, the level of education ranged from none to standard five (sixty-three per cent). Two of the main reasons for not being able to find work are lack of skills or qualifications and the unavailability of suitable work (CSS 1996:68-71 & 76).

#### 1.1.1 **Adult literacy in the Border/Kei region**

In comparison to the rest of South Africa, adult literacy rates in the Eastern Cape (72,3 per cent) is well below the official national average of 82,2 per cent (Erasmus 1996:7&33). According to the Daily Dispatch (1998:1), two million Eastern Cape adults out of a total population of around 6,4 million still require some form of basic education and training. This figure is projected to increase by approximately 40 000 within the next four years, considering an annual population increase of more than two per cent. Accurate figures for the Border/Kei region are currently unavailable due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the haphazard accumulation of data of the former homelands in the 1980 census period caused the unavailability of information concerning literacy levels, and any educational statistics are difficult to find (cf Bunting 1994:215; Hartsthorne 1992:43; Steinberg & Suttner 1991:13). Furthermore, the 1991 population census undertaken by the Central Statistical Service (CSS) excludes the former homelands (Harley, Aitchison, Lyster & Land 1996:39). Although the October 1994 statistics of the CSS include the entire South Africa, a specific breakdown for the Border/Kei region is not given (CSS1996; Harley et al 1996:25).

However, for a number of reasons it is clearly indicated that the Border/Kei region has a high level of illiteracy. These reasons include the fact that this region is a predominantly rural one, with poor infrastructure, including a lack of access to educational facilities. Furthermore, the majority of the population, consisting mostly of women, children and the elderly, live in these areas (Erasmus 1996:31&36; Harley et al 1996: 30-40; Van Heerden 1991:10). This is also confirmed in research

findings by Fuller, Pillay and Sirur (1995:23-33 & 36), who indicate that Xhosa females are less literate than males. Xhosa males have significantly higher literacy levels in comparison to females, even though they may have the same level of schooling. Furthermore, it is found that urban people are more literate than rural persons and have more educational resources.

The significance of the above statistics for the Border/Kei region is directly linked to what has been previously discussed. Firstly the Border/Kei region has a majority black population with a high unemployment figure. Secondly, as a mostly rural region with a mainly female population, it has suffered severely in terms of lack of education and high levels of unemployment. There seems to be a significant link between literacy levels and employment. As authors have stated literacy or the lack thereof can affect the standard of living and therefore the socio-economic development of a community (Central Statistics Office 1994:Table; DBSA 1995:51; French 1982:100-101; Hutton 1992:17). The social value of literacy is also emphasised by a Daily Dispatch (1999:9) report which relates how rural people are being tricked by insurance agents precisely because they are “ignorant rural or illiterate clients.”

Within the new dispensation and considering the rapid changes within South Africa, there is pressure on individuals to participate as citizens, “intensifying the felt need for literacy”. Yet many South Africans do not have adequate functional literacy skills to cope with these challenges (Van Heerden 1991:14).

### **1.1.2 Literacy training within the Border/Kei region**

As previously stated (cf 1.1.1) and confirmed by the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) (1995:59), literacy levels in the Eastern Cape are of the lowest in the country. As indicated in paragraph 1.1.1 and as research suggests, improved literacy levels can be a means towards improving social and economic positions of people, as well as a means to modernisation (Witthaus 1992:4). Due to this, adult literacy has been addressed by various sectors of society, including non-governmental organisations

(NGOs), government and industry (Daily Dispatch 1998:1). They have introduced training programmes in order to improve literacy levels amongst adults for specific purposes (Withaus 1992:4).

A number of networks of literacy organisations and teachers have been established within the Border/Kei region. These include amongst others: the Adult Basic Education Extension Programme (ABEEP) – University of Fort Hare, Border Training Centre, the Department of Adult and Continuing Education – University of Transkei, Umtata Adult Literacy Centre and the Siyaphambili Institute (a number of these are discussed more fully in chapter four). Yet, research indicates that despite this, there are many problems affecting the effectiveness of adult literacy programmes (including high drop-out rates, insufficient funding, and an inability to meet the expectations of the learners). This is a national problem and includes programmes within the Border/Kei region of the Eastern Cape (Daily Dispatch 1998:1, Moodly 1997:157).

### **1.1.3 Adult literacy and outcomes-based education**

Due to the irrelevant traditional South African education, amongst other reasons, Curriculum 2005 with an outcomes-based educational approach, has been implemented since the beginning of 1998. This represents a new paradigm in education. Many educators are doubtful regarding its success, while most teachers still hold onto traditional procedures of the content-based education model. However, this model also represents hope to many functionally illiterate adults from the more disadvantaged groups. Of the countries who have implemented outcomes-based education, the United States of America (USA), Canada, Australia and New Zealand are but a few (Pretorius 1998:v-vi).

The implications of this approach are vast, impacting on amongst others: assessment of achievement, learner advancement, placement of learners and learning support material, practically a re-organisation of the education system (Pretorius 1998: xi).

The adult basic education and training (ABET) sector has not been excluded from this process. In terms of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), unit standards have been set for ABET below the general education and training (GET) band, although not so for formal schooling. These unit standards will provide a pathway for adult learners to achieve a general education and training certificate (GETC). Adult literacy and education, amongst other programmes, now forms part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Mothata 1998:21&25).

The implications for literacy programmes as part of the education system is emphasised by Lysfer's (1992:104) statement that literacy methods are not neutral, but inextricably bound to ideology. Literacy training in South Africa, and thus the Border/Kei region is bound to outcomes-based education (OBE). As previously stated it affects and determines the method of teaching, assessment criteria, learning materials used, assessment of achievement, learner advancement, placement of learners and learning support material, amongst others.

Currently, literacy programmes operate under the following conditions:

- teacher training is generally short (1-2 weeks);
- teacher follow-up and support is limited or non-existent;
- teachers tend to have less than a standard 10 education;
- learners usually only attend classes twice a week;
- learners are usually tired after a hard day's work;
- levels of learners' abilities tend to be mixed;

- there is very little suitable literature to develop learners' reading skills outside classes;
- learners generally have very little access or exposure to print (Lyster 1992:105-106).

The situation as described by Lyster has to change to accommodate the process of OBE. This leads to a number of questions, which are formulated in paragraph 1.2.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Against the background as outlined in paragraph 1.1, a need exists to investigate literacy training within the Border/Kei region of the Eastern Cape and the need to implement outcomes-based education within this.

The following questions facilitate the demarcation of the problem more clearly:

- what are the some of the international trends in adult literacy training? What is the rationale for, and what are the approaches that various education systems follow in this regard? What types of problems do these education systems encounter and what solutions do they apply to solve contemporary problems? What evaluation techniques are applied to determine the effectiveness of these programmes?
- what are the current developments in the South African education system regarding adult literacy training? What are the possibilities of an outcomes-based approach (OBE) to enhance the effectiveness of adult literacy training programmes in South Africa?
- how effective are literacy training programmes in the Border/Kei region? What are the circumstances and problems encountered within this area? What possible solutions could be implemented to solve contemporary problems?

- is there a possible strategic direction for implementing OBE and other solutions to enhance programmes offered in the Border/Kei region?

### **1.3 THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The aims of this investigation are:

- to establish some of the international trends in adult literacy training, determine the rationale for and approaches by various education systems in this regard. To determine the types of problems encountered by these education systems and the solutions they apply to solve contemporary problems. To establish the evaluation techniques applied in order to determine the effectiveness of these programmes;
- to investigate the current developments in the South African education system regarding adult literacy training. To determine the possibilities of an outcomes-based approach in order to enhance the effectiveness of South African adult literacy programmes;
- to determine the effectiveness of literacy training programmes in the Border/Kei region. To identify the circumstances and problems encountered in this area. To determine possible solutions that could be implemented to solve contemporary problems; and
- to determine a possible strategic direction for implementing OBE and other solutions to enhance programmes offered in the Border/Kei region.

### **1.4 CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

**Chapter one** offers an introduction to the investigation, the problem statement and sub-problems, aims and objectives, methods description, value of the investigation and explanation of concepts.

**Chapter two** addresses the aim of examining some of the international trends in adult literacy training. The chapter provides a review of the literature in terms of some of the international trends in adult literacy training, rationale for and approaches by various education systems of the world in this regard. It provides a literature review in terms of the types of problems these education systems encounter and the solutions they apply to solve contemporary problems. Furthermore, the evaluation techniques applied to determine the effectiveness of the literacy programmes are reviewed.

**Chapter three** addresses the aim of examining current developments in the South African education system, regarding adult literacy training. It provides a review of the literature in terms of current developments in the South African education system regarding adult literacy training. A literature review of the possibilities of an outcomes-based approach to enhance the effectiveness of adult literacy training programmes in South Africa is offered.

**Chapter four** addresses the aim of examining the effectiveness of literacy training programmes in the Border/Kei region. The chapter investigates the effectiveness of, as well as the circumstances and problems encountered by, literacy training programmes in the Border/Kei region. Possible solutions that could be implemented to solve contemporary problems are also examined.

**Chapter five** addresses the aim of a possible strategic direction and examines whether there is a possible strategic direction for implementing OBE and other solutions, in order to enhance adult literacy programmes offered in the Border/Kei region.

## **1.5 METHODS OF RESEARCH**

In order to gain new insights into, and an in-depth understanding of the theme under discussion, with a view of making a contribution to literacy training and outcomes-based education, a number of exploratory methods have been used.

### **Literature study:**

A literature study will be used to address following aims:

- some of the international trends in adult literacy training. The rationale for and approaches to adult literacy training in various education systems of the world. Problems encountered and solutions applied by these education systems. Evaluation techniques applied to determine the effectiveness of these programmes. These are examined in chapter two.
- the current developments in the South African education system regarding adult literacy training. The possibilities of an outcomes-based approach to enhance the effectiveness of adult literacy training in South Africa. These are investigated in the third chapter.
- part of the possible strategic directions for implementing OBE and other solutions to enhance programmes offered in the Border/Kei region will stem from the data collected in terms of the above-mentioned aims, which are addressed in the second and third chapters. The strategic direction is addressed in the fifth chapter.

### **Observation and interviews**

The following data has been collected by means of observation and interviews:

- the effectiveness of the literacy training programmes in the Border/Kei region. The circumstances and problems encountered in the area. Possible solutions that could be implemented to solve contemporary problems. Interviews have been conducted with specialists, in order to present the ABET experience within the Border/Kei region, as well as to enrich the literature study. This is addressed in the fourth chapter.

- part of the possible strategic direction for implementing OBE and other solutions to enhance the programmes offered in the Border/Kei region, will stem from the data collected, as mentioned above. This is addressed in the fifth chapter.

### **Case studies**

Case studies in terms of international practices with regard to approaches to literacy programmes and OBE have been selected to get a broader view. This method is used in chapter two where a study is made on the approaches to adult literacy programmes in terms of OBE. The findings of this chapter will be used as lessons for the Border/Kei region.

### **1.6 ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ABE</b>	Adult Basic Education
<b>ABEEP</b>	Adult Basic Education Extension Programme
<b>ABET</b>	Adult Basic Education and Training
<b>ACAL</b>	Australian Council for Adult literacy
<b>AETASA</b>	Adult Education Trainers' Association of South Africa
<b>ALAN</b>	Adult Literacy And Numeracy
<b>ALBE</b>	Adult Literacy and Basic Education
<b>ALBSU</b>	Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit
<b>ALO</b>	Adult Learning Opportunities
<b>AMES</b>	Adult Migrant English Services
<b>AMEP</b>	Adult Migrant English Programs
<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>ANTA</b>	Australian National Training Authority
<b>ASF</b>	Australian Standards Framework
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>CABET</b>	Centre for Basic Education and Training

<b>CBE</b>	Competency-Based Education
<b>CBE/T</b>	Competency-Based Education and Training
<b>CBVET</b>	Competency-Based Vocational Education and Training
<b>CDCs</b>	Community Development Councils
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CGC</b>	Central Government Council
<b>COSATU</b>	Congress Of South African Trade Unions
<b>CSS</b>	Central Statistics Services
<b>DACE</b>	Department of Adult and Continuing Education
<b>DEET</b>	Department of Employment, Education and Training
<b>DETAFE</b>	Department for Employment, Training and Further Education
<b>ELP</b>	English Literacy Programme
<b>ERS</b>	Education Renewal Strategy
<b>ESL</b>	English Second Language
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>ETQAs</b>	Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>FETC</b>	Further Education and Training Certificate
<b>FTEs</b>	Full-Time Teaching Equivalents
<b>GEC</b>	General Education Certificate
<b>GET</b>	General Education and Training
<b>GETC</b>	General Education and Training Certificate
<b>GNU</b>	Government of National Unity
<b>GNVQ</b>	General National Vocational Qualifications
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>IEB</b>	Independent Examinations Board
<b>LEA</b>	Language Experience Approach

<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>MTA</b>	Manpower Training Act
<b>NEPI</b>	National Education Policy Investigation
<b>NCVQ</b>	National Council of Vocational Qualifications
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Government Organisations
<b>NOOSR</b>	National Office of Overseas Skill Recognition
<b>NSBs</b>	National Standard Bodies
<b>NSF</b>	National Stakeholders Forum
<b>NTB</b>	National Training Board
<b>NTSI</b>	National Training Strategy Initiative
<b>NUM</b>	National Union of Mineworkers
<b>NVQ</b>	National Vocational Qualification
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>OBE</b>	Outcomes-Based Education
<b>OBET</b>	Outcomes-Based Education and Training
<b>OCNs</b>	Open College Networks
<b>PABET</b>	Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust
<b>PPPA</b>	People's Participation Planning and Action
<b>QCAL</b>	Queensland Council for Adult literacy
<b>RDP</b>	Reconstruction and Development Programme
<b>RPL</b>	Recognition of Prior Learning
<b>RSA</b>	Republic of South Africa
<b>SACABE</b>	South African Committee for Adult Basic Education
<b>SAQA</b>	South African Qualifications Authority
<b>SETAs</b>	Sectoral Education and Training Authorities
<b>SGBs</b>	Standard Generating Bodies
<b>SIM</b>	System of Integrated Materials
<b>SMMEs</b>	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises

<b>SYOC</b>	South Yorkshire Open College
<b>SYOCF</b>	South Yorkshire Open College Federation
<b>TAFE</b>	Technical and Further Education
<b>TESOL</b>	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNITRA</b>	University of Transkei
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>VEETAC</b>	Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee
<b>VET</b>	Vocational and Education Training

## **1.7 DESCRIPTION OF TERMINOLOGY**

In the context of this thesis, the following terms are used:

### **Adult literacy**

Many languages are used in South Africa and therefore a useful definition of literacy is especially elusive. Harley et al (1996:18-21) adopt a working definition of what it means to be an adult who is not functionally literate and who lacks basic education. "An adult person is considered to be illiterate and/or lacking a basic education who is aged 15 years or older and has received no education, or less than seven years of formal schooling (that is, less than a standard 5 level) or its equivalent."

### **Functional literacy**

According to Bramley (1991:4) functional literacy is the level of reading and writing ability needed to function effectively in society. Van Heerden (1991:3) expands on this by stating that functional literacy is actually a number of skills which include vernacular literacy, English literacy and oral communication, numeracy, post-literacy skills such as alphabetical order and map reading, a sense of administrative, clerical conventions such as signing one's name in the same way, and a very basic understanding of a modern economy in order to cope with income tax, sales tax, hire purchase and banking. Thus functional literacy

includes the basic skills of reading and writing but in a broader context include other skills which enhance the person's potential.

### **Functional urbanisation**

According to the DBSA (cf Lloyd & Levin 1996:7) people living in the vicinity of an urban area and who are dependent on the urban area for their source of income, are included in the definition of a functionally urbanised (semi-urban) population. Included in their concept of functional urbanisation therefore, are official urbanisation (area with some form of local authority) and people clustered around towns, or in peri-urban areas, as well as those parts of semi-urban areas.

### **Practitioner**

Within chapter four the term practitioner is used to refer to those involved in the education and training of adult learners. The reason for this is the diversity of terms available, including, tutor, facilitator, trainer and educator, amongst others, and the possible confusion the use of the varied terms can cause. This is emphasised in the Curriculum 2005 report (cf 3.2.2) (Chisholm, Volmink, Ndhlovu, Potenza, Mahomed, Muller, Lubisi, Vinjevold & Ngozi 2000:21) in which the unnecessary, obtuse use of language and proliferation of new terminology is criticised. The banishment of old terms for new terminology is also described as exclusionary, marginalising those who do not have a good grasp of English.

The term 'practitioner' is also preferred, since it is not an exclusive term. It reflects the responsibilities of those involved in ABET, which does not necessarily only focus on teaching (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.8).

### **Training**

Although the terms 'education' and 'training' may overlap, a distinction is made between them. In terms of the educational process, training involves the acquisition of knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills related to specific roles and tasks, in terms of practitioners, as well as learners (Motala 1992:1).

## CHAPTER TWO

### COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION AND ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMES: THE UNITED KINGDOM AND AUSTRALIA

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one (cf 1.5) it was stated that a review, in terms of some of the international trends in adult literacy training, would be one of the essential aims of this study. This chapter presents an international study on competency-based education as well as adult literacy programmes. The motivation for this study stems from the fact that South Africa is involved in the process of introducing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), applying an outcomes-based education (OBE) approach (cf 1.1.3), which is a trend in some countries, including Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) (Genis 1997:39). This chapter focuses on Australia and the UK, although references are also made to other countries at times, in order to illustrate a point.

By focusing on Australia and the United Kingdom (UK), some of the international trends in adult literacy training, are established. Choosing these countries, allows for an in-depth study of the systems, whereas a broader choice may not lend itself to such an in-depth examination and prove to be unwieldy.

Furthermore, as is evident within the chapter, both Australia and the UK embarked on competency-based education for various reasons, including as a means of integrating the cultural divide between education and training, and to improve the skills level of workers towards economic development. These are also some of the reasons for South Africa's choice of outcomes-based education. Although other countries have also embarked on competency-based education, their motivation is not necessarily the same as those of Australia and the UK, and the approach or emphasis may differ. In the United States for example, although there is more provision for competency-based education than in Britain and Australia, unlike the UK and Australia, "competency" often refers to what students can do in education rather than what they can do at work (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:53).

In Japan, on the other hand, increasing emphasis is put on both knowledge requirements and certain forms of generic competencies. However, these generic competencies do not function as an alternative orientation to, or substitute for, a knowledge-based curriculum (Kaneko 1992:71-72). There is also a move away from in-house training, to increasing knowledge requirements in order to perform specialised tasks in various fields (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:52).

The rationale for and various approaches by education systems of the UK and Australia in this regard, are determined. The types of problems encountered by these education systems and solutions they apply to solve contemporary problems are investigated. The evaluation techniques applied in order to determine the effectiveness of these programmes are studied. This assists in defining and understanding the South African NQF (and adult literacy programmes in the light thereof) more clearly.

For clarification and understanding of the frameworks, a general study of the rationale for competency-based/performance-based education and the evaluation thereof is presented before discussing adult literacy programmes. The term "competency" is firstly discussed as its use varies within the education systems of various countries.

## **2.2 COMPETENCY-BASED/PERFORMANCE-BASED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

The term "performance" in terms of performance-based learning refers to different things depending on the country in which it is being used. According to American educators in Connecticut's Pomperang Regional School District 15 (1996:5-6), performance-based learning and assessment represent a set of strategies for the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, and work habits through the performances of tasks that are meaningful and engaging to learners. This form of learning and assessment achieves a balanced approach by extending traditional fact-and-skill instruction and constitutes a better way of delivering the curriculum. Whereas traditional testing assists in answering the question "Do you know it"; performance assessment helps answer "How well can you use what you know".

In the American context, in performance-learning, the **source of the subject area content** can be derived from various areas, including already defined curriculums or by the adoption of a set of themes or topics by amongst others, the school system. **High order thinking and process skills** can be sourced from a number of disciplines and can cut across subject area lines or may be identified as areas of need. In order for an individual to be successful in life, certain **work habits** have to be adopted. These include time management, individual responsibility and intrapersonal skills, amongst others (Educators in Connecticut's Pomperang Regional District 15 1995:5-6).

The combination of content-knowledge, process skills and work habits have to be embedded in performance learning tasks, in a strategic manner so as to enhance learning as the student integrates them. (Educators in Connecticut's Pomperang Regional District 15 1995:5-6).

The emphasis in terms of the American use of "performance" is strongly related to **education**. This emphasis is also highlighted by Marginson and O'Hanlon (1993:53) who state that although there is more provision of competency-based education in the United States than in Britain and Australia, "competency" often refers to what students can do in **education** rather than what they can do at **work**.

In Australian terms "competency" defines a particular combination of knowledge, skills and other attributes underlying successful performance at **work** (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:1). This relation seems a natural occurrence considering that Australia's national competency reform agenda has been driven mostly by economic policy imperatives. According to the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET)(1991:1), education and training is a principal source of international economic competitiveness. Competency reform therefore is intended to specify more clearly the **skills and attributes** needed in each **industry**, and also to lift the general skill level of the **workforce**.

In the United Kingdom (UK), the concept of competency has become associated with a move towards more practicality in education and training (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:44).

A major problem however, is a certain lack of agreement concerning the nature of competency and its implementation. There seems to be two approaches to this concept. While the stress may be on outcomes (what one can do, rather than what one knows), it may also on a broader perspective embrace possession and development of sufficient skills and knowledge, as well as appropriate attitudes and experience for successful performance in life roles (Brady 1995:4).

The following two approaches to “competency” have been identified. One is job-related, identifying the skills to successfully perform within a given job, while the other, more broader concept includes qualities to perform a wider occupational role. Should the broader concept be used, it is important that the assessment procedures reflect this. By emphasising outcome behaviours, this could be inhibited (Brady 1995:4).

The word “competency” and its derivatives are used in a number of ways. People may be generally “competent” or specifically with regard to their occupational performance or job performance.

“Performances” however, are also described as “competency”. Authors quoted in Brady (1995:4-6) generally agree that “competencies” are complex and that there are different versions of “competency”. Furthermore, this impacts on the assessment of competency.

Whereas, according to Wolf (1995:2), competency-based assessment and competency-based education, are, in their most widely practised and preached forms, essentially American ideas, there are dramatically different institutional structures which characterise the United States on the one hand, and the UK and Australia on the other. These have produced very different patterns of implementation and growth in competency-based programmes.

### **2.3 THE UNITED KINGDOM (UK) AND COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)**

In the UK the preparation of young people for work, and the problem of unemployment, began to challenge traditional occupational education. That challenge is still developing even to the present. The National

Council of Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) was established to design and implement the competency-based National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) which would be awarded for competent performance in work activities and assessed where possible in the workplace. Recent research findings on how employers and candidates perceived competency-based qualifications indicate that most employers have heard of NVQs and that more than a quarter of employees are already using them (Harris, Guthrie, Hobart & Lundberg 1995:43).

Competency-based training stresses the importance of training for the workplace (cf 2.2). Competency as a “term of art” was adopted by the NCVQ (Mckenzie 1995:viii).

NVQs were introduced in the UK in 1987, with the emphasis on defining outcomes and concentrating on assessment. The outcomes model of defining qualifications and learning was proposed as a means of opening access to learning to more individuals across the age span, as well as a way of cost-effective and efficient learning. It would also provide a means of relating and aligning academic and vocational education and training. The NVQ framework was further extended by the introduction of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) with an emphasis on achieving parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications, providing an opportunity to implement the outcomes model in an educational context. A separate though related initiative, the development of core skills units, defined by outcomes, has also been driven by GNVQs and other programmes (Jessup 1995:33).

NVQs are defined by the **outcome** that must be achieved and not by any standard process of learning. The learning route varies from individual to individual depending on their pre-existing levels of knowledge and skill. The outcome to be achieved is expressed in terms of **competency** rather than **knowledge** alone (Randall 1996:51-52).

The outcome statements in GNVQs perform a number of tasks. They are among other things, a mechanism for encouraging certain forms of learning while not prescribing the learning programme. Furthermore, they promote active forms of learning by requiring that students demonstrate a range of cognitive, interpersonal

and practical skills, as well as an understanding of the principles, which govern them. The outcomes model is based on the assumption that learning is a personal and individual experience and that to “standardise” it by prescribing certain modes and timeframes is not the most effective means for a group to achieve a set of learning outcomes (Jessup 1995:33-34).

As discussed in paragraph 2.3.2.2, although criticised at higher levels of learning, competency-based education does seem to enjoy support, especially at the basic/lower levels (Brady 1995:3).

It is suggested that the NVQ model is moving closer towards the traditional professional model, especially in the application of the model to more complex occupations with a heavy knowledge base. Both have a common objective of ensuring that the learning processes are appropriate and effective, that they do succeed in producing an individual who performs competently in the workplace (Eraut 1996:5; Randall 1996:62).

With regard to the NVQ model, professional bodies are recognising the need to make competency in applying knowledge, a specific outcome. There is also the recognition that not only is there a body of knowledge that requires assessment, but that there is also a need for the “mastery of residual or foundation knowledge that may not be related to action but which provides context, the ability to identify problems and the capacity to deal with uncertain futures”. Synthesis between the two approaches is presently being explored (Randall 1996: 62).

### **2.3.1 The distinction between National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and traditional qualifications**

Randall (1996:51) compared the competency-based NVQs in the UK with the traditional professional model of training. NVQs were established in the wake of the DeVille Review of vocational qualifications. This review found that the existing provision of qualifications was incoherent, failed to provide for some occupations, contained barriers to access and progression, gave no credit for learning and achievement

outside the formal education system, and was strongly biased towards the testing of knowledge at the expense of skill or competency. To address these perceived problems the Council for Vocational Qualifications was created with a remit to create a system for vocational qualifications based on standards of competency and clear routes of progression to the higher levels of achievement.

The concept of the NVQ framework is that qualifications will be designed to comprehensively cover all occupational functions. There are now NVQs, and thus systematic training in workplace sectors, which previously had none. Previously, approximately half the UK workforce were either described as 'unskilled' or 'semi-skilled' and received no systematic training and qualifications relevant to the work they performed. The NVQs also encompass a far wider range of skills than those of the jobs they have traditionally performed (Jessup 1995:35).

Furthermore, the distinctive form of NVQs allow open access to learning for the maximum number of people. A wide variety of modes of learning (formal, informal, full-time or part-time and in a variety of locations) can be utilised to acquire competency. In addition to this, the unit structure of NVQs can be separately assessed and certified, providing a considerable degree of flexibility in the way in which NVQs can be built up through credit accumulation over time and in different locations (Jessup 1995:36-37).

NVQs promote learning and assessment of learning in the workplace (Burke 1995:6). As a result, competency is measured against occupational standards that reflect the needs of employment. Competency is not just knowledge, not just knowing how to do something, but being able to demonstrate in practical terms the ability to perform to a standard that is fit for the purpose of the job. This means that most of the assessment of competency will take place in the workplace, as will much of the learning that develops it (Randall 1996:51-52).

### 2.3.2 Assessment of competency-based education (CBE)

According to Burke (1995:2) assessment lies at the heart of any system of qualification. If the concept of competency is problematic, so is its assessment (Brady 1995:6). The assessment approach used in the UK in terms of NVQs is also a controversial area, in terms of the amount and nature of knowledge which underpins competency. Critics allege that knowledge is neglected in the approach and that underpinning knowledge and theory are not tested separately but are inferred. Furthermore it is stated that there is a danger that the competency-based approach with its downgrading of knowledge at the expense of action, further exacerbates the educational divide in the UK where practical activities tend to be held in low esteem (Atkins, Beattie & Dockrell 1993:7).

According to Atkins et al (1993:7) there is no standard definition of competency-based assessment. The term is used to mean “the assessment of the acceptability of the performance of a defined activity against the pre-determined standards of criteria”. The activity can require intellectual, personal or practical achievements.

Competency-based education (CBE) in the UK is criticised for being behaviouristic, in that it refers to the observable. In this version of competency, “outcomes” are referred to. Problems associated with this include when and how often these outcomes are assessed and interpreted as evidence of competency (Brady 1995:5). A relevant argument is that if one can demonstrate “competency” one must possess the underlying knowledge. This assumption is made by those in favour of a demonstration of behavioural outcomes. A criticism of this is that it reduces the significance and importance of knowledge. Knowledge and understanding in this context is apparently only recognised to the extent that these are revealed in the performance of an occupation (Atkins et al 1993:7).

In research regarding consistency in assessment in relation to NVQs, Johnson (1995:20) makes a number of statements. Firstly, it is stated that there should not be any comparisons between persons when assessing NVQs, as competency is defined as the ability to meet the performance standards consolidated by the

performance criteria. This differs tremendously from the conventional norm-referenced approach with varying degrees of excellence. Within the norm-referenced approach, the reference point against which a candidate is graded is how other candidates normally perform (Jessup 1991:47).

However, as stated by Johnson (1995:20), only two categories of either “competent” or “not competent” are now used. Thus, the scope for mediocrity or excellence does not exist; only the meeting of standards specified for the units in which the candidate is being assessed at a given time. Little attention though, has been given to criteria-referenced assessment in NVQs. Criteria-referenced assessment refers to the ability of a candidate to demonstrate an element of competency by satisfying associated performance criteria. These criteria often describe a number of activities, which the candidate should be able to perform in order to demonstrate competency in the element to the satisfaction of the assessor. The criteria thus have two facets: as objectives for the candidate; and decision-making aids for the assessor (Steadman 1995:204).

A generally acceptable quality in assessment is vital and in order to achieve this quality, it is important that the standards are understood by all who use them. This point is emphasised by Macken and Slade (1993:206) who state that learners can only take control of their learning if they understand what it is asking of them. Explicitness about language is thus also an important foundation for ensuring that all learners can participate in the education process. Since standards are described in written form, this in itself causes a number of problems. An elaborate description could result in misinterpretation. In addition to this, human activities are being judged and therefore total accuracy in assessment is never an absolute (Johnson 1995:20).

Furthermore, according to Johnson (1995:20-21), assessment based purely on observation places barriers between performance-linked and other types of knowledge and understanding. This superficial separation has been questioned and emphasis has been placed upon general occupation competency. Difficulties are experienced in interpreting the range of statements and performance criteria for units of competency.

According to Jessup (1991:48), looking at assessment as evidence collection helps one recognise that there are many sources of evidence that can be found in performance at work and outside. However, difficulty in terms of inconsistencies and misinterpretations, both in guiding literature and current practice, are also experienced within the system. Concerns are raised with regard to issues in respect of evidence collection, sustainability of evidence, matching of evidence with standards and knowing if the evidence was sufficient and of the appropriate quality. Assessors and awarding bodies also find these issues problematic and observe the need for urgent development work to address these (Jessup 1991:49-50; Johnson 1995:21-22).

In theory, NVQs focus on qualification and certification. In as much as this may be its current primary focus, there is a tendency for an assessment process to become more than just this. Already there are negotiations with higher education, for example, to accept NVQs as passes into degree courses. This also influences the decision of potential employers of these graduates whether to recognise this qualification as proof of potential for further progress (Steadman 1995:203).

According to Steadman (1995:203) the real differences emerge at the level of the purposes of different systems. The purposes of the NVQs system are to:

- increase the economic competitiveness of the country by raising skill levels across all facets of the economy;
- define standards of competent occupational performance so that training can be effectively directed to their achievement;
- increase the flexibility of the workforce;
- raise the number of workers with recognised qualifications; and

- break the stranglehold of the academic bias in existing patterns of qualification so that more emphasis can be given to practical and technical achievements (Steadman 1995:203).

In order to achieve these purposes, there is a need for certain requirements in the processes and procedures used to assess the specified outcomes, which provide proof of competent performance. The natural habitat of the NVQ system has been assumed to be the workplace, although this has not replaced institution-based provision. The reason for this is that the assessment of performance in the course of normal work offers the most natural form of evidence of competency and has a number of technical and economic advantages. However, there are areas of difficulty which need to be addressed in meeting the NVQ assessment requirements, including:

- lack of necessary skills by supervisors to combine the roles of manager, mentor and assessor;
- the size of the workplace affects the opportunity of the employee to collect the range of experience necessary to build towards NVQ statements of competency;
- the natural flow of the work affects the tasks facing an assessor, for example, in some settings there may be close contact with supervisors and therefore an abundance of paper-based records; in other settings staff movements may disrupt the relationship between mentor/assessor and trainees and additional effort may be required to document evidence;
- the oral workplace culture makes it difficult to get documentary evidence (Jessup 1991:51-54; Steadman 1995:203 &206-208).

These problems have further added to the debate as to whether institution-based or workplace assessment is best. Efforts towards an institution-workplace liaison are also not without difficulties. Assessors and verifiers are in need of practical and experientially based guidance, with examples of recorded performances on either side of acceptability. Advice and guidance is also needed on sampling of evidence,

ways to use evidence, and how to exploit natural opportunities for observation and evidence gathering (Steadman 1995:207).

As the principles behind the NVQ model are being tested in a number of new circumstances, including GNVQs (cf 2.3), assessment methods are to be reconsidered. The following assessment methods are either in use or are under active consideration for assessing performance in relation to ethical matters: mentor observation, witness of colleagues, assessment of the correct following of procedures by workplace assessors, oral questioning, interviews and vivas, reflective accounts, projective techniques, work-based projects, simulations and role play, skills rehearsal, case studies and assignments, evidence of prior achievement, and written examinations or tests. The implications for research are many. More detailed observational evidence of what happens at the point of assessment is needed. Assessors also need to be guided in their in-service training from an accurate knowledge of difficulties and successful and unsuccessful practices. Although the assessment system emphasises demonstration of performance, it produces relatively little direct evidence of its own performance at the point of assessment itself (Jessup 1991:56-58; Steadman 1995:207-208).

#### 2.3.2.1 Criticisms with regard to competency-based learning and assessment

Although the UK has adopted performance-based learning (as discussed in 2.3), there are many criticisms with regard to this approach.

One of the biggest criticisms is that greater emphasis is placed on the assessment of performance rather than on knowledge (as mentioned in paragraph 2.3.2). By focusing on competency, certain assumptions are made, namely, that competency provides occupational relevance and directly focuses on outcomes and products. It is further assumed that competency-based training seems to lend itself to technical precision due to its clarity of specification, judgement and measurement. It is also a requirement that competencies should be easy to understand, permit direct observation, be expressed as outcomes and be transferable from

one context to another. This suggests that competencies are straightforward, flexible and meet national as opposed to local standards (Norris 1991:331).

According to Brady (1995:1-2) "competency" is an elusive concept. What appears to be useful and commonsense is found, on further reflection, to be complex and possibly misleading. Furthermore, it is warned that the rapid spread of competency-based approaches should not be taken as an indication that they command universal or even widespread support. They have been criticised on a number of grounds, including behaviourism, reductionism and atomisation. There is considerable confusion and disagreement, despite the large numbers of teachers working hard to develop or implement competency-based approaches.

Marshall (1991:58-59) indicates that there may be practical difficulties in the assessment of competency which as yet remain to be resolved. The reason for this is related to the fact that competency is the embodiment of a technically oriented way of thinking which is not normally appropriate to the description of human action, or to the facilitation of the training of human beings. Furthermore, the theoretical standpoints of NCVQ procedures is also criticised. It is stated that the functionalist tradition of assessment (that is, breaking down competency into various functions), does not allow people to respond in an unexpected way and thus there is no place for alternative indicators of performance. This stifles the 'trainee's' ability to think imaginatively and would result in judgement of 'not competent'. The tautological/circular nature of the functionalist tradition is also challenged. It is said to be tautological since the purposes and outcomes of training are established by the NCVQ and are used as the basis for devising the units and elements of competency.

It is also stated that assessment in the NCVQ model is behavioural since the behaviour of the 'trainee' is observed in order to establish competency. The assessment is thus criticised as being unequivocal as it concentrates on predictable behaviour and does not cater for diverse behavioural changes/individuality which may also indicate competency. Thus it is concluded that the functionalist and behavioural background of the NCVQ model is restricting. It may be relevant to the basic training level but even here

it needs to be refined. However, for higher training levels a change in direction is recommended (Marshall 1991:62-63).

However, Burke (1995:21-22) states that one of the problems which face the NVQ is prejudice and misunderstanding. It is also stated that those who know little about GNVQs criticise them as being premised on a narrow, behaviourist approach and that this understanding influences all further perceptions or interest, resulting in a negative attitude. Burke is also critical of the criticism that there has been no proper evaluation of GNVQs. He states that no other initiative has been so extensively and diversely evaluated in the UK in terms of the timeframe from initial implementation.

Regarding the criticisms of inconsistencies in assessment of the NVQ and GNVQ system, Burke (1995:22-24) states that assessment is never perfect as it is ultimately subjective and a matter of judgement. It is also stated that assessment is at the heart of any system and that it seems to be forgotten that the existing systems that the new system is seeking to replace in the UK (as discussed in paragraph 2.3.2), are themselves filled with inconsistencies and are not perfect and unproblematic. It will be a requirement that assessors are to be trained and certified to newly published standards, demonstrating that they are able to carry out assessments to the new standard.

Jessup (1995:33) states that since the introduction of NVQs there has been a widespread belief that proponents of this model were not concerned with the learning process. It is argued however, that although a particular mode or course of learning is deliberately not specified, the manner in which the outcomes are specified, shapes the modes of learning and its content.

There is also much criticism with regard to the complexity of the language and the weight of the paperwork involved in assessment. Most criticisms also revolve around the shift from knowledge-based assessment (as discussed in 2.3.1).

According to Randall (1996:61-63) the standards are of wide application and do far more than just provide the basis for the qualification. It is also a potentially powerful tool in human resources management and in curriculum development. Within human resources development it can help inform and support a range of activities, including amongst others, recruitment and promotion exercises as well as an aid to job descriptions. Within curriculum design, the standards can assist in identifying, in a holistic manner, the body of knowledge and understanding that needs to be applied to a particular type of problem.

Steadman (1995: 208-209) questions the reliability and validity of the NCVQ position. The validity in terms of the NVQs system's unintended and undesirable consequences is currently being debated. The reliability is questioned in terms of the lack in trust resulting from the situation that the trainer is also the assessor. For these reasons, arrangements need to be made to build in quality assurance and providing safeguards at points. Assessors may be fallible, either for reasons of underdeveloped assessment skills or because of interpersonal bias.

However, according to Burke and Jessup (1990:192-195), no system is infallible and there will always be a margin of error. Whereas reliability may be vital in norm-referenced assessment, it is argued that validity is more central to criterion-referenced assessment. As the 'statement of competency' provides an external reference point for assessment in the NVQ model, the essential question of validity centres on comparing the judgements made on the evidence of competency collected against the performance criteria associated with each element, and **not** between different assessors or assessments.

A new system of assessment cannot afford to be cheap if it is to gain trust. In evaluating an assessment system, the overt as well as hidden costs have to be examined. The direct fees paid for assessment may represent only a small proportion of the total cost, depending on the amount of time expended by employees. This has been a major point of concern about new patterns of assessment. Empirical research is needed to establish a proper basis for costing such assessments and the NCVQ has commissioned studies in this area. However, the costs of the new system may be greater than that of the system being replaced.

These costs will have to be justified by the savings arising from more efficient and effective training, resulting in improvements in the quality of job performance (Steadman 1995: 210).

Despite the likelihood of increased costs, according to Wolf (1995:138), the ideas on which competency-based assessment is founded are unlikely to disappear.

## **2.4 AUSTRALIA AND COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)**

As in the UK, there has been a long-standing cultural divide between education and training, and between much of generalist higher education and employment in Australia (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:44).

However, over the last decade, increasing pressure has been placed on educational authorities by the government to meet national economic imperatives. Economic growth and international competitiveness are now conventionally seen as contingent on the capacity of the education and training system to produce a highly educated, flexible and literate workforce which is able to cope with the challenges of rapid social and economic change (Brindley 1998:45-46).

Blackmore (1988:35) notes that the primary concern of economic accountability is **outcome**, rather than process. In line with the emphasis on outcomes, major efforts have been put into the development of system-side indicators that allow the performance of educational institutions to be closely monitored and evaluated (Brindley 1988:46).

In November 1990, across Australia, competency-based vocational education and training (CBVET) was introduced into vocational and training systems as a result of a national agreement between all Ministers of Vocational Employment, Education and Training (Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee - VEETAC). It is one of a number of changes to vocational education and training that are collectively referred to as the National Training Reform Agenda. The purpose of this reform agenda is to contribute towards improvements in Australia's economic performance and competitiveness on world markets through a more educated and trained workforce. The pressure for competency-based

standards thus derives from industrial requirements for educational institutions to articulate more directly with the needs of industry; and the premise that priorities for education should serve national economic goals (cf 2.2; Strong 1995:21; Marginson & O’Hanlon 1993:2).

According to Marginson & O’Hanlon (1993:2), outside education institutions, the support for CBE is broad. Not only has CBE been associated with “flatter” structures in work organisation, but also with a more prescriptive and hierarchical division of labour at work. CBE has been presented as a method of cutting across credential inflation, as well as an additional layer of credentials. These contrasts show how competency reform is capable of taking a number of different roles (as discussed in paragraph 2.2) and that it tends towards the ubiquitous.

#### 2.4.1 Contrasts between traditional approaches and competency-based approaches

The following list provides a programmatic contrast in terms of attributes ascribed to traditional and competency-based education and training (CBE/T) approaches (Harris et al 1995:29):

<b>Traditional Programmes</b>	<b>CBE/T</b>
Content-focused	Competency-based
Time-based	Workplace performance-based
Emphasis on inputs	Emphasis on outputs
Group needs	Individual needs
Group-paced	Individually paced
Subjects	Modules/units
Little or no recognition of prior learning (RPL)	RPL as an integral component
Delayed feedback	Immediate feedback
Narrow range of learning approaches and styles (e.g. textbook focused)	More flexible delivery approaches
Limited field experience	Collaborative arrangement between workplaces and providers

Teacher/trainer as expert and provider resources of lectures, demonstrations	Teacher/trainer as resource person and mentor: one of many
Learner as receptacle	Learner more self-directed and responsible for own learning
General aim/general objectives	Specific learning outcomes
Norm-referenced assessment	Criterion-referenced assessment
Subjective criteria, often unstated	More objective criteria, publicly stated upfront
Emphasis on assessment of knowledge	Emphasis on assessment of competence
Final grades	Competent or not yet competent (or grades of competence)

There is a move from a content and group based approach of traditional learning towards a learner-centred approach as emphasised in CBE/T. There is also a shift from knowledge-based assessment to the assessment of competency. Prior learning is considered and networking among educators plays an important role within CBE/T.

#### 2.4.2 Contemporary competency reform in Australia

The Australian approach to competency-based education and training (CBE/T) has three components: vocational competencies endorsed by the National Training Board (NTB), the recognition of overseas qualifications on a competency basis by the National Office of Overseas Skill Recognition (NOOSR), and generic key competencies that the Finn and Mayer committees proposed be developed in all post-compulsory education and training pathways (Harris et al 1995:55).

The Finn Committee examined the appropriate roles of schools, Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and higher education in providing post-compulsory education and training, with a view to improve educational outcomes for all. The Finn Report was published in July 1991, making several recommendations, including competency in six key areas as mentioned in the following paragraph (Mellor, Withers, Batten, Lokan, McQueen & Carthy:1995 219).

The six key areas as identified by the Finn Committee include language and communication, mathematics, scientific and technological understanding, cultural understanding, problem solving and personal as well as interpersonal skills. Although there is an overlap between the Finn and Mayer committees' generic competencies (as discussed below), it is an indication that there is still considerable debate regarding competency in Australia. However, it is agreed that competency is holistic and that competencies are an attempt to describe it. What is vital is that the **assessment** process is particularly concerned with the attribution of competency based on the desired description (Harris et al 1995:22&25).

The Mayer Committee, whose report was published in September 1992, was convened to undertake further work on the key competencies concept proposed by Finn (Mellor et al 1995:220). The generic employment-related competencies as developed by the Mayer Committee are in the form of seven key competency strands, covering communication, analysing and organising information, organisation of activities, working with others, solving problems, using mathematical ideas and techniques, and using technology. These competency strands are generic in that they apply to work in general rather than to specific occupations (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:4; Harris et al 1995:22 ). An eighth competency, namely, cultural understanding, has been added by the Minister of Education (Mellor et al 1995:220).

The NSOOR was established in 1989 in order to develop a competency-based approach to the assessment and recognition of migrants' professional skills, in the place of judgements concerning fitness for professional practice based on initial training, but it became the main forum for the development of professional competencies (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:4; Harris et al 1995:62).

It is within industry training and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) that competency reform has advanced furthest. In 1991 the National Training Board (NTB) recommended that training in all industries move to a competency-based approach by 1993 and established the Australian Standards Framework (ASF) with eight levels of competency (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:3). The following table summarises the descriptors for the **eight levels of the ASF** (Harris et al 1995:55).

8 Self-directed development and mastery of a range of knowledge and skills, applicable to broad and varied and/or highly specialised contexts.

Normally full independence and contexts and combinations of great variability.

Complex judgement is applied in planning, design, technical and/or management functions.

Responsibility and accountability for the work of others and general functions.

7 Self-directed development and mastery of broad and/or specialised knowledge and skills, applicable to varied and/or highly specialised contexts.

Independent and non-routine.

High-level judgement is required in planning, design, operational, technical and/or management functions

Applied in accordance with a broad plan, budget or strategy.

Responsibility and accountability for the work of others and/or functions may be involved.

6 Self-directed development of knowledge with substantial depth across a number of areas, and/or mastery of a specialised area with a range of skills, applicable to major functions in either varied or highly specific contexts

Normally used independently and both routinely and non-routinely

Significant judgement is required in planning, design, technical or supervisory functions related to products, services, operations or processes.

Limited guidance in line with a broad plan, budget or strategy.

Responsibility and defined accountability for the work of

others and for defined functions may be involved.

- 5 Self-directed application of knowledge with substantial depth in some areas, and a range of technical and other skills to tasks, roles, and functions in both varied and highly specific contexts  
Normally used independently and both routinely and non-routine!  
Judgement is required in planning and selecting appropriate equipment, services, techniques and work organisation for self and others  
Likely to be broad guidance. Responsibility for the work of others may be involved
- 4 range and choice of actions required  
Normally within routines, methods and procedures where discretion and judgement is required, for both self and others.  
Only general guidance on progress and outcomes sought. The work of others may be supervised, or teams guided or facilitated, and limited organisation of the work of others may be involved.
3. Application of knowledge with depth in some areas and a broad range of skills.  
Applicable to a variety of contexts, with some complexity in the extent and choice of actions required  
Normally within routines, methods and procedures where some discretion and judgement is required.  
Likely to be applied under limited guidance with checking related to overall progress but may be broad guidance and autonomy if working in teams. Responsibility for the work of others and/or team co-ordination may be involved
- 2 Application of knowledge and skills to a range of tasks and roles, in a defined range of contexts.  
Some discretion about possible action within established routines, methods and procedures.  
Likely to be routine guidance with intermittent checking, but may be general guidance with autonomy and co-ordination responsibility in a work team.
- 1 Application of knowledge and skills to a limited range of roles.  
Choice of actions required within established routines, methods and procedures.  
Direct guidance with regular checking or work teams.

Advocates of competency-based reform assume that education and training can prepare students for vocational purposes; once formed in education and training, the work-related competencies can then be *transferred* to the workplace (Marginson & O'Hanlon 1993:1; Harris et al 1995:17).

However, the rate of CBE/T implementation has not been as rapid as expected by interested parties. This has been due partly to such *structural* factors as lack of national competency standards, generality of national frameworks and concentration upon industrial relations issues. *Human* factors relating to those responsible for translating CBE/T into action are also involved. These include: the teachers/trainers who either lack understanding of the intentions of the process or who have developed a range of resistance mechanisms against its implementation. Some implementers believe the existing teaching/training arrangements are quite adequate, whereas for others it has been too much, attempted too quickly (Harris et al 1995:59).

None-the-less, there are indications of increasing implementation in the vocational education and training sector as well as in others. There is still an urgent need for staff development within CBE/T with the highest demands for training in planning courses, converting courses, exchanging materials, discussion on competency-based learning and advanced techniques (Harris et al 1995:59&63).

In mid-1993, a South Australian survey from the TAFE sector, industry, private providers and other areas found that staff development activities in order of priority were: developing CBE/T assessment tools and strategies, design and implementation of CBE/T programmes, creative resources for CBE/T programmes, recognition of prior learning (RPL), development of curricula documents and training plans from industry standards, designing training from approved curriculum, evaluating CBE/T programmes, on-the-job delivery and assessment, promotion of training in the workplace and development of teaching resources for different delivery modes. The survey also found the main concerns to be staff development, insufficient time for implementation, more knowledge and skills to implement and deliver CBE/T and the need for national standards (South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education - DETAFE :1993:1-3).

### 2.4.3 Assessment of competency-based education (CBE)

Assessment plays a vital role in CBE/T and as such needs considerable consideration (Harris et al 1995:159). Within the framework for the implementation of the CBVET system, assessment is defined as:

*The process of collective evidence and making judgement on the nature and extent of progress towards the performance requirement set out in a standard, or a learning outcome, and at the appropriate point, making the judgement as to whether competency has been achieved (VEETAC 1993:13).*

As previously stated, this form of assessment is referred to as 'criterion-referenced', in other words the performance of an individual is measured in relation to criteria and not in relation to their relative performance against other learners (norm-referenced criteria) (Harris et al 1995:160; Masters 1992:67).

Four different purposes for assessment have been identified by the CBVET framework: formative (assessment activities primarily concerned with assisting the learning process), diagnostic (assessments to help determine educational and training needs), summative (assessments concerned with more watershed judgements) and recognition of prior learning (RPL) (learning that people gain informally as well as through more formal training, which is outside the national framework for the recognition of training).

Four key principles of assessment have been outlined: validity (assessments should assess what they claim to assess), reliability (methods and procedures of assessment used should be reliable), flexibility (assessment process should not disadvantage certain learners, but must be equitable, accessible, transparent, participatory and open to reasoned questioning) and fairness (no single approach should be used, but a range of approaches appropriate to a range of delivery modes, sites and learners' needs (Hagar, Athanasou & Gonzci 1994:12; Harris et al 1995:162-167).

Besides the four purposes of assessment as outlined in the national framework, Murphy (1993:4) outlines a wider variety, including:

- measuring knowledge and/or learning outcomes;
- determining capability for undertaking education and training;
- measuring relative merit in relation to selection or promotion;
- recognising meritorious performance in learning attainment; and
- determining competency and performance in learning work.

Within these there are a number of concerns which are being debated at a national level and issues which have been raised by the South Australian DETAFE. These issues include assessing and reporting on levels of achievement, the form that it should take, criteria to be used and the manner in which the report should be made (Strong 1995:22).

Currently, within TAFE, the form of **performance** assessment is utilised. The learner is graded as either 'competent' or 'not competent', based on samples of job performance. The question of validity arises in terms of whether assessment events do assess the relevant elements of competency to the standards prescribed, the quality and range of available facilities and the capacity to simulate real workplace conditions and events. Reliability depends on the quality of the assessment items and objectivity of marking, amongst others. Problems associated with this approach include fragmented assessment at the expense of a holistic approach, complex and time-consuming recording of progress and the difficulty in making valid judgements about workplace competency on the evidence of a single performance of a job in an institution setting. There is the suggestion that this form of assessment be linked to workplace assessment, through the establishment of a co-operative arrangement for integrated work-based assessment (Watson 1994:35-36).

Strong (1995:23-24) and Jonhstone (1994:39) state that the arguments in favour of assessment and reporting of levels of achievement include:

- indicators of relative educational merit are required by employers to assist them in making decisions between equally “competent” applicants for limited jobs and promotional opportunities;
- employers require information about the higher levels of achievement of their trainees during the off-job component of the training programme. The reasons for this include:
  - higher achievement can be extended on-the-job;
  - those with an identified aptitude for particular areas of specialisation can be afforded additional opportunities for on-job training; and
  - excellence can be encouraged and rewarded;
- the recognition of higher levels of achievement not only captures the innate motivation in many students to perform to the best of their abilities but also gives students an incentive to achieve over and above the essential course requirements. Students who have achieved higher levels want formal acknowledgement and want it reported in their record of results;
- indicators of relative educational performance provide one means of ranking and selecting applicants for limited places in higher vocational and training (VET) and university programmes;
- this type of feedback provides students with more realistic or more detailed and accurate information on their strengths and weaknesses as a guide for career specialisation or areas that may need additional attention if competency is to be maintained; and

- the recognition of higher levels of performance is in line with initiatives in the areas of continuous improvements and best practice.

Masters (1992:70) also argues in favour of assessing and reporting in terms of levels of competencies rather than on set behavioural objectives requiring precise assessment and reporting frameworks. It is argued that the development of precise frameworks can be unwieldy and impractical due to their complexity and specificity. Precise specification also means that the lower-level competencies and psychomotor skills are emphasised at the expense of higher-order capabilities. Furthermore, “frameworks of precision” tend to be based on a reproductive view of learning with too little recognition of the personal, constructive nature of human learning. Most fundamentally though, the intuitive reasonable attempt to say with certainty what a person can do proves problematic in practice. Finally, an assessment and reporting framework that is in the form of a checklist rarely has built-in direction/order.

However, Strong (1995:24) states that there are arguments against reporting in terms of levels of competencies, which include:

- additional costs for assessing and reporting levels of achievement beyond the essential requirements are likely to be incurred;
- assessment systems that recognise different levels of individual performance encourage competition rather than a spirit of co-operation required for teamwork (a major theme in the restructuring of the workplace);
- students who consistently achieve only a “pass” in comparison to others who are being recognised for higher levels of achievement could develop inferiority complexes (feeling less valued/sense of failure/demotivated) even though they have fully met the course or industry requirements;

- it has been argued that CBA requires the use of a criterion-referenced assessment method. This method assesses performance against pre-determined criteria and individual candidates are judged as either competent or not. Norm-referenced approaches to assessment, which measure and report on individual performances relative to one another are not accommodated. Supporters of CBVET further argue that even if criterion-referenced assessment did accommodate the recognition of levels of achievement, the value of doing this is debatable.

Generally in Australia there seems to be a move towards recognising achievement beyond the essential course requirements. Moran (1994:21), chief executive officer (CEO) of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) states that ANTA favours a system which is capable of both recognising industry's minimum competency requirements and rewarding excellence independently of the Australian Standards Framework (ASF).

The support for utilising methods of assessing and reporting on levels of achievement is also evident in Masters' (1992:71) document. It promotes the concept of an "achievement continuum" as firstly introduced by Robert Glaser in 1963 and once again stressed in 1981. The concept introduces the notion of a 'progression of increasing competency' around which 'probabilistic' rather than 'precise' frameworks can be developed.

There are four key ideas underlying probabilistic frameworks, namely:

- the notion of progression and growth. The frame of reference would be a 'progression of increasing competency' along which individual growth can be charted;
- the purpose of assessment is to estimate an individual's current level of competency in the area being assessed, with the result being recognised as an estimate only;

- assessment tasks are interchangeable, transient and expendable. No task is important in its own right, but only as an example and source of information for estimating individuals' competency levels;
- this approach interprets an individual's estimated level of competency by describing what can typically be expected of a person with that level of competency. The comparison is thus between a person's estimated level of competency and descriptions of typical behaviours at various levels along an achievement continuum (Masters 1992:71-72).

A framework construction around the probabilistic approach has been developed which according to Masters (1992:76) satisfies the Finn Committee's desire for a standards framework that 'identifies the knowledge, skills and understandings of a competency area in an ordered and sequential way'. This is already being implemented in a number of Australian assessment and reporting programmes.

Alternative forms of assessing competency suggested by Watson (1994:37-38) include performance evidence from **natural observation** in the workplace and **evidence from prior achievements**. Natural observation is typified by multiple observations of natural or routine work performance on all elements of competency. It appears to have face validity and is holistic, but the extent to which it is reliable, fair and cost effective is dependent on adequate quality control, the quality and range of workplace experience and training, and sensible decisions regarding the number of observations required to make reliable judgements about competency. Evidence from prior achievements, on the other hand, entail making judgements about competency based mainly on the recognizing, assessing and accrediting of prior achievements and learning through means which document this achievement such as a portfolio of evidence. This approach is suited to higher levels of competency where the portfolio of evidence is utilised either for 'action planning' or 'accreditation'. For face validity it must be ensured that all steps in the process, as well as decisions made, relate to the units and elements of competency in the relevant set of standards. Steps would have to be taken in order to ensure that the process of evidence collection and documentation is not just a file-keeping

exercise. For reliability, candidates would have to be trained in documentation and reflection techniques and assessors would need to be experts in the facilitation and assessment of these techniques.

#### 2.4.4 Criticisms with regard to competency-based education and assessment

Marginson and O'Hanlon (1993:v) use the workplace context and higher education to criticise competency-based education as follows:

- the generic competencies are wide-ranging and there is no single agreed system as to what these are;
- significant problems exist in defining and measuring generic skills, and it cannot be assumed that the generic skills generated in the educational context will automatically be transferable into the different context of the workplace;
- the competency-based approach tends to take transfer for granted – but it has otherwise been indicated that this could be the key problem in the transition from education to work.;
- generic skills , assessed at points of transition from “higher education to employment”, cannot provide an adequate summation of either student achievement or employee potential;
- the effects of higher education are felt over a working life .

However, as stated by Peddie (1993:8), no method of assessment is perfect. There is no single method of assessment that is totally valid and reliable. Competency-based assessment has considerable and visible advantages for quite specific purposes.

## **2.5 CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARD TO COMPETENCY –BASED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT – AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM (UK)**

As discussed in paragraph 2.2, the meaning associated with the term ‘competency’ varies depending on the context in which it is being used. In the American context it refers to performance as related to education, whereas in the Australian context it applies to skills and attributes needed in industry as well as to lift the general skill level of the workforce. In the UK the term is associated with a move towards practicality in education and training.

However, it can be agreed that in the case of the UK and Australia, CBE/T stresses the importance of training for the workplace. Both countries adopted this form of education in order to improve the quality of training. In the case of the UK the outcomes model was adopted as a means of opening access to learning to more individuals across the age-span, as well as a way of cost-effective and efficient learning. It was also a means of relating and aligning academic and vocational education and training.

As in the UK, concern over the quality of training outcomes and a belief that standards of vocational education and training must be improved, lay at the centre of educational reform in Australia (Harris et al 1995:52). In the Australian context, as with the UK, the long-standing cultural divide between education and training, as well as between general higher education and employment, needed to be bridged. CBE/T was also a means of contributing towards improvements in Australia’s economic performance and competitiveness on world-markets through a more educated and trained workforce.

In both countries, therefore, the traditional-based approach to education was found to be lacking. In the UK, the traditional qualifications failed to provide for some occupations, contained barriers to access and progression, gave no credit for learning and achievement outside the formal education system and was strongly biased towards the testing of knowledge, at the expense of skill or competency (cf 2.3.1).

In Australia, the general criticisms were focused on the content-based and group learning of the traditional approach. The new approach encourages focusing on the needs of the individual and key competencies as promoted in the CBE/T programmes (cf 2.4.1).

Assessment of CBE/T is at the heart of both the Australian and UK systems, with an emphasis on workplace assessment. The main purpose of assessment can be summarised as follows: formative, diagnostic, summative and RPL (cf 2.4.3).

However, in both countries, a number of problems have been cited with regard to the assessment of CBE/T.

These include:

- it is alleged that knowledge is neglected in the approach and the underlying knowledge and theory are not tested separately but inferred. This could further exacerbate the educational divide (in the UK) where practical activities tend to be held in low esteem;
- by focusing on competency certain assumptions are made, namely, that competency provides occupational relevance and directly focuses on outcomes and products. It is also assumed that competency-based training seems to lend itself to technical precision due to its clarity of specification, judgement and measurement. Competencies should also be easy to understand, permit direct observation, be expressed as outcomes and be transferable from one context to another, suggesting that they are straightforward, flexible and meet national as opposed to local standards;
- there is no standard definition of competency-based assessment. What appears to be useful and commonsense is found, on further reflection, to be complex and possibly misleading. There is considerable confusion and disagreement despite the large numbers of teachers working hard to develop or implement competency-based approaches;

- as competency embodies a technically oriented way of thinking, practical difficulties related to the assessment of competency in terms of describing human action remain to be resolved. The functionalist tradition of this approach also does not allow for alternative indicators of performance. It is also criticised as being tautological in that the purposes and outcomes are established by the qualifications framework and are used as a basis for devising the units and elements of competency;
- competency-based education (in the UK) is said to be too behaviouristic, in that it refers to the observable. In this context, the term 'outcomes' is used. Problems associated with this include how often these outcomes are assessed and interpreted as evidence of competency;
- with regard to consistency in assessment, the criticism is that there is no scope for mediocrity or excellence, only the meeting of standards specified for the units in which the candidate is being assessed at a specific time. In Australia, the term "satisfactory/not yet satisfactory" is used. In the UK, it is "competent/not competent";
- little attention has been given to criterion-referenced assessment;
- a general acceptable quality in assessment is vital, and in order to achieve this it is imperative that standards are understood by all who use them. Currently this is not so. The fact that standards are described in written form is problematic in itself as elaborate descriptions could result in misinterpretations;
- difficulties in terms of inconsistencies and misinterpretations both in guidance literature and current practice are also experienced;
- in addition to the above-mentioned criticism, human activities are being assessed and therefore total accuracy in assessment is never absolute;

- assessment based purely on observation places barriers between performance-linked and other forms of knowledge and understanding;
- as the workplace is now assumed to be the natural habitat of the NVQ system (UK) a number of problems have been experienced with regard to this:
  - supervisors lack the necessary skills to combine the roles of manager, mentor and assessor;
  - the size of the workplace affects the opportunity of the employee to collect the range of experience necessary to build towards NVQ statements of competency;
  - the natural flow of the work affects the tasks facing an assessor;
  - the oral workplace culture makes it difficult to get documentary evidence;
- the above-mentioned problems have added to the debate as to whether institution-based or work-place assessment is best. Even if an institution-workplace liaison is found, problems in terms of the following can occur:
  - assessors and verifiers are in need of practical and experientially based guidance, with examples of recorded performances on either side of acceptability;
  - advice and guidance is also needed with regard to sampling of evidence, ways to use evidence, and how to exploit natural opportunities for observation and evidence gathering.

However, it is also argued that many of these criticisms are based on misperceptions. Assessment is never perfect and is ultimately subjective and a matter of judgement. It should not be forgotten that the existing systems are being replaced precisely because they are filled with inconsistencies and are not perfect and unproblematic.

Besides the above-mentioned criticisms a number of recommendations with regard to assessment have also been made. These include:

- assessment methods need to be reconsidered. This has many implications for research; Alternative forms of assessing competency, such as performance evidence from natural observation in the workplace and evidence from prior achievements should be considered. However in order to ensure validity and reliability a number of steps are recommended:
  - all steps in the process and decisions made must relate to the units and elements of competency in the relevant set of standards;
  - steps have to be taken to ensure that the process of evidence collection and documentation does not just amount to a file-keeping exercise;
  - candidates have to be trained in documentation and reflection techniques;
  - assessors should be experts in the facilitation and assessment of these techniques.
  
- more detailed observational evidence is needed at the point of the assessment;
  
- assessors need to be guided in their in-service training, in terms of accurate knowledge of difficulties, as well as successful and unsuccessful practices;
  
- since the reliability and validity of the NCVQ position has also been questioned (validity in terms of unintended and undesirable consequences; reliability in that the trainer is also the assessor), there is a need for building in quality assurance and providing safeguards at points where assessors may be fallible;
  
- internal and external verifiers should be used to ensure consistency of interpretation;
  
- a new system is costly and needs to be justified in terms of the savings from more efficient and effective training, resulting in improvements in the quality of job performance;
  
- assessors should be trained and certified to newly published standards, demonstrating that they are able to carry out assessments to the new standards;

- CBE/T has been inhibited by structural as well as human factors, which need to be rectified;

These include:

- establishing national competency standards, generality of national frameworks and concentration upon industrial relations issues;
- teachers/trainers who either lack understanding of the intentions of the process or who have developed a range of resistance mechanisms against its implementation.

Therefore urgent need for staff development in CBE/T is necessary, especially in the following areas:

- planning courses;
  - converting courses;
  - exchanging materials;
  - competency-based learning and advanced techniques;
  - CBE/T assessment tools and strategies;
  - design and implementation of CBE/T programmes;
  - creative resources for CBE/T programmes;
  - recognition of prior learning;
  - development of curriculum documents and training plans from industry standards;
  - designing training from approved curriculum;
  - evaluating CBE/T programmes;
  - on-the-job delivery and assessment;
  - promotion of training in the workplace;
  - development of teaching resources for different delivery modes.
- various levels of assessment and reporting on achievement need be adopted, since a single level of performance does not necessarily provide useful information when it comes to the allocation of scarce resources and individuals;

Language education has not been immune from the trend set within the education and training system. Competency-based education thus affects adult language education as is the case within the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, the New South Wales Adult Migrant English Service as well as services in the UK, amongst others (Brindley 1988:46). Luke (1992:3-4) states that the claim that increased levels of literacy are necessary and sufficient for economic development can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution. This claim, though challenged, is still prevalent in modern society. Thus there is a need to focus on adult literacy programmes within the context of competency-based education. This is examined within the next section.

## 2.6 AUSTRALIA AND ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMES

During the post-war period Australian migrants had to acquire English as a second language, which had to replace the migrant's original language, for the sake of assimilation into Australian society (Ozolins 1993:70). As the desire was for a monolingual society, Aboriginal languages in Australia were also downplayed in favour of English (Ozolins 1993:2).

From the mid 1970s to the present adult literacy has become a public issue in Australia. The 1960s and 1970s saw an increase in the number of students attending secondary and tertiary institutions. The children of the working class and lower middle class students, mature-aged students, women and migrants were impacting on the workforce or tertiary education in large numbers. Since many of these people had been previously disadvantaged they were unable to master the "timeless curriculum of the disciplines or inflexible methods of transmission "(Hodgens 1994:14).

Prior to the 1970s, literacy per se received very little explicit attention. Even during the early 1970s the issues around literacy were concerned more with Australia's 'brain drain' and industrial unrest. By 1973 the Whitlam Government reforms of schooling started to place emphasis on equality and rectifying disadvantage. Part of the changes that occurred included the tertiary level; the abolishment of fees, and a focus on technical and further education. Adult literacy also achieved a new prominence by 1974. The

negative state of affairs regarding literacy was blamed on a number of factors including defective brains, defective homes, defective teaching and teacher training, as well as defective government: in short, the deficiency thesis. Deficit is seen everywhere. The answer to deficit is an orientation to competency-based education (Hodgens 1994:16 & 22-23).

Although Australia is now looking at a multilingual language policy (Ozolins 1993:261) English still plays a dominant role in its society. Literacy is no longer a peripheral concern but an important corollary of labour market programmes, of economic restructuring, of the adaptability, mobility and more highly skilled workforce for increased economic productivity (Wickert 1990a:134).

Within the Australian literacy programmes, a close examination is made of workplace and institutional-based literacy programmes. The findings are considered as lessons for the Border/Kei region, as this region also offers institutional and workplace-based adult literacy training (cf 4.2.3 & 4.2.4).

#### **2.6.1 The need for relevant adult literacy programmes**

Coordinators and educators of on-going and newly established literacy programmes have to ask themselves who it is that they are serving. It should be assessed whether the programmes are meeting the literacy needs of individuals or special groups at the local level. In order to decide on areas of growth, developing programmes, attracting clients and addressing inadequacies of programmes related to literacy skills, a needs analysis is needed (Jones 1990:100).

Skinner and Fowell (1988:8) warn against imposing perceived needs for a literacy and numeracy programme on a community. Perceived needs often originate from people outside the targeted group who may make false assumptions and misinterpret data.

According to Jones (1990:101-104) there are four steps in a needs analysis. These are as follows:

- Identify the users and uses of the research:

- all stakeholders who may eventually use or be affected by the research product must be identified.
  
- Describe the target population and service environment:
  - geographic dispersion: Consider where students in current programmes come from. If there are patterns, consider whether there are stronger networks in relation to certain literacy programmes than others;
  - transportation: Consider the availability of public transport in the literacy provision area. If public transport is poor, alternative, more accessible venues may be considered;
  - characteristics of the target population: The characteristics of the likely target population have to be considered. Although certain patterns may emerge, people who do not fit the pattern should not be excluded. All information should be used to make recommendations and for decision-making;
  - service capacity: All services provided in a particular area should be investigated. These may range from local council services to various associations and organisations.
  
- Identify the need:
 

In existing literacy programmes where evaluation or expansion is being considered, the following areas should be looked at:

  - the current outcomes/programmes;
  - the expectations of outcomes;
  - the impact and cost of changes

The required information can be extracted from people using various methods, including the use of analyses and surveys.

- Evaluation:

The information gathered has to be evaluated. This allows for a plan to emerge, which can be modified as the process continues.

### 2.6.2 The initiatives of Victoria and Queensland

Since the early 1970s educators in Australia have been concerned by the extent of literacy problems among adults in industrialised nations. It was realised that there are major pockets within the so-called developed world in which low literacy levels prevailed. Thus in 1987 the Australian government endorsed the national Policy on Languages and prominence was given to the issue of adult literacy. Initiative was taken by educators in Victoria who have thus been involved in developing literacy programmes in TAFE-institutions, in prisons, in community learning centres, in neighbourhood houses and in libraries (Goldsworthy 1990:209; Lo Bianco 1988:1). After the fifth conference of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL), the Queensland Council for Adult Literacy (QCAL) was formed. This saw the evolution of adult literacy provision from initially isolated provision to the development of an identifiable practitioner body (Searle 1997:36).

Attempts were made to develop some co-ordination between providers to look at issues such as curriculum, evaluation and professional development. However, problems were encountered in terms of unreliability of funding, stress on unpaid volunteers and the lack of clear government recognition of both the problem and of commitment to its solution. Until the Victorian government's 1988/89 adult literacy and basic education (ALBE) initiative, this field had been a marginalised and neglected area of post-compulsory education (Goldsworthy 1990:209). In Queensland, the early development of literacy programmes was ad hoc, with no formal policy or planning. There were no specialist adult literacy teachers within the Department of Education, apart from a number of individuals, working in isolation who recognised a need for adult literacy provision. It was some time before the official recognition of adults with reading problems took place and programmes were introduced in TAFE-institutions (Searle 1997:38-39).

In order to understand the Victoria initiative, background knowledge with regard to the way in which the TAFE system operates, is necessary. In 1988 the Victorian state government separated TAFE into two entities: one a state training system, the other a further education system. This was aimed at bringing into closer coalition the assorted groups involved in general adult education. In order to manage this coalition, the government established within the Ministry of Education, a Division of Further Education (hereafter referred to as the Division). The Division was given the responsibility for co-ordinating further education in institutions of TAFE, in community providers, the Council of Adult Education and the Adult Migrant and Education Service (AMES) (Goldsworthy 1990:210).

The Victorian government's initiative allowed additional funding to adult literacy funds already provided to TAFE institutions, in order to expand ALBE provision throughout Victoria and to improve the quality of provision. These funds flow to regions and into grants to community providers. It is used to pay salaries and for the infrastructure which enables activities to be provided. It is also used to provide educational leadership to the adult basic education field as well as workplace education (Staggard 1990:168).

Two approaches were initially adopted in terms of adult literacy programmes in Queensland. These included an institutional approach and a home approach. Whereas the former marked the beginning of a more formal, institutional role in provision, the latter bordered more on the provision of a community adult literacy programme. However, both were dependent on volunteer tutors, and provision was fragmented and unco-ordinated (Searle 1997:40-41).

#### 2.6.2.1 Co-ordination

A desire for a variety of co-ordinated but different forms of provision of adult literacy training was expressed at a conference of ACAL (Lo Bianco 1988:1). In Victoria, this has materialised through the government's additional funding, which is also used to develop a co-ordinated strategy across the State. Reports by the Division have assisted in placing ALBE firmly within the context of the government's economic and social justice objectives (Staggard 1990:168). The Division argues for the importance of seeing adult literacy efforts in the context of opening pathways for adults to gain access to other

educational opportunities, to gain access to employment, or opportunity to progress in the workplace, and to participate more fully in the general community (Goldsworthy 1990: 210).

In Queensland, the adult literacy was consolidated through the QCAL, which is partly a networking for community groups, as well as an independent voluntary organization, representing the community, able to lobby for social justice and recognition of adult literacy issues and funding at State policy level. It is partly as a result of the lobbying by QCAL that adult literacy programmes were commenced in TAFE (Searle 1997:43).

#### 2.6.2.2 Pathways and networks

Due to the co-ordinated strategy in Victoria, a coherent statewide framework was established (Staggard 1990:168). This enabled ALBE to be seen as part of the mainstream of adult educational life. Adult education programmes are thus no longer separate or on the margin, and because of this, greater attention to pathways for students is needed. A learner pathways framework was established in the Adult Migrant English Program (sic) (AMEP), for example, in order to address the issue of continuity (Hagan 1994:31). This entails looking more closely at **goals and outcomes** which ought to be different for different student groups but also need to be **appropriate and feasible**. There is also a growing recognition that **different providers will need to specialise in providing different sorts of adult basic education services and that correct assessment and placement** of students is a crucial component of good adult basic education provision (Goldsworthy 1990:211).

Due to the focus on literacy as an important aspect for vocational education and training (VET), there has been a major shift in the curriculum. All VET courses and providers were to be accredited, with all courses to become modularised and competency-based and linked to vocational or employment outcomes. Thus Queensland TAFE developed competency-based accredited adult literacy curricula for the teaching of adult literacy as well as for the training of volunteer tutors. This allowed for formal recognition of student outcomes and the creation of learner pathways (Searle 1997:45).

### 2.6.2.3 Targeting

To ensure that activities in the Victoria regions reach those most in need, regions are developing approaches to targeting. Significant steps have been made to make sure that the regional balance of programmes more accurately represents the population of those in a region who have literacy needs. The implications have been that some regions have paid greater attention to the joint literacy/language needs of people whose first language is not English and to the needs of Aboriginal groups. In rural areas, progress has been made in developing techniques to reach remote students. Teleconferencing and the use of computers have been of technological assistance in dealing with this problem. Writing weekends or other intensive study mechanisms have been another way in which provision has been varied and extended (Goldsworthy 1990:211).

The need for targeting is also emphasised in the initiation of literacy and numeracy programmes for aboriginal adults. The support for a programme on the part of the community is essential and therefore conducting a survey within the community has an effect in that it makes people aware of what it is the programme offers (Skinner & Fowell 1988:8).

Targeting takes a different angle in the Queensland approach. Whereas previously, the adult literacy programmes were more community-orientated, with the introduction of the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) there was a shift in the focus towards VET courses. Thus literacy is linked to the vocational context, targeting labour market programmes and bringing recognition and portability to qualifications (Searle 1997:45-46).

### 2.6.2.4 Curriculum development

Statewide there has been a need to set up coordination systems in curriculum development and research, information support, professional development, media liaison, long term planning and evaluation. In terms of curriculum, coordinated developments are taking place within the literacy/language curriculum and the

mathematics/science curriculum. It incorporates what is considered broadly to be basic skill needs of adults. Various activities are envisaged in this area, including working with a Curriculum Review and Development Group to identify needs in the ALBE sector (Goldsworthy 1990:210).

In Queensland, TAFE Community partnerships facilitated the move towards professionalism in the field. Although adult literacy provision became more formalised, there was also criticism that there was a movement away from the original notions of community action. However, recently there has been an emphasis on literacy as a technology, as one of the basic skills or key competencies required for employment and training. This has resulted in the central focus on adult literacy. A Volunteer Tutor Training Curriculum was established, for example, to enable trainers to organise a comprehensive, competency-based training programme which would provide opportunities for volunteers to develop the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills (Searle 1997:44-45).

#### 2.6.2.5 Professional development

A professional development scheme is needed to establish an appropriate support system so that literacy provision can develop. A professional development officer will coordinate activities within the Victoria region, monitoring regional plans, managing the development of appropriate reading manuals, induction kits and other support materials, coordinating state-wide conferences and developing links with other education and training professional development programmes (Staggard 1990:167). Integral to the development of a planned approach to the enhancement of skills in this field, is the need to develop closer ties with educational institutions. Pathways have to be established through which new entrants to this field can undertake formal advanced studies at diploma, degree, or postgraduate levels. The development of units within other qualifications for students who want to specialise in adult literacy work is thus required. However, ways in which the experiences of unqualified staff are recognised and accredited are also needed. Hence the need to act on accrediting prior learning (Goldsworthy 1990:212-213).

AMES (discussed in 2.6.3) has supported the implementation of competency-based training with a comprehensive professional development programme which has focused on areas such as the national training agenda, assessment, course design, language theory and moderation processes. Central courses and workshops have involved teachers and managers in specialist roles. Regional staff training has taken a work team approach and targeted whole staff groups (Hagan 1994:38).

In Queensland, some practitioners welcomed the introduction of accredited courses and the accreditation of providers as bringing greater professionalisation to the field. This meant that adult literacy teachers were required to have recognised adult literacy qualifications. Other practitioners felt that there was too much interference. None-the-less the professionalisation of the field resulted in, amongst others, a demand for increased staff accountability (Searle 1997:46).

#### 2.6.2.6 Career issues

Associated with the need to enhance the skills of those involved in this area of education is the need to look at issues of industrial relations. The terms and conditions for adult literacy staff in the more formal education sector has been far more attractive than for those in community provision as mentioned by Prince (1992:7-13;cf 2.6.4), where adult literacy workers are employed by independent non-government organisations (NGOs). Issues such as award wages, normal benefits of maternity benefits, superannuation, long service leave and career pathways within education as well as the public service, amongst others are being addressed (Goldsworthy 1990:213).

#### 2.6.2.7 Stigma

There is often a stigma surrounding literacy problems. It is not easy to admit that as an adult one cannot read and write as well as one wants. According to Wales (1994:202) negative feelings about English classes in the workplace are not unusual. Reporting on a language experience approach (LEA) in adult immigrant literacy programmes, Wales states that immigrants can experience hostility from supervisors, as

well as from fellow workers who ridicule their return to the classroom. Older immigrants also fear that they cannot improve their English, and that they may be too stupid or old to learn. One of the challenges for adult basic educators is breaking down the barriers which stop people from admitting that they need help, and convincing them that it is acceptable to seek help with literacy problems. The year 1990, declared as International Literacy Year, played a large role in bringing the problem out in the open. Slogans, programmes and publicity materials were used, which aimed at potential students as well as those who came into contact with them (Wickert 1993:30-32).

#### 2.6.2.8 Funding issues

On the premise of the devolution of decision-making about the precise destination of funds, it was suggested that the State level programmes receive three quarters of available funds and that the national component receive the smaller share. Despite the government's commitment to the improvement of adult literacy provision and additional funds being allocated to it, it has not been without problems (Lo Bianco 1988:1-2). Since the federal budget was introduced in 1996, there have been severe cutbacks in many adult literacy programmes, including the recruitment and support of volunteer tutors. In addition to this, many programme coordinators are faced with trying to stay true to their beliefs in providing learner-centred curricula in informal, shared, trusting environments, when neither the programme structure nor the administrative structure supports this. There has also been the effect of increased bureaucracy, with increasing amounts of time being consumed in accounting for government funding, assessment, recording, evaluating and reporting on students, tutors and programmes. This has increased the responsibilities of coordinators who now act as programme managers as well as full-time teachers (Searle 1997:48-49).

#### 2.6.2.9 External evaluation

There is also the need to develop external valuation systems. Performance agreements amongst the various sectors involved in this area need to be formalized. These agreements will enable negotiations about what appropriate outcomes are to be expected for different types of programmes and what indicators are to be

used to gauge whether programmes have adequately achieved the expected outcomes. A cluster of four or five key indicators will be used to monitor a programme's health. Non-achievement of expected results does not necessarily mean that there is a problem with a particular programme. Unexpected results may be due to a number of factors, including amongst others, inappropriate measures, or events beyond a programme's control. Aberrant results however need to be checked and understood (Goldsworthy 1990:214).

#### 2.6.2.10 Challenges

The challenges and opportunities within the field of adult basic education are immense. A few of these challenges include:

- the realisation of the need to provide basic education to those in the workforce affected by reward restructuring (a process introduced by the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission based on a two tier wage system, with its focus on the Restructuring and Efficiency (R & E) Principle). Wage increases, linked to progress on award restructuring, provided a catalyst for employers and unions to proceed with reorientation of wage policies to promote increased productivity and efficiency at the workplace level (Prince 1992:3);
- linking further education with the provision of welfare benefits; and reducing the number of people who vote informally because they cannot read the ballot paper (Goldsworthy 1990:215).

#### 2.6.3 **Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) Victoria and New South Wales (NSW)**

AMES Victoria and AMES New South Wales (NSW) are specialist providers of language and literacy courses. In Victoria, around six hundred permanent and sessional teachers provide instruction in twenty-

five teaching venues throughout the state. All teachers have general teacher training, along with specialist training in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and are involved in regular professional development activities. In NSW there are seventeen learning centres in regional locations besides other services (Colman 1991:28 & 35; Dalton & Bottomley 1994:70).

Since the early 1980s, AMEP has made significant changes in approaches to curriculum design, with the largest change undertaken in 1993. These changes are the result of a number of factors which include ongoing evaluation of learner-centred curriculum in practice, developments in language and language learning theory, changes in the broader Australian education and training sector (as discussed in 2.4), as well as problems of co-ordination between courses and between teaching centres (Colman 1991:28-29; Dalton & Bottomley 1994:70; Hagan 1994:30).

Problems encountered with the learner-centred curriculum included lack of continuity in learning arrangements and difficulties in implementing a needs-based approach. The form of oral proficiency ratings as a means of reporting on learner achievement was a major concern to teachers and programme managers as this form of assessment did not explicitly relate to the language learning outcomes of courses (Colman 1991:28-29; Hagan 1994:31).

The above-mentioned problems, in conjunction with the broader changes in the Australian education and training sector led the AMES to the competency-based curriculum model. It was felt that the competency-based approach was compatible with a commitment to a learner-centred curriculum and the provision of language tuition, which was appropriate for adults of non-English speaking backgrounds with a variety of needs. It also led to improved learner pathways through a number of developments in recent years (Colman 1991:29-30; Hagan 1994:33).

In establishing a learner pathway framework, a stage/band grid was developed for describing AMES courses in terms of their level of English proficiency (Colman 1991:3; Couper 1991:17). Stemming from this, the *Certificate in Spoken and Written English* (CSWE) was designed, building on the earlier learning

pathways framework (as mentioned in 2.6.2.2) and using the principles of competency-based training.

There are four stages within the learning paths framework with learning outcomes described at the end of each stage. This ensures continuity in curriculum sequencing and allows learners to exit the framework at any stage. There are also core competencies at each stage. Learners are initially assessed and placed within the framework on the basis of their current English proficiency level, learning pace, needs and social goals for learning English (Hagan 1994:33).

#### 2.6.3.1 Competency descriptions

The competencies in the CSWE are descriptions of what a learner can do at the end of a course of study.

They are expressed in general terms ensuring that the competency statements are applicable to a wide variety of learner groups and also acknowledges the educator's role in syllabus design.

The competency descriptions at each stage are divided into four domains, which are outlined as follows:

##### Domain 1 Knowledge and learning competencies

This domain is an important recognition of the non-language outcomes of the language classroom.

Competency one within each stage is concerned with the knowledge that each learner needs in order to understand, locate and access education systems, employment and community services. The second competency is concerned with the role of the learners in their own language development.

##### Domain 2 Oral competencies

These competencies deal with the learner's receptive and productive oral language skills. They attempt to describe oral texts, which integrate speaking and listening.

##### Domain 3 Reading competencies

This domain deals with texts such as diagrammatic and graphic texts, recounts, procedures and information texts. The competencies are described in terms of the learner's understanding of the purpose and content of texts by using the appropriate skills of interpretation.

#### Domain 4 Writing competencies

In this domain outcomes are described in terms of the learner using appropriate knowledge and language features to construct texts (Dalton & Bottomley 1994:72;Hagan 1994:33-35).

#### *Theoretical approaches to competencies*

As discussed in 2.6.4.1 competency descriptions in the CSWE are based on systemic functional linguistics.

This is evident in the competency descriptions in the CSWE, which are briefly as follows:

- incorporate learning gains other than language;
- relate language to the cultural and social contexts of its use;
- are based on whole spoken and written texts;
- describe language development in terms of learners progressively accessing increasingly demanding contexts of language use (Hagan 1994:37).

This indicates that a learner-centred approach is adopted as the learner's needs and background is considered, in this context (as discussed in paragraph 2.6.1).

#### 2.6.3.2 Assessment

Assessment is necessary to describe and document the learner's passage through AMES. It is therefore necessary to set explicit objectives in order to assess learner achievement and learner progress. As criterion-referenced assessment has been recommended as the most suitable for the learner-centred curriculum (cf 2.4.3), it is thus best suited to the AMES programmes. In order to successfully perform this form of assessment in relation to adult literacy programmes, the following is suggested:

- AMES teachers should develop a repertoire of performance-based tests based on real-life tasks and have confidence in using them;
- qualitative measures, such as ticking criteria on checklists as they are perceived in actual performance, are valid;
- a useful tool in building up a repertoire is to use teacher and learner observation of normal classroom tasks and activities supported by in-course assessment tools (such as checklists) (Couper 1992:17-18).

### 2.6.3.3 Conclusion with regard to AMES

The adoption of a competency-based curriculum approach within AMES has largely addressed the problems of continuity associated with the needs-based approach. The core competencies at each stage of the framework facilitate continuity within and beyond the adult ESL classroom while still allowing for flexibility to meet learner needs. The challenge for AMES is to provide ongoing support for the continued implementation of this approach to curriculum, while at the same time evaluating its continued relevance to learners and to teachers and ensuring the use of effective course design procedures within each course. This requires the further development of teacher and learner resources and an ongoing commitment to professional development at all levels, amongst others (Hagan 1994:39, Colman 1991:42).

### 2.6.4 Workplace literacy

As previously stated (cf 2.5) and reiterated by Taylor (1997:64), competency-based education and training have been recommended as essential ingredients in the restructuring of the Australian workforce and the globalisation of the Australian economy. Within this context, it is reasoned that such training in terms of improved literacy levels, will benefit not only the workplace, but also community participation.

According to Milton (1994:45-46) the Australian workplace is changing through industry restructuring, enterprise bargaining and multi-skilling. Many companies have committed themselves to 'Total Quality Management', which aims to give workers ownership and responsibility for a whole process or product, where previously they required only specific skills for an isolated part. Massive retraining is thus required. Whereas in the past, many workers either did not need literacy skills to perform their jobs, and either developed compensatory strategies or were able to hide inadequate skills, this is no longer the case. The workplace can no longer escape its responsibilities to prepare workers adequately for all aspects of their jobs. Literacy skills are therefore now not only an integral part of the job, but specific literacy skills are necessary for specific jobs.

Literacy has become a resource and thus worthy of investment, provided that its returns are predictable (Wickert 1993:34). In addition to this, with reward restructuring in the workplace (as mentioned in paragraph 2.6.2.10), it is certain that those with limited literacy and numeracy skills would be further disadvantaged unless they have access to on-going vocational training and associated wage increments. This has many implications for literacy training. Training is expected to be accredited, competency-based and modular in design in order to address the notions of portability and transferability of skills and to accommodate the different backgrounds of workers (as mentioned in paragraphs 2.4 & 2.4.2). There is also a need to ensure access and equity in vocational training, and therefore, a need to target courses to meet the needs of specific groups of learners from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds (Prince 1992:4).

The Werribee Farm training programme described by McMaster (1990:186) emphasises the need for diversity in programmes to meet the needs of the targeted group. In order to meet the needs, the Werribee Farm programme offered a range of classes including Everyday Reading and Writing, General Mathematics and Werribee Writing.

Workplace demands have many implications for educators/trainers of language and literacy. It concerns their responsiveness to change and their role in that process; their understanding of the range of issues involved and sensitivity to the diverse perspectives on these issues; and their ability to communicate

effectively with all involved (Prince 1992:4). Milton (1994:47) expands on the qualities needed by the workplace trainer. Although the trainer may be competent in delivery of practical training to workers, the knowledge needed to undertake literacy training may be insufficient. Most trainers do not have formal teacher qualifications, although many are well practiced in setting up and running effective programmes for adults. Many trainers do not have an understanding of the complexities of literacy and the need for qualified teaching staff.

Milton (1994:47) recommends that workplace trainers need to become aware of literacy issues through professional development. Furthermore it is also recommended that trainers not only become familiar with any literacy products eventuating from the National Framework of Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy (established in 1993 with the purposes of informing curriculum development and providing a framework for reporting on curriculum outcomes) (Wickert 1998:63), but possess a deeper and broader understanding of literacy to ensure that these products are used optimally.

According to Prince (1992:7-13) the workplace setting differs from that within educational institutions and these differences need to be considered by the literacy trainer. These differences include, the environment, learners and group dynamics, the curriculum, assessment and evaluation, resources and materials, purpose and texts, isolation, as well as organisational culture and politics. As explained by Wales (1994:203), workers in the LEA programme had to adjust to their learning environment, moving from a huge workshop or outdoors to a small room. They also had to acclimatise to the instructor and fellow workers. The differences between the workplace and educational institution settings are briefly explained in the following paragraphs. Trainers should be aware of these differences, so as to facilitate the learning process.

The **environment** differs in that in most educational institutions there are organised, well-equipped classrooms, which one is not likely to find in a factory location, for example. In terms of **learners and group dynamics** there is often a broader range of learners in a workplace group, compared to those in classes with educational institutions. It is important to establish group dynamics, which enable each

individual member to feel at ease with the others and to assume responsibility within the group (Prince 1992:7-8).

The **curriculum** is not a set one, unlike within particular programmes in TAFE, for example, where the content of some courses have been established over a period of time and there are guidelines to assist in the process of designing a course to meet specific needs. In workplace programmes the content is tied to the needs of the particular organisation and its employees. There is a wider group of stakeholders, including individual learners, management, the unions and their membership. The educator has to be aware of the possibility of conflicting interests and expectations and be able to respond to the needs of all stakeholders involved (Prince 1992:8-9). It also takes time to assist learners in engaging in needs analyses in order for them to fully develop an ability to realise and express their language learning needs (Wales 1994:203).

In terms of **assessment and evaluation** for any workplace, stakeholders will have different objectives and will measure the success of a course in different ways. The measurement could be in terms of an increase in productivity time due to the ability of a worker to understand instructions without repetition, or to complete a form without assistance, for example. With so many possible expectations concerning outcomes, there is a need to be explicit at the outset of language and literacy courses, about the criteria by which individual performance or progress is to be measured, and about how the courses are to be evaluated. In workplaces, **competency based assessment** is being introduced. People are thus assessed on their actual performance of a particular task (Prince 1992:9).

In terms of **resources and material**, it is important that these be relevant to the workplace as courses differ from one workplace to another. There are also differences in the types of skills developed in the workplace in relation to educational institutions. Whereas institutions concentrate on **texts** for the **purpose** of reading "*to know*", workplace texts are used for the purpose of reading "*to do*". Research into language and literacy demands across a range of jobs in one workplace has also indicated that although similar texts were read at each occupational level, the purpose for reading and the amount of reading in detail, changed

from operator level jobs through to professional level jobs (Prince 1992:11). Furthermore, research also indicates that workers, overall, tend to read a great deal on the job, and probably read job materials more each day than any other type of material. This suggests that job-related literacy is an important type of functional literacy and should be stressed in functional literacy programmes. Although higher level occupations entail more job reading, time spent on job reading materials is an important component of jobs at almost all levels (Diehl & Mikulecky 1980:224).

There is also a difference in the sense of **isolation** from colleagues for the workplace educator. Regular contact with colleagues needs to be established in terms of support. The structured support system in relation to educators is emphasised in AMEP. In these programmes, educators experience continuous support and opportunities for collaboration by being in close contact with each other and programme coordinators on a regular and individual basis (Burns & Hood 1994:81).

There are also differences relating to the **culture, politics and power-relationships** evident within the educational institution and the workplace. Whereas the educator's role may be defined in the educational environment, in the workplace it may not be as obvious since there is no formal place for the educator in this setting. It is important that the educator establishes this position so as to be of maximum benefit to the organisation (Prince 1992:13).

Literacy within the workplace thus, according to Wickert (1993:34-35) has shifted away from the traditional construction of the literate adult as someone able to read and write schooled literacy to someone who is in possession of a set of competencies harnessed to the efficiency and effectiveness of industry in times of rapid change. The question is put about what happens to the worker who is unable to acquire these 'new skills'. Fingeret (1990:37) argues that this is a way of gate-keeping as well as responding to the need for new literacy skills in a particular context.

#### 2.6.4.1 The applicability of functional systemic theory to the teaching of language and literacy in workplace contexts

As warned by Paolo Freire (1972:66) “the concrete, existential, present situation of real men” should not be overlooked when making political and educational plans. Thus literacy educators develop programmes which take into account the cultural values and educational experiences of the participants. As previously mentioned (cf 2.6.4) research has indicated that there is a difference between academic reading tasks and vocational reading tasks. There is thus a need to integrate literacy and vocational training. A systemic linguistic analysis of the text types relevant to particular workplaces provides a comprehensive understanding of how training, education, and skills formation can be integrated in this context, and, as a result, be more effective (Prince 1992:69-70).

As described by Hagan (1994:35) systemic functional linguistics provides a social theory of language which is educationally useful as it provides teachers, curriculum developers and language learners with a coherent model of language which systematically relates language to the cultural and social contexts in which it is used. It is concerned with how the vocabulary and grammatical choices made by language users relate to text construction for social purposes. It also facilitates the integration of the teaching of grammar with the teaching of socially relevant and appropriate spoken and written texts.

The systemic model seeks to encourage educators to be explicit about what they are teaching and the reasons for doing so. The Literacy and Research Education Network (1990:6-19) noted the following principles of this approach to language:

- language occurs in real life texts;
- texts are socially constructed and socially purposeful. People interact through speech and writing to achieve particular goals or purposes in their everyday work and social life;
- genres are texts which are patterned in a distinctive way to achieve particular goals;

- different cultures value and use different genres differently;
- texts can be related in a systematic way to a context; and
- both the context of the culture and the context of situation determine the kind of language used to create text.

This approach, although not explicitly stated, is applicable to the LEA programme as described by Wales (1994:203) where learners were encouraged to develop their own reading text, using the learners' fluent oral communication in English second language (ESL). Great value was achieved in allowing learners to develop their own reading text and basing activities around it. Amongst others, the learner's own language and life experience was acknowledged. The text was also relevant, interesting and directed at the learners' own linguistic level.

It is important to remember that literacy and written texts are not static objects but change over time. Systemic theorists believe that literacy, although involving reading and writing, is not isolated from spoken language or from job skills and tasks. Workers move between written texts and other tasks within the workplace. Being literate entails mastering the conventionalised ways of making meaning with and around written texts relevant to personal, social and occupational needs, rather than simply mastering grapho-phonetic symbols and codes (Prince 1992:73). This nature and use of the text is also explicit in the LEA programme (Wales 1994:204-206) where the text was used as a basis for individual level reading. It was also used as a correct model for written work, as well as for reading and writing activities relevant to the individual's personal and work-related needs.

Workplace language and literacy courses should enable workers to learn from written texts, make decisions using information in written texts and create written texts appropriate to particular contexts and purposes. The contexts incorporated into workplace courses relate to current and changing job duties, training

provision and the changing workplace culture. Key factors that should be considered in order to achieve the aim of increased participation in these contexts are:

- workplace language and literacy courses should reflect the language, texts, contexts and skills of the workplace;
- the curriculum needs to contextualise the literacy tasks, so that the context and purpose is encompassed;
- assessment outcomes need to be understood by all stakeholders and assessment tasks simulate real-life literacy tasks. This was also emphasised by Johnson (1995:20) (cf 2.3.2);
- workplace curriculum needs to reflect the developmental nature of literacy education and therefore guide the workers in their control of increasingly complex tasks (Prince 1992:73-74).

#### **2.6.5 Assessment of adult literacy programmes**

According to Wickert (1990b:18) literacy is relative, the concept being socially constructed. Therefore any measurement of literacy must reflect this relativity as well as give an indication of the performance across the population on a range of literacy tasks at varying levels of difficulty.

Wickert (1990b:18) states that most standard tests of adult literacy not only treat literacy as a fixed inventory of skills that can be defined and measured, but also often treat the population to be tested as a uniform group. The results of these tests are then seen to be universally applicable to a wide range of concepts.

It must be recognised that there are many types of literacy that adults use, which will have been acquired (or not) in different ways and for different purposes in the complex matrix of personal background experiences. Appropriate and relevant ways of assessing the literacy proficiency of adults should thus be devised (Wickert 1990b:18).

#### 2.6.5.1 The adult literacy and numeracy (ALAN) scales

A form of assessment and reporting in language learning programmes was the introduction of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALAN) scales by the DEET. The scales were intended to provide a report framework for practitioners to describe literacy and numeracy behaviours in government-funded adult literacy and numeracy programmes. Five scales describing different levels of numeracy and literacy ability were developed. The descriptors of literacy and numeracy competencies were derived from statements made by teachers about tasks and achievements that were considered to be relevant for adult literacy students at a range of ability levels (Brindley 1998:59).

The Rasch rating scale model was used, where the descriptors were placed along a hypothetical continuum which aimed to describe an unidimensional model of literacy and numeracy (Brindley 1998:58). Tests by experts and practitioners however, revealed inconsistencies in the way the scales were being applied, and it was recommended that more work be carried out on the validity and reliability of judgements associated with the use of scales (Griffin & Forwood 1991:42).

The Australian Council for Adult literacy (ACAL) condemned the scales on the grounds that:

- the methodology used to develop the scales was flawed and major theoretical approaches to the teaching of reading and writing were ignored;
- the scales represented a view of literacy, which was outmoded and restricted;

- the scales were isolated from a curriculum context and failed to recognise the diversity of needs in adult literacy and numeracy teaching;
- the scales were unusable since they were not accompanied by assessment tasks, which would enable teachers to locate learners' level on the scales; training and moderation procedures for raters had not been developed and there were no procedures for monitoring the use of the scales (ACAL 1992:3-6).

Due to the grievances mentioned above, the government commissioned a team of academics to undertake a review of the scales. A number of theoretical, empirical and practical problems in relation to the ALAN scales were identified, questioning whether the scales could be implemented even if they were adapted. It was thus recommended that the use of the ALAN scales be discontinued and that the DEET pursue the development of reporting frameworks by channeling and co-ordinating the efforts of currently unco-ordinated groups working on competencies and on adult literacy and numeracy provisions (Freebody, Cumming, Falk, Muspratt, Doyle, Flaherty & Lee 1993:171 & 174).

The ALAN scales were withdrawn and two major projects were commissioned: one to develop a national framework for describing adult English language, literacy and numeracy competency; and a second to design a system for reporting the outcomes of adult language, literacy and numeracy programmes, thereby expensively duplicating the goal that the ALAN scale project had originally set out to achieve (Brindley 1998:60).

#### **2.6.6 Conclusions with regard to Australian literacy programmes**

In Australia, adult literacy programmes were mainly motivated by, in earlier years, the desire for a monolingual society, and the mid-1970s onwards, by the decreasing rate of adult literacy.

These literacy programmes have to be relevant, serving the needs of those for whom it was meant. In order to do this successfully, a **needs analysis** is important. This includes:

- identifying the users and uses of the research;
- examining the target population and environment;
- identifying the needs;
- evaluating the information gathered in order to plan.

Valuable lessons that have been learnt from the Victoria and Queensland TAFE initiatives include the following, in order for adult literacy programmes to be successful:

- ALBE should be a priority of the government;
- a co-ordinated strategy involving all in ALBE is essential to its success;
- adult literacy efforts should be seen as pathways for adults to gain access to other educational opportunities, employment or progression in the workplace, and to participate more fully in the general community;
- a co-ordinated strategy ensures a statewide framework enabling ALBE to be seen as part of the mainstream of adult educational life;
- targeting of learners is important in order to ensure that activities in regions reach those who need them most;

- regional programmes should be balanced to accurately represent the literacy needs of the population in that region;
- a statewide co-ordinated system is needed in curriculum development and research, informational support, professional development, media liaison, long-term planning and evaluation;
- rapid and efficient exchange of information across the ALBE sector should be ensured. Thus, instead of a single central place for materials, a central position within each region in co-ordination with state libraries can ensure this;
- a professional development scheme is needed to establish an appropriate support system so that literacy provision can develop. Activities can be co-ordinated in this manner.

Activities include:

- monitoring regional plans;
  - managing the development of appropriate reading manuals, induction kits and other support materials;
  - coordinating state-wide conferences;
  - developing links with other education and training professional development programmes; - pathways have to be established through which new entrants to this field can undertake formal advanced studies at diploma, degree, or postgraduate levels;
  - developing units within other qualifications for students who want to specialise in adult literacy work;
  - recognising and accrediting experiences of currently unqualified staff ;
- an adult basic education research forum is essential in bringing together educators and researchers in the ALBE field;

- career issues in terms of the enhancement of literacy workers, especially those in community involvement, needs to be improved. This includes addressing the following:
  - award wages;
  - maternity benefits;
  - superannuation;
  - long service leave;
  - career pathways within the educational as well as public service fields;
  
- it should be acknowledged that there is often a stigma attached to adults who have to attend literacy classes. Adult basic educators have to break down barriers, which prevent people from admitting that they need help, and convince them that it is acceptable to seek assistance. A means of creating national awareness of this could be:
  - an International Literacy Year campaign;
  - literacy slogans;
  - literacy programmes;
  - publicity material;
  
- funding is a central issue with regard to ALBE. Government funding does not necessarily ensure the sustenance of adult literacy programmes. In fact it could also mean:
  - cutbacks in adult literacy programmes;
  - increased bureaucracy;
  - increasing amounts of time spent on accounting of government funding, and other administrative tasks; and
  - co-ordinators acting as programme managers as well as full-time teachers.
  
- to ensure the effectiveness of resources, appropriate evaluation systems need to be put in place;

- external evaluation systems are vital to the success of literacy programmes. They ensure that outcomes expected are appropriate and that the indicators used to monitor a programme's effectiveness are satisfactory to all;

The AMES Victoria and New South Wales programmes, indicate that there is a specific need to cater for immigrants whose first language is not English. As the curriculum is largely learner-centred, an appropriate curriculum model had to be adopted for the sake of compatibility and relevance. Thus the choice of the competency-based curriculum model. Lessons learnt from the designed CSWE include the following:

- stages have to be built into learning path frameworks with outcomes described at each stage. This ensures continuity in curriculum sequencing and allows learners to exit the framework at any time;
- core competencies, expressed in general terms should be written at each stage. The general nature of the competency statements ensure that they are applicable to a wide variety of learner groups, at the same time acknowledging the educator's role in syllabus design;
- four competency domains can be considered, namely:
  - knowledge and learning competencies;
  - oral competencies;
  - reading competencies;
  - writing competencies;
- the systemic functional linguistics (cf 2.6.4.1) description for competencies is effective as it focuses on the learner and the learner's needs .

The systemic functional linguistics theory emphasises that programmes should be developed taking into account the cultural values and educational experiences of the participants. It provides a social theory of language, facilitating the teaching of grammar with the teaching of socially relevant and appropriate spoken and written texts. It teaches us that language is alive and lives within a particular context. Lessons which should be taken into account from this approach to language includes:

- language occurs in real life texts;
- texts are socially constructed and socially purposeful;
- people interact through speech and writing to achieve particular goals or purposes in their everyday work and social life;
- genres are texts which are patterned in a distinctive way to achieve particular goals;
- different cultures value and use different genres differently;
- texts can be related in a systematic way to a context;
- both the context of the culture and the context of situation determine the kind of language used to create text.

Thus it is very important that the educator be aware of these principles when choosing texts for particular learners;

- in terms of assessment of AMES programmes, the following should be considered:
  - explicit objectives should be set to assess learner achievement and progress ;
  - criterion-referenced assessment is best suited to AMES programmes;
  - a repertoire of performance-based tests based on real-life tasks should be developed by teachers;
  - qualitative measures are valid; and
  - teacher and learner observation of normal classroom tasks and activities supported by in-course assessment tools can be utilised to build up a repertoire.

Industry restructuring, enterprise bargaining and multi-skilling, have also resulted in the need for massive retraining within the workplace. Workplace literacy programmes make considerable demands on the

literacy tutor. Within this context workers attend literacy programmes mainly as a means of gaining access to on-going vocational training and associated wage increments.

The workplace literacy tutor thus has to meet certain demands with regard to programmes. These include:

- training has to be accredited;
- training has to be competency-based and modular in design;
- access and equity in vocational training has to be ensured and therefore literacy courses have to specifically meet the needs of a particular group of learners from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds.

These demands put the workplace literacy trainer in a unique position, as the needs of a specific environment have to be considered. Lessons learnt with regard to literacy trainers within this context include:

- specific qualities that a trainer should possess:
  - an understanding of literacy issues;
  - responsiveness to change and their role in the process;
  - an understanding of a range of issues and sensitivity to diverse perspectives;
  - the ability to communicate effectively with all involved;
  - the ability to adapt to a workplace environment;
  - the ability to establish group dynamics which enable individual learners to feel at ease with others and to assume responsibility within a group; and
  - knowledge and skill to design courses to meet the needs of a wide range of stakeholders;
- in relation to assessment and evaluation procedures the trainer should:
  - be explicit at the outset of language and literacy courses, about the criteria by which individual performance or progress is to be measured;
  - be explicit as to how the course is to be evaluated;

- have the ability to apply competency-based assessment, as the person is assessed on the actual performance of a particular task;
- with regard to resources and material the trainer should:
  - ensure that these are relevant to the workplace;
  - be aware of the purpose and usage of texts within the workplace;
  - have the ability to use and adapt texts across a range of occupational levels within a workplace;
- the workplace trainer should also establish contacts outside the organisation. This allows for continuous support and opportunities for collaboration.

Regarding assessment and adult literacy programmes, it should be acknowledged that the concept of literacy is relative and a social construct. It should also be recognised that there are many different types of literacy that adults use. In the light of this, assessment techniques should be developed that are appropriate and relevant to the literacy proficiency of adults (cf 2.6.5). Assessment with regard to the experience of the ALAN scales (cf 2.6.5.1) emphasises the need for validity and reliability of judgements. Lessons learnt with regard to choice of scales include:

- the methodology used to develop scales should be carefully selected and should consider major theoretical approaches to the teaching of reading and writing;
- the scales should represent a current and flexible view of literacy;
- the scales should not be isolated from a curriculum context and should recognise the diversity of needs in adult literacy and numeracy teaching;

- the scales should be accompanied by assessment tasks which will enable teachers to locate learners' level on the scales; training and moderation procedures for raters should be developed as well as procedures for monitoring the use of the scales.

These lessons together with those from the United Kingdom will be considered as recommendations in relation to the development of adult literacy programmes in the Border/Kci region.

## **2.7 LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (UK)**

Before 1975 very little adult literacy provision existed in the UK. Much of what did exist was provided in rather special circumstances, as in prisons and other penal establishments where a considerable need had been recognised for some time. The Army, through its Schools of Preliminary Education, also provided literacy help for new recruits where they would be able to benefit from basic army training. However, these centres of provision were not matched by equivalent facilities within the community. Although some limited provision existed, it was perceived as remedial and operated largely independently of other adult education (Wells 1987:259).

It was only during the mid-1970s that the government provided funds towards the eradication of illiteracy. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) also offered short programmes to stimulate interest and motivate adults to attend literacy classes. However, young people were not well represented in adult education in general. After the 1980s the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) developed a wider concept of basic education. By this time there was a substantial rise in unemployment in the UK with a particularly serious effect on young people. Since many young adults did not possess any recognised qualifications or vocational skills, they were particularly vulnerable. Many young people soon became disillusioned and alienated by lengthy unemployment, particularly as lack of money meant that there was little else to do. The impact of high level youth unemployment, its disproportionate effect on those with very limited mastery of basic communication skills, and the relative failure of adult literacy and basic education schemes to attract young people in great numbers, led to a number of initiatives. These

initiatives included Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP), Manpower Services Commission (MSC) programmes, as well as community development programmes on the part of ALBSU and other such organisations (Wells 1987:261-262). Some of these community development programmes are examined in paragraph 2.7.1.

In recent years many industrialised nations have come to realise the extensive and complex social, economic and educational issues which are involved in establishing a literate society and to understand that the achievement of universal literacy is not just exclusively a problem for developing nations. There is a need for awareness-raising, public commitment of resources, the development of partnerships to enable the identification of needs, appropriate provision for, and a commitment to literacy as a basic human right, and not merely justified in economic terms (Withnall 1994:67).

Within the UK context, the literacy programmes of the community-based campaigns are closely examined. These, together with Australia's workplace and institutional-based adult literacy programmes, offer a broad range of lessons for the Border/Kei region.

### **2.7.1 The Yemeni Community/Sheffield Literacy Campaign**

According to Chakravorty (1992:221) the black communities' struggle for education has taken a long time to make its full impact because of the social and employment circumstances that many of its members face. Interviewing past learners from the **Yemeni Literacy Campaign (Sheffield)** Chakravorty (1992:221) and Bennett (1992:201) found that their experience within the campaign was not unique but could be found in other black communities as well. Sheffield is one of the major centres of the British steel industry and as such, has attracted substantial Third World immigration during the post-war economic boom (Shaif 1992:203).

Although the black community has more than thirty years' residency in the UK there remains a high degree of illiteracy in the cities. Bennet (1992:200) observes that as a professional observer of education for more

than twenty years, the existence of adult illiteracy among such large numbers of the population has always seemed one of the most disturbing aspects of the education system. The mixture of the institutionalised approach of the traditional adult education facilities and the lack of available time of the working-class black people in the past, made it difficult to run a useful literacy programme. Many issues that were important to the learners, including time, setting of the class, bilingual support and course content, were ignored. The result was that the communities did not support these programmes (Chakravorty 1992:221). Badade (1992:216) sites additional reasons for the lack of attendance of these literacy classes. These include the lack of awareness of the facilities in existence, fear of racial, sexual and religious harassment and a lack in confidence in their ability to use English.

Ahmed (1992:209) sites the traditional approach to teaching ESL as a contributing factor to poor literacy rates. Previously the approach to ESL was fragmented and of a "piecemeal" nature. It was offered at adult education centres where tutors felt isolated and marginalised, with unclear management structures and inadequate resources. There was inadequate planning, monitoring and evaluation of the work. The consequence was that the content of the teaching had little bearing on the needs of the community. The majority of the tutors had little direct contact with the communities and therefore denied them influence on policies. Often many of the workers illegitimately assumed the role of community representatives.

Literacy and retraining is for many black people the key to education and establishment of a new life through self-development and meaningful employment. Launched in 1988, the Literacy Campaign was an educational as well as political initiative through which the community mobilised and organised its members in a group (Shaif 1992:203).

#### 2.7.1.1 Targeting

In order to ensure the success of adult literacy campaigns, **targeting** of the learners, as well as of assistants within the community, is important. This is also emphasised in the Australian adult literacy programmes as discussed in paragraph 2.6.2.3. Recruitment workers are thus an important aspect of the literacy campaign.

In the Yemeni campaign these workers were involved in various duties including, setting up literacy classes, advising literacy lecturers and assistants on the cultural aspects of delivery and working closely with them in resource and curriculum development. They also conducted research into further literacy strategies to enhance the programme, and developed the relevant resources at the information centre (Badade 1992:216).

It was the responsibility of the recruitment workers to visit potential clients in order to make them aware of the opportunity of participating in a literacy programme and to encourage them to become active within the campaign. Literacy assistants were recruited from within the community in order to assist in meeting the needs of the particular community. In the Sheffield literacy campaign, literacy assistants were trained, enhancing their inter-personal and communication skills. Thereafter they could seek employment or higher education (Badade 1992:216).

Literacy classes were set up in close proximity to the community. The needs of the community, including bilingualism, transport, religious and cultural needs and assistant-learner relationships, amongst others were considered. The effect was that the self-confidence of the learners as well as the learners' sense of identity were raised. It also assisted the community to express their social and political awareness in English and make collective demands for the development of their community (Chakravorty 1992:222).

#### 2.7.1.2 Involvement of tertiary institutions

Within Sheffield, the tertiary institutions were deeply involved in the campaign. This ensured continuity of campaigns within the community and an increase in black enrolment at these institutions. These liaisons were established by the recruitment workers, further emphasising the fundamental role they play in literacy campaigns (Badade 1992:217). Bennett (1992:201) also stresses that young Yemeni men and women who were unemployed and under-qualified just a few years ago are now studying for degrees at Sheffield City Polytechnic. Institutions subsequently improved service delivery and increased their Full-time Teaching Equivalents (FTEs) (Shaif 1992:204).

This close collaboration between the community campaigns and tertiary institutions highlighted the need for developing accredited courses as well as access and progression, as many learners wish to gain vocational qualifications in order to compete for jobs in the labour market. Thus ESL tutors developed courses, most of which are now accredited through South Yorkshire Open College (SYOC) and the establishment of a new intermediate foundation programme is being developed. It is modular-based and the intention is for it to run alongside the core programme vocational modules in each of the major vocational areas in the city's tertiary education system. It will also incorporate NVQ units which learners can build on should they wish to pursue a full vocational qualification. This programme will include black cultural studies, mathematics, communication skills, community languages as well as computing and will provide sufficient credits for learners to make progress to more academic as well as vocational courses (Ahmed 1992:210;Kerton 1992:212).

#### 2.7.1.3 Involvement of the larger community

According to Bennett (1992:201) the Sheffield approach combined the campaigning zeal of the past with the rooted provision of adult basic education (ABE), and is already proving to be effective. The reason for its impact is that its starting point was the need to empower communities to promote literacy.

Other communities such as the Pakistani, Bengali and Somali, have also adapted the strategy and developed campaigns of their own. These campaigns are supported by the City Council's Education Committee through its Unified Multi-Cultural Education Service – SUMES- and by the local tertiary institutions (as previously mentioned).

This was not just another literacy campaign. By adopting a new strategy, which recognised the need to give the community the power to solve its own problems, it offered a new meaning to traditional approaches of community education. The community itself was used as a resource, helped and supported by the local institutions who trained and used this resource to act as the agent for spreading literacy within the community (Bennett 1992:201&202).

Women in particular have gained much from this campaign. Their role has developed from a position of isolation to a position of strength. Most of the women who joined the campaign have since developed meaningful routes into employment and further education (Shaif 1992:204). They look at education very positively and believe that it can contribute to the development of their community. This fundamental change is mainly the result of the academic success of the women assistants from the campaign, now at the Polytechnic. The women out-performed the men and played a central role in promoting the aim of the campaign through their literacy work in the community (Moqbil 1992:205).

Statistics also indicate that more women than men enrol in further and higher education and thus it should not be surprising that this is also the case in community development. However, opportunities for women in further and higher education posts are still fairly bleak and there is a need for institutional change in this regard (Gee1995:143-145).

#### 2.7.1.4 Positive effects

Ahmed (1992:209) argues that the positive effects of the campaign are as follows:

- it has “rescued” ESL from its marginal position to meet the articulated needs of the community;
- it has helped in the development of access and progression routes into main programmes of vocational education for an increasing number of ESL learners;
- it is unlocking and enhancing the vast potential that exists within the black communities and releases it for the benefit for those communities and society at large;
- it is equipping young adults with the necessary education to become teachers and community workers as well as narrowing the generation gap between young and old;

- it has influenced the institution management in allocation of resources and the development of better reception in the main programme for black students;
- it has had a large impact on the institutions, tutors and lecturers who are having to re-examine their programmes and practices.

#### 2.7.1.5 Materials

Culturally sensitive teaching materials have been developed, for use within these programmes. These have often been designed by the assistants, and are based on the knowledge the learners bring with them to the classroom. The materials are bilingual, reflecting the cultural richness of a particular community. An example would be a comprehension exercise based on the learners' own life-history or on extracts from black authors familiar to those learners (Ahmed 1992:210).

#### 2.7.1.6 Open College Networks (OCNs)

The details of the learners' progress are recorded for assessment purposes and for regular feedback to them. A portfolio of work is created which is eventually used to award certificates through South Yorkshire Open College Federation (SYOCF) (Ahmed 1992:210).

Open College Networks (OCNs) or Federations have not been around for very long but they are now recognised for their important contribution to post-16 (the legal school-leaving age) education and training. The impetus for the development of OCNs has been the growing recognition of the need for an accreditation framework, which embraces all forms of adult learning, particular, that which was not formally valued. At the heart of their development is the concern for equity. They also promote a fundamental rethink on how learning is valued and how learning opportunities are provided and delivered (Kerton 1992:211).

The flexible nature of the OCN accreditation system has opened a route of progression for learners who have traditionally been denied access to the full range of provision. A learner is now able to move through this progression path and gain entry into Higher Education (HE) within a three-year period by linking into a range of Access into HE courses which are run by Sheffield institutions and are SYOCF accredited. At each stage learners know where they are, how they are progressing and where they need to go next (Kerton 1992:212).

#### 2.7.1.7 Impact of the Yemeni Community Campaign

According to Robb (1992:55) with all these changes having occurred in the field of adult literacy, there have been few attempts at assessing their impact. Within the workplace environment it was found that it is very difficult to persuade employers to offer workplace courses based on the needs of individuals. It proved more effective to talk in terms of increased productivity and harmonious labour relations, since the customer was no longer the individual student but the employer, whose priorities are inevitably of a different order. Workplace literacy programmes are of importance with literacy schemes increasingly experiencing funding shortages.

The spread of open learning and the move towards competency-based accreditation, in conjunction with the way in which the image of the individual learner has been constructed, has according to Robb (1992:56), exacerbated the tendency to downplay the underlying social and political reasons for educational disadvantage and to shift the responsibility for illiteracy onto the individual, who is seen as being in some sense personally inadequate. Although the positive benefits (as previously mentioned) are not denied, the move away from group work risks reinforcing the sense of personal stigma and isolation that many literacy students feel, at the same time as losing opportunities for building up self-confidence through discussion, creative self-expression and mutual learning. These should be incorporated in the broader vision of literacy work.

## 2.7.2 Conclusions with regard to the United Kingdom literacy programmes

Although adult literacy only received serious consideration after the mid-1970s, within the UK, adult literacy programmes were initiated as an acknowledgement of the declining literacy rates. It was also recognised that it was a basic human right for all. It was also a means of economic and community empowerment for those involved in the Yemeni/Sheffield literacy campaign.

The following conclusions can be drawn with regard to adult literacy programmes in terms of the Yemeni/Sheffield campaign:

- Campaigns of the past failed due to:
  - the institutionalised approach of the traditional adult education facilities;
  - the lack of time available of the working-class black people;
  - disregard for issues important to the learners, for example, time, class-setting, bilingual support and course content;
  - the lack of awareness of available facilities on the part of potential learners;
  - fear of racial, sexual and religious harassment on the part of potential learners;
  - a lack in confidence on the part of the potential learner in the ability to use English;
  - the fragmented and “piecemeal” nature of the traditional approach to teaching ESL;
  - the sense of isolation and marginalisation on the part of the tutors;
  - unclear management structures and inadequate resources at adult education centres;
  - inadequate planning, monitoring and evaluation of the work done;
  - the lack of the course content to meet the needs of the community;
  - the denial of communities to influence programme policies; and
  - the illegitimate role workers assumed as community representatives.

The politically and educationally motivated initiative in terms of the Yemeni Literacy Campaign was successful due to the following reasons:

- the support of the City Council's Education Committee through SUMES;
- learners as well as literacy assistants and recruitment workers from within the community were targeted;
- recruitment workers were involved in:
  - setting up literacy classes;
  - advising literacy lecturers and assistants on the cultural aspects of delivery ;
  - working closely with lecturers and assistants in resource and curriculum development;
  - conducting further research into further literacy strategies to enhance the programme;
  - developing relevant resources at the information centre;
  - visiting potential clients and spreading awareness of the campaign;
  - establishing links with tertiary institutions;
- literacy assistants who were recruited were trained, enhancing their inter-personal and communication skills; thereafter they could either seek employment or further their education;
- literacy classes were set up in close proximity to the community;
- the needs of the community, including bilingualism, transport, religious and cultural needs and assistant-learner relationships, amongst others were considered;
- tertiary institutions within the area were also involved in the campaign. The spin-offs were:
  - ensuring continuity of campaigns within the community;
  - an increase in black enrolment at these institutions;
  - improved service delivery on the part of institutions;

- increased FTEs on the part of institutions;
  - accreditation of courses towards access and progression between community programmes and tertiary courses;
  - the establishment of a modular-based, intermediate foundation programme incorporating NVQ units on which to build towards a full vocational qualification;
- culturally-sensitive, bilingual, teaching materials, based on the knowledge of the learners were used.

By adopting the above-mentioned approach to adult literacy within the community, a number of positive effects besides those mentioned, have been experienced. These include:

- the empowerment of women;
- unlocking and enhancing the vast potential that exists within the black communities and releasing it for the benefit for those communities and society at large;
- equipping young adults with the necessary education to become teachers and community workers as well as narrowing the generation gap between young and old;
- influencing the institution management in the allocation of resources and the development of better reception in the main programme for black students;
- impacting on institutions, tutors and lecturers who have had to re-examine their programmes and practices;
- the development of OCNs recognising the need for an accreditation framework which embraces all forms of adult learning, particularly that which was not formally valued. At the

heart of their development is the concern for equity. They also promote a fundamental rethink on how learning is valued and how learning opportunities are provided and delivered ;

- the flexible nature of the OCN accreditation system has opened a route of progression for learners who have traditionally been denied access to the full range of provision.

Although these positive gains are highly motivating, there are a number of possible negative consequences, which also need to be taken into account. These include:

- few attempts have been made at assessing the impact of these campaigns;
- within the workplace environment it is very difficult to persuade employers to offer workplace courses based on the needs of individuals. It proves more effective to talk in terms of increased productivity and harmonious labour relations, since the customer is no longer the individual student but the employer, whose priorities are inevitably of a different order;
- workplace literacy programmes are of importance with literacy schemes increasingly experiencing funding shortages;
- the spread of open learning and move towards competency-based accreditation, in conjunction with the way in which the image of the individual learner has been constructed, has in the opinion of certain authors, exacerbated the tendency to downplay the underlying social and political reasons for educational disadvantage and to shift the responsibility for illiteracy onto the individual;
- the move away from group work risks reinforcing the sense of personal stigma and isolation that many literacy students feel, at the same time as losing opportunities for building up self-

confidence through discussion, creative self-expression and mutual learning. These should be incorporated in the broader vision of literacy work.

Thus it is essential, especially within the current economic context, to consider the importance of workplace literacy programmes and to acknowledge that the emphasis may shift from individual needs to the needs of the stakeholders at large. The community-based programmes may thus have to be adapted to meet the particular demands of the workplace (as discussed in paragraph 2.6.4) None-the-less, the Yemeni Literacy Campaign offers good guidance towards community literacy programmes. Lessons from this, together with those from educational institutions (as discussed under the Victoria and Queensland TAFE initiatives (cf 2.6.2) and the AMES initiatives of Victoria and NSW (cf 2.6.3), together with workplace programmes (cf 2.6.4) will be considered in adult literacy programmes within the Border/Kei region.

## **2.8 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

As discussed (cf 2.3.1 & 2.4.1), CBE/T has been adopted in both Australia and the UK as it is relevant to the current economic and concomitant educational as well as training needs of these countries. At the heart of CBE/T lies assessment as this is the means by which success or failure or rather “competent/not yet competent”/ “satisfactory /not satisfactory” is determined. Although not without problems, this approach to education and training offers a more relevant means of meeting the demands of the needs of these countries.

Within the field of adult literacy, CBE/T has also been incorporated as a practical approach to meeting the needs of stakeholders involved. As part of the broader educational framework, rather than the marginalised position it once held, adult literacy programmes have had to adapt to the trends within the education and training sector of society. This is evident in both Australia and the UK where the competency-based curriculum has been utilised within these programmes with a certain degree of effectiveness. Whether these programmes are workplace, community or institution-based, all subscribe to a competency-based approach.

The CSWE developed by AMES (cf 2.6.3), for example describes outcomes at the end of each stage so that continuity in curriculum sequencing is ensured. This allows learners to exit at any stage. Core competencies are also described at each stage.

Workplace literacy programmes (cf 2.6.4) are also to be accredited, competency-based and modular in design. This addresses the notions of portability and transferability of skills as outlined in CBE/T. The evaluation of the person is also based on the actual performance of a particular task.

Within community programmes (cf 2.7.1.2), the establishment of a modular-based intermediate foundation programme, incorporating NVQ units further emphasises the trend towards CBE/T.

Throughout this discussion the need for relevant literacy programmes is emphasised (cf 2.6.1 and 2.7.1). Both within the UK and Australia, learners were targeted so as to ensure the success of the programmes (cf 2.6.2.3 and 2.7.1.1). The need for support by government and broader community structures is also one of the important keys to success (cf 2.6.2 and 2.7.1.3).

These lessons, together with lessons from the broader South African perspective, regarding outcomes-based education and adult literacy programmes (as discussed in chapter three), will be considered in the context of adult literacy programmes within the Border/Kei region.

In chapter two a review of literature, in terms of some of the international trends in CBE/T and adult literacy training, is provided. Chapter three provides a review of the literature, in terms of current developments in the South African education system, regarding outcomes-based education and adult literacy training.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMES – THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

As outlined in chapter one (cf 1.5), one of the research aims is to establish the current developments in the South African education system regarding adult literacy training. Furthermore, it is also to determine what the possibilities of an outcomes-based approach could be to enhance the effectiveness of adult literacy training programmes within the South African context. In order to review possibilities of an outcomes-based approach within adult literacy training programmes, a general understanding of outcomes-based education (OBE) within the South African context is required. Chapter three thus firstly presents a general discussion of OBE before examining current developments in adult literacy programmes in the South African education system and the implications of an outcomes-based approach in this context.

#### **3.2 THE NEED FOR CHANGE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

In contemporary South Africa, the empowering of individuals by way of education and training is crucial to their participation in all aspects of society. Education and training are imperative to the improvement of economic participation and performance. In order to do away with the fragmentation and inequality of provision, which characterised education and training previously, a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was introduced. The NQF is an organising system for all qualifications in education and training and its objective is to clarify the levels of all qualifications. The level and nature of the qualifications would be an indication as to what could be reasonably expected of an individual with particular qualifications. As a result the new framework directly affects all sectors of education and training (Genis 1997: xiii).

The NQF, which is outcomes-based, will ensure that assessment in South Africa is firmly based on criterion-referenced or self-referencing, where a learner's progress is compared against his/her own previous achievements, and not against those of other learners (Niebuhr 1996: 31).

Education and training is of great consequence to societal progress and activities. Education, in all probability, is likely to be affected by any amendments within society, be it economic, political or otherwise. The recent political change from an authoritarian to a more democratic government, accompanied by new directions in the approach to socio-economic development, has had implications for education and training in South Africa (Genis 1997:1-7).

The establishment of a NQF illustrates the advancement of the government's human resource strategy by emphasizing access, mobility and quality in the education and training system. Mobility will become possible because the accepted standard will be competence as expressed in terms of set standards. Competence, by the same standard, will guide access and quality in education and training. The radical paradigm shift from content- to competence-oriented learning programmes requires that the focus shift from instruction to learning. As a consequence, educators will be expected to act as facilitators of knowledge and scholars will be more actively involved in the learning process (Genis 1997:15-17).

### **3.2.1 South Africa within the global perspective**

Within contemporary society, South Africa is a global partner. The current predominant trends of international interdependence and economic co-operation, make it inconceivable that South Africa can be isolated and at the same time hope for a competitive economy. There is an increasing dependency not only on increased healthy domestic policies, but also on improved international co-operation, stronger business allies, higher productivity and improved quality products for the export market which are able to compete with the finest in the world. It is imperative that South Africa responds to technological developments, in order to ensure quality standards of living for its inhabitants. It is only with improved technology that competitive productivity and quality can be ensured. Therefore, to be competitive within this highly technological era as part of a global economy, it is clear that South Africa requires a workforce that is in tune with the latest technological developments, committed to continuous learning, can solve problems, are creative, have good communication skills, can participate in managerial processes and decision making,

can work well as team members and can be utilised flexibly. However, the traditional South African education system could not produce a workforce of this calibre (Pretorius 1998: viii).

Greenstein, Tikly, Motala, Mkwanazi and Chisholm (1994:82) however, question whether education can or should be a key instrument for transforming labour markets and growth rates. According to them, international experience shows that education rarely functions as a “panacea for economic ills”. Although a sound system of education is a prerequisite for economic growth, it does not automatically lead to greater economic competitiveness.

None-the-less, Burroughs (1994:39) stresses the importance of education and training as an organic and interconnected part of systems and structures in the context of the workplace. In order to create a workforce which is flexible to adapt to changing demands, education and training is regarded as playing a pivotal role.

### **3.2.2 The traditional South African education system**

The apartheid legacy of the traditional South African system, prior to 1994, lead to tremendous inequalities in educational standards for the various ethnic groups within the country. In addition to this, the curriculum favoured the requirements of a minority group, neglecting to develop the large black sector of South African society (Moodly 1997:99-103; Van Wyk & Mothata 1998:1).

The following problems are highlighted within the traditional education system in South Africa:

- a rigid and prescriptive curriculum;
- rigidly structured curriculum processes without stakeholder participation in the decision-making process;

- an emphasis on academic education, neglecting skills education;
- a gap between education in the formal education sectors and workplace training;
- emphasis on differentiation in the form of a wide variety of subjects;
- a content-based curriculum where the teacher instructed and the learner memorised;
- a teacher-centred, rather than learner-centred curriculum;
- the measurement of learner achievement in terms of symbols and percentage which are often no real indication of actual performance; and
- the comparison of learner achievement to that of other learners which resulted in excessive competition (Pretorius 1998:viii-ix).

Considering all that has been discussed, it is clear that there is a need for transformation within the South African education system. Not only is it essential towards correcting the educational inequalities of the past, but if South Africa endeavours to be on par with the changes occurring within the international economic arena, and with technological and organisational developments, educational transformation is necessary for the development of a skilled workforce which is internationally competitive. For these reasons, amongst others (cf 3.6.3.3), the integration of vocational and general education has been encouraged. This has led to the introduction of a new qualifications framework (the NQF) with the adoption of outcomes-based education (OBE) as a means of transforming education within South Africa (Department of Education 1995:17-18; Genis 1997:4-8; Pretorius 1998: ix).

At the heart of this process of transformation within the education and training system, is the curriculum. As a time period was set in which the transformation of the curriculum would take place, the term

'Curriculum 2005' was adopted. The curriculum is to be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society (Department of Education 1997e:1). However, after a review of Curriculum 2005, the term 'Curriculum 21' (for the twenty-first century) was suggested (Chisholm et al 2000: 23). This term however, has not been adopted in the place of 'Curriculum 2005', as the recommendations entail a strengthening and streamlining of the curriculum, rather than its phasing out (Daily Dispatch 2000e:9).

### 3.2.3 A paradigm shift

The shift from mainly content-based learning to outcomes-based learning is analogous to the complete quality movement in business and manufacturing. Outcomes-based learning reflects the notion that in order to get where you want to be you have to first determine what you want to achieve. Once the objective has been determined, strategies and other ways and means will be put into place to achieve the goal. In terms of outcomes-based learning, the learner accomplishes more than remembering or mastering skills and knowledge. The aim of education and training is to prepare learners for life in society and for performing a job. It is the intention of the outcomes-based learning approach to focus equally on knowledge, skills, the process of learning and the final outcome or result. In this way, the process of achieving outcomes during the learning process can be related directly to the way outcomes are achieved in the world of work. The outcomes-based approach necessitates a paradigm shift towards the curriculating process and how learning should empower the learner via the achievement of outcomes (Olivier 1998: 20-21).

#### 3.2.3.1 The debate

One of the most important elements of the NQF is integration, specifically the integration of education and training. How this would take place, sparked a debate of major proportion. Essentially, there are two schools of thought, namely, one which wanted no distinction drawn between education and training and one which was in favour of them existing in parallel tracks, joined by some kind of umbrella body. The education sector was concerned that education would lose its 'soul', that it would become narrow in focus, paying attention only on teaching which was required by the world of work – training, in other words. The

education sector was anxious that education standards would decrease rapidly if training were to prescribe to education (Niebuhr 1996:18).

The training sector, however, was concerned that the integration of education and training would lead to unreasonable demands for 'high' academic standards in the training world; an imposition that would make it strenuous, if not impossible, for those who trained workers to adjust rapidly to employment demands when required (Niebuhr 1996:18).

French (1997:20) however, is of the opinion that both education and training are "impoverished" by the separation. Ideally there will be a time when the word 'learning' will be used to overcome invidious distinctions between education and training. However, integration does not mean that the system is without differentiation and diversity. The differentiation is on the basis of functional, purposeful and relevant discriminations, rather than on the elitist notion of learning as can sometimes be found in the academic sector.

There is also a debate as to how fast development should take place within the NQF. Business and industry are fairly anxious to go ahead with certificated training in new and urgently needed skills, whereas there are those who are concerned with the long-term effects and hold the view that innovation and the creation of new regulations should be approached with caution. The latter argues that systems and regulations should be carefully thought through before being implemented and that ordinary people and communities should be given time to understand and own the system. The former argues that it is only when the systems are in place that it will be possible to act, learn and refine. This debate is as yet, open (SAQA1997b:3-4).

Despite the schools of thought regarding education and training, a compromise is reached in the *White Paper on Education and Training* which rejects the rigid divisions between academic and applied knowledge, and between theory and practice. The White Paper points to the need for convergence on issues such as a single aim for education and training, while at the same time acknowledging the need for divergence (Niebuhr 1996:19; Republic of South Africa 1995b:16 &26).

### 3.2.4 Outcomes-based education (OBE) and learning

As discussed in chapter two and stated by Pretorius (1998:xi) and Genis (1997:5-8), education systems perceive OBE as a more relevant and appropriate model that can address future needs more readily than in the past, as well as implement technological inventions and changes that have taken place in the work environment.

According to Olivier (1998:3), the difference between outcomes-based learning and traditional content-based learning is that the latter are mostly content/skill driven and teacher/trainer centred (as discussed in paragraph 3.2.1). The primary purpose of content-based learning is the mastering of knowledge, with textbooks and teachers being the informative sources. Outcomes-based training is based on identifying and listing of the generic competencies for a particular job or a range of job activities at a particular level. Manuals or guides are used as directives to provide guidelines for self-paced learning. Furthermore, outcomes-based learning is a learner-driven learning process and aimed at achieving outcomes. Particular learning procedures are used to guide learners in order for them to achieve their outcomes in real-life situations. Knowledge and skills can be extracted from any source and the role of teachers evolves accordingly to provide guidance for learners. In other words, trainers should facilitate learning by encouraging self-learning, critical thinking and stimulating creativity. The changing role of teachers signifies that not just anyone qualifies to be a teacher or trainer. The role and functions of facilitators of outcomes-based learning should be redefined to align it with outcomes-based, real learner-centred learning.

It is also important to note, as stated by (Niebuhr 1996:1) “*students do not achieve the outcome through a set of prescribed learning experiences in one programme area or in one grade; they attain them through a wide range of experiences encountered over several grades.*” Thus OBE is a continuous process which can occur over a lengthy period of time.

Education systems favour OBE for a number of reasons. These include:

- a learner-centred approach constructed on the principle that all learners have the ability to achieve well if allowed sufficient time to do so;
- time and assistance are provided for each learner to achieve the maximum potential;
- learners are focused on what should be learnt, having advanced knowledge of the outcomes;
- an opportunity for flexible teaching methods is offered to teachers, since the emphasis is on whether the learner reaches the required standard or outcome, rather than on procedure;
- multiple opportunities to demonstrate whether the outcome has been achieved are offered to learners;
- learner promotion is based on demonstrated achievements;
- learner achievement is ascertained solely on whether the individual learner has achieved the required outcome or not, rather than in terms of the achievements of other learners;
- greater accountability in achieving the required standard or outcome is expected to be accepted by the learner;
- freedom and flexibility to augment their learning to engage in enriching activities, for self-motivated learners who achieve the required outcome;
- outcomes or culminating demonstrations of significant learning must be of acceptable quality;

- great expectations for all to succeed is emphasised;
- it is based on the involvement of an extensive range of stakeholders, parents, educators and business leaders in determining the required outcomes; thus, community requirements tend to be addressed more directly;
- the focus is on skills needed in day-to-day living and requirements of the work environment, rather than on memorising factual knowledge;
- emphasis falls on embedding quality problem-solving skills, rather than on memorising a given amount of scientific information;
- it is focused on the future and is able to address the changing needs of the community more readily; and
- it is a long-term commitment based on the notion of continuous improvement (Pretorius 1998:xi).

There are three forms of OBE, namely:

- **Traditional outcomes-based education** which is the design which originates from the existing curriculum. Outcomes are defined as instructional goals based on the existing curriculum. They focus on the ability to master content, with the emphasis on remembering and understanding. The principal dangers of this approach are that the culminating demonstration is often restricted to small segments of instruction which makes each an end in itself; the content of the curriculum stays the same; and the concept of the total person is rarely the driving force.

- **Transitional outcomes-based education** which is an approach that began in the early eighties. It moved away from existing curricula to identify outcomes that reflected higher order competencies that cut across traditional subjects. Content was the vehicle to cultivate higher order competencies such as problem-solving, critical thinking, effective communication and technological applications.
  
- **Transformational outcomes-based education** which is the greatest evolution of the outcomes-based concept. It moved away from the existing curriculum as well as from the given structures of schooling. None of the existing features of the school's instruction are regarded as untouchable. All curriculum design, strategic planning and resource allocation, mirror the scope and nature of the outcomes. The objective is to equip all students with the knowledge, competence and orientation required for success after they leave school (Brady 1995:9).

However, Chisholm et al (2000:21) caution against these distinctions. It is argued that learning can encompass both content and competency acquisition.

### **3.3 SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA)**

The aim of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (hereafter referred to as the Act), which was executed by proclamation on 4 October 1995, is to accommodate a National Qualifications Framework, and to facilitate the establishment of SAQA (*Republic of South Africa 1995a:1521*).

The Act gives South Africa the ability to develop its own integrated NQF accompanied by a supporting quality assurance system. The system will concentrate on recognition of both newly as well as previous learning achievements. The function of the system is to ensure that credits, unit standards and qualifications (discussed in paragraph 3.3.1.3) obtained at all levels adhere to set standards and will abide by national and international standards (Olivier 1998:4).

The Act restructures education by not restricting recognition of learning to formal settings such as schools and colleges, but also recognising prior learning which might have taken place in the work environment or through self-study. Since the establishment of SAQA, important progress has been made with the establishment of the NQF (discussed in paragraph 3.3.1). The NQF will be instrumental in making an outcomes-based, integrated approach to education and training a reality (Van Wyk & Mothata 1998: 8).

It is the intention of the NQF to be instrumental in ensuring that qualifications will further an integrated approach to education and training. Standards and qualifications, which comply with the requirements of the NQF, will be registered by SAQA and will be identified by a unique description (Olivier 1998: 4).

### 3.3.1 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

It is important to remember that the intention of the NQF is to bring about transformation. The NQF has its roots in the discontent with the nature and quality of education and training of the traditional South African education system (discussed in paragraph 3.2.2) (SAQA bulletin 1997b:2).

Providing a definition for the NQF Niebuhr (1995: 15), states that it “*is a framework for providing lifelong learning opportunities utilising nationally recognised levels*”. Besides providing a means to register all types of learning achievements within one of eight levels, the NQF will also incorporate all registered unit standards, credits and qualifications in such a way that the interrelationship will intensify and facilitate career pathing, portability, articulation and flexibility between economic sectors. One of the primary objectives of the NQF is to create a mechanism to enable and further lifelong learning (Olivier 1998:4).

#### 3.3.1.1 The structure of the NQF

The NQF consists of eight levels providing for General, Further and Higher Education and Training bands. The education and training bands can be perceived as broad containers of the NQF accommodating

qualifications on the different levels. Levels 1 and 8 are seen as open-ended to respectively accommodate low level entrants and remove any kind of ceiling at the highest level (Olivier 1998:5).

- The following three major certificated levels or exit points can be identified :
  
- **General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)** marks the completion of general education , including adult basic education and training (ABET);
  
- **Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC)** marks the completion of further education whether school-based or work-based; and
  
- **Higher Education (HE)** marks the completion of college, technikon or university-based education (Vacarrino 1995:12).

A diagram of the structure of the NQF follows:

### THE NQF STRUCTURE

<b>NQF LEVEL</b>	<b>BAND</b>	<b>TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATES</b>
8	HIGHER	DOCTORATES AND FURTHER RESEARCH DEGREES
7	EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND	HIGHER DEGREES
6		FIRST DEGREES AND HIGHER DIPLOMAS
5		DIPLOMAS AND OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATES

4	FURTHER	SCHOOL/COLLEGE/NGO CERTIFICATES (GRADE 12)
3	EDUCATION	SCHOOL/COLLEGE/NGO CERTIFICATES
2	AND TRAINING	SCHOOL/COLLEGE/NGO CERTIFICATES

1	GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND	SENIOR PHASE	ABET LEVEL 4
		GRADES 7-9	
		INTERMEDIATE PHASE	ABET LEVEL 3
		GRADES 4-6	
		FOUNDATION PHASE	ABET LEVEL 2
		GRADES 1-3	
		PRE-SCHOOL	ABET LEVEL 1

(Olivier 1998:5)

#### 3.3.1.2 Objectives, functions and responsibility of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The success of the NQF will largely depend on how the recipients, partners and other stakeholders comprehend and implement the system. The objectives of the NQF are to:

- create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- facilitate accessibility, mobility, and progression within education, training, and career paths;
- enhance the quality of education and training;
- accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; as well as
- contribute to the overall personal development of each learner and to the social and economic development of the nation at large (Mothata 1998:20).

The **functions** of the NQF are as follows:

- ensure that education and training be brought together. Previously education was perceived as an area where knowledge is gained and training as an area where skills are obtained. The NQF will integrate these areas. This will enable learners to move from one learning institution to another;
- ensure that learning is recognised whether it occurs in formal or informal settings;
- facilitate the ability of learners to move between the education and working environments;
- ensure that areas of learning are joined together to enable learners to build on what they learn as they move from one learning institution to another;
- ensure that transferring credits and qualifications from one learning situation to another is made easier;

- ensure that the needs of the learner and the nation are attended to; and
- ensure the acceptance and recognition of qualifications obtained by learners both nationally and internationally (Department of Education 1997d:5).

The **primary responsibility** of the NQF is the measurement of qualifications, credits and unit standards in order to construct a framework, which adheres to the following:

- **integration** of education and training;
- **relevance** of education and training as mediums to acquire other ends rather than to be pursued as ends in themselves;
- **credibility** for industry, service sectors and institutionalised learning providers;
- **coherence** and versatility for moving within and through levels;
- **standards** for education and training stated in terms of outcomes;
- **access** to relevant levels of education and training for all potential learners;
- **articulation** between and within education and training to enable learners to move between components of the delivery system;
- **progression** which should allow the progress of learners through the levels of national qualifications through different combinations of the components of the delivery system;

- **portability** which should allow for learners to transfer credits or qualifications from one learning institution/employer to another; and
- **recognition of prior learning** achieved through formal, non-formal and informal learning and/or experience (Olivier 1998:6-7).

In order to successfully develop and implement the NQF it is crucial that its content and process be understood (Olivier 1998:7). The content is dealt with in terms of the structure (described in paragraph 3.3.1.1), and other concepts (described in paragraph 3.3.1.3). The process is discussed in terms of its various bodies (discussed in paragraph 3.3.1.4)

### 3.3.1.3 Concepts of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

At the macro-level of national policy, the NQF reflects the conceptual shift towards the provision of opportunities for life-long learning for all. This shift has changed the meaning of education and training and has left many educators without adequate ways of expressing new concepts. Old words are used to express what is new and are therefore used in new ways, and new words are used without clarity or agreement on their usage. There is thus a need to define concepts, which are related to the NQF (Niebuhr 1996:15; SAQA 1997b:6).

#### (a) *Qualifications*

The Act (Republic of South Africa 1995a:1521) defines qualifications as follows:

*“Qualifications means the formal recognition of the achievement of the required number of and range of credits and such other requirements at specific levels... as may be determined.”*

A qualification constitutes a planned combination of learning outcomes which have a distinct purpose and are intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning.

Therefore, a qualification is the formal recognition of achievements of a required number and type of

credits at a particular NQF level, as determined by bodies registered by SAQA (Olivier 1998: 8-10).

Previous learning will be recognised, and knowledge, skills and expertise acquired formally, non-formally or informally will be assessed for credit (Niebuhr 1996: 67).

(b) *Unit standards*

Unit standards are nationally agreed and internationally comparable statements of specific outcomes and their associated performance/assessment requirements together with administrative and other necessary information (Niebuhr 1996: 15). Unit standards are packaged into qualifications at specific NQF levels. The function of the unit standard is to provide an assessor document, a learner's guide and an educator's and trainer's guide for preparing learning material. Unit standards must express clearly defined learning outcomes associated with clearly defined criteria in order to ensure that requirements are complied with (Olivier 1998: 15-16).

(c) *Outcomes*

"An outcome is in fact a **culminating demonstration** of the entire range of learning experiences and capabilities that underlie it, and it occurs in a **performance context** that directly influences what it is and how it is carried out. These defining elements clearly tell us that an outcome is not simply the name of the learning content, or the name of a concept, or the name of a competence, or a grade or test score, but an **actual demonstration in an authentic context**" (Niebuhr 1996: 24).

According to the SAQA bulletin (SAQA 1997b: 6) the terms 'outcome' and 'competence' are seemingly being used interchangeably in the training or human resource development system. When using the term 'outcome' it seems clearly to relate to results, which are seen to relate to consequences within a person, in economic contexts or in societal contexts. Presently, within the Department of Education the language around 'outcome' is varied.

However, outcomes clearly are the results of a learning process whether formal, non-formal or informal. In outcomes-based education and training (OBET), curriculum developers work backwards from agreed outcomes within a particular or specific context. The learner should be able to demonstrate an understanding of, as well as the ability to apply these outcomes appropriately (Niebuhr 1996: 15).

(d) *Critical/Essential outcomes*

Critical/essential outcomes are cross-curricular, broad generic outcomes that inform educating and learning (Niebuhr 1996: 15). The objective of the critical outcomes is to direct educational activities towards development of the learners within a social and economic environment (Olivier 1998:17). The eight critical cross-field outcomes as designed by SAQA and which apply to all the learning areas are that learners should be able to successfully demonstrate their ability to:

- communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation;
- identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking;
- organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- work effectively with others in a team, group, organisation and community;

- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others;
- understand that the world is a set of related systems. This means that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation;
- show awareness of the importance of effective learning strategies, responsible citizenship, cultural sensitivity, education and career opportunities and entrepreneurial abilities  
(Department of Education 1997d:16).

(e) *Specific outcomes*

Specific outcomes are contextually demonstrated knowledge, skills, and values, which mirror essential/critical outcomes (Niebuhr 1996:15). Specific outcomes express the outcome of narrowly defined aspects of learning. The specific outcomes are context-linked whilst complying with, and supporting the critical outcomes (Olivier 1998:17).

(f) *Learning programmes*

Learning programmes serve as guidelines that will allow teachers to be innovative and creative in guiding learners to achieve outcomes. A learning programme is made up of a combination of outcomes selected from the areas of learning, which will allow the learner to progress through the levels via appropriate combinations of the components of the delivery system, following the concepts of portability and flexibility. They are the sets of learning activities in which the learner will be involved while working towards the achievement of sets or clusters of particular outcomes. A learning programme is made up of the following elements:

- **critical outcomes** (already described);
- **specific outcomes** (already described);
- **assessment criteria**, the criteria attached to an assessment, which provide broad indicators of what evidence learners need to present, submit or provide to be assessed;
- **range statements**, statements which indicate the scope, depth, complexity, and the parameters of the achievement; and
- **performance indicators**, indicators which provide detailed evidence of the progress in the achievement of the knowledge, skills, and processes that learners should master in order to prove progress (Olivier 1998:35-36; Department of Education 1997c:10-15).

(g) *Recognition of prior learning (RPL)*

While for some the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a new concept of which the meaning and implications are not clear, for others it is a concept put into practice and is perceived as an important policy tool in the field of education and training in South Africa. Within the NQF, provision has been made for learners to apply for assessment (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.8.e) of their skills, knowledge, understandings and experience which they have acquired through their adult lives, even though they might not possess formal certification to prove their learning (Genade 1998:69).

Adults have accumulated many life experiences, and for learning to occur, they use their existing knowledge to understand the new information (Vaccarino 1995:37). Morphet (1992:93) describes this experience as “the accumulated baggage of personal history”. According to Brookfield (1986:30) experience is used by adults as a resource in learning so the learning content and process must bear a perceived and meaningful relationship to past experience.

RPL allows for the awarding of credits to learners for unit standards for which they have never formally studied, provided that they are able to meet the registered outcomes for those unit standards (Niebuhr 1996:30).

*(h) Assessment*

Assessment is discussed in more detail in paragraph 3.4. Assessment is made up of a task or series of tasks set in order to obtain information about a learner's competence. These tasks can either be workplace, coursework, classroom, homework or project based or they can be set in an examination paper (Niebuhr 1996: 16). The basis for assessment within traditional education concentrated on written tests or exams where learners were assessed according to set criteria and were passed or failed on the basis of how well they mastered the knowledge. Assessment of outcomes-based learning is a continuous evaluation, based on assessment of knowledge, skills as well as the achievement of outcomes. Assessment now forms part of the learning process as well as a method used for gauging success (Olivier 1998: 3).

*(i) Assessment criteria*

Assessment criteria are the criteria attached to an assessment task designed to determine the achievement of a specific outcome (Niebuhr 1996:16).

*(j) Credits*

This is the recognition that a learner has achieved a unit standard. Credits may be accumulated until conditions have been satisfied for a qualification to be awarded (Niebuhr 1996:16).

*(k) Levels*

These are positions on the NQF where unit standards are registered and qualifications are awarded to those who have completed the necessary combination of unit standards (Department of Education 1997d:32).

### (l) Level descriptors

Level descriptors are statements which reflect desired achievements in terms of essential outcomes for each level of the NQF (Niebuhr 1996:16).

#### 3.3.1.4 Structures within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The awareness of and necessity for quality management in education and training is a trend that is growing internationally and one which does not exclude South Africa. In order to regulate quality within education and training within the country, a number of structures have been established (Niebuhr 1996:33). These structures, though as yet new and untested, are crucial to overseeing the development and implementation of the NQF (SAQA bulletin 1997a:4). In order to ensure national, as well as international credibility, the SAQA act prescribes that a quality assurance management system be established, which must ensure:

- stakeholder participation;
- mechanisms for registration, accreditation, moderation and auditing; as well as
- maintenance of the quality of unit standards (Olivier 1998:10).

As these structures are referred to within this chapter, a brief outline of them follows.

#### (a) *Fields/Learning areas*

A key part of the organisational mechanism of the NQF is fields. It is within these fields that standards are generated, and at an organisational level, where coherence of qualifications is regulated. Fields are thus the “organising tools” of the NQF (Niebuhr 1996:34).

The twelve fields/learning areas identified within the NQF framework are as follows:

- 01 Agriculture and Nature conservation
- 02 Culture and Arts
- 03 Business, Commerce, and Management Studies
- 04 Communication Studies and Language
- 05 Education, Training and Development
- 06 Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
- 07 Human and Social Studies
- 08 Law, Military Science, and Security
- 09 Health Sciences and Social Services
- 10 Physical, Mathematical, Computer, and Life Sciences
- 11 Utility Services
- 12 Physical Planning and Construction (Niebuhr 1996:35; SAQA 1997a:8).

There are overlaps between many fields, and arguments can be put forward for other ways of describing and grouping the fields. However, it should be emphasised that the fields were established after a long and thoughtful process (SAQA 1997a:8-9). Although a recommendation was made by Chisholm et al (2000: 30) to reduce the number of learning fields in the GET band, this recommendation was not accepted by the Minister of Education, Dr Kader Asmal, and the Ministers of the Provincial Education Councils (Daily Dispatch 2000d:1).

*(b) National Standards Bodies (NSBs)*

For each of the twelve learning areas, a National Standards Body (NSB) must be established in order to identify sub-fields of learning. They will also ensure that the unit standards recommended by standards-generating bodies (SGBs) (discussed within this paragraph) meet the requirements of SAQA. NSBs are to

be composed of national stakeholders comprising key interest groups in the field (Olivier 1998:11; SAQA 1997a:10).

(c) *Standard-Generating Bodies (SGBs)*

The standard-generating bodies (SGBs), will develop unit standards and qualifications in the sub-fields of learning. They will also update and review these standards and make recommendations to the NSBs. These bodies should also consist of key education and training stakeholders and specialists (Olivier 1998:10-11; SAQA 1997a:11).

(d) *Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies (ETQAs)*

Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies (ETQAs) are to oversee the implementation and maintenance of the system (Olivier 1998:13). ETQAs are thus bodies, which are accredited by SAQA for the purpose of monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards and qualifications (Mothata 1998:16).

### **3.4 ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES-BASED LEARNING**

The assessment of learning achievements is inextricably linked to the characteristics of curricula. There is a direct bearing between the format, nature and scope of a curriculum and what will be achieved and assessed. Unless assessment is correctly aligned with curriculum reform and teaching practices, the desired changes in education (cf 3.2) will be extremely difficult, if not impossible to implement. Whereas the traditional content-based approach was mainly judgmental in its assessment, outcomes-based assessment also incorporates assessment of processes and other fundamental attributes. Outcomes-based assessment is made up of a series of activities (discussed in paragraphs 3.4.1 & 3.4.2), which take place in order to obtain information and evidence about a learner's competence in achieving outcomes (Olivier 1998:44-45; Van Rensburg 1998:82).

### 3.4.1 Definition of assessment

According to the Department of Education's assessment policy, assessment is *"the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes for a particular phase in learning"*. There are four steps involved in the process of assessment, namely, generating and collecting evidence of achievement, evaluating the evidence against outcomes, recording the findings of the evaluation and using the information to assist the development of the learner as well as to improve the process of learning and teaching (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 1998b:3).

### 3.4.2 Assessment and the learning process

According to Vaccarino (1995:44) assessment should be regarded as a natural step in the learning process and serves two purposes. These purposes serve as a guide to learner and tutor alike.

There are a number of methods and techniques (discussed in paragraph 3.4.4) that could be implemented to assess progress throughout the learning process. It is essential to bear in mind that the assessment criteria are statements, which will provide evidence that teachers need to look for in order to decide whether a particular outcome or aspect thereof has been achieved. The principle of the assessment process is therefore regarded as part of the learning process and not as a means in itself. For this reason, it has the imperative that those who do not meet the requirements should receive clear feedback and support, while simultaneously indicating areas, which need further attention in order to achieve the required standard. As previously mentioned, the focus shifts from judgmental assessment to continuous development assessment. A critical characteristic of evaluation now is to enable and to empower (Olivier 1998:44-45).

It is also imperative to note that within outcomes-based education, the learner and results are the focus points. The notion is that all learners need to and can achieve their full potential, but that it does not necessarily happen in the same way or within the same period. It therefore implies that:

- what learners are to learn is clearly defined;
- each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement;
- each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools; and
- each learner is provided with the time and assistance to realise his or her potential (RSA 1998b:3).

Outcomes-based assessment suggests not only the assessment of knowledge and skills, but also the application or employment thereof in order to achieve the outcome. The sum and substance of outcomes-based assessment is that:

- learners are assessed against the requirements in the learning programme;
- learners are given the chance to provide further evidence of achieving outcomes;
- moderation ensures consistency of assessment; and
- the assessment process is seen as part of the learning process and not as a means in itself (Olivier 1998:47).

### 3.4.3 Types of assessment

Vaccarino (1995:45) states that the appropriateness of an assessment is largely determined by purpose, namely, why the assessment is needed at a specific stage in the learner's learning, and what use will be made of the results.

Within OBE, various types of assessment can be performed. These include:

- **formative assessment**, which refers to assessment that takes place throughout the duration of the learning, as the learner progresses towards the outcome. It allows for feedback, remedial activities as well as additional support, which might be necessary;
- **summative assessment**, which is carried out at the end of the learning period and is used to verify that the learners have met the set standards;
- **diagnostic assessment**, which allows for the evaluation and classification of learning difficulties so that appropriate remedial assistance and guidance can be given;
- **evaluative assessment**, to compare and aggregate information about learner achievements in order to use it in curriculum development and evaluation of teaching and learning (Olivier 1998: 67-71; RSA 1998b:5).

According to Olivier (1998:67) within OBE, essentially the two forms of formative and summative assessment can be implemented. This can be applied separately or in combination. However, Van Rensburg (1998:97) recommends that assessment should be based on continuous diagnostic assessment and not merely on summative content-based assessment. It is also noted though that these types of assessment are not mutually exclusive and should be integrated in the overall assessment process (RSA 1998b:5).

#### 3.4.4 The educator and assessment

Educators have the overall responsibility of assessment, although it is essentially a partnership between various parties. A wide range of techniques, including informal monitoring by observation, formal use of appropriate and approved standardised tests, oral questions and answers, interviewing and peer assessment, amongst others, can be used. For the effective application of continuous evaluation, it is imperative that

educators have sound knowledge of what each technique offers and be able to use them in a balanced combination (RSA 1998b:6).

#### 3.4.5 Characteristics of assessment

Essentially though, assessment must be **valid, reliable and fair**. The outcome as well as the supportive learning and processes which are needed to ensure achievement, should be clear and defined before the learning commences. The assessor and the learner must be completely aware of what will be assessed, as well as how it will be assessed. It is important that assessment should be reliable through selecting the correct assessment methods to provide the correct type of evidence, which can be related to particular achievements. Assessment being fair means that there is no discrimination against a learner. The assessment process must be fair, open and transparent. This will ensure that the learners and assessors are both involved in the assessment process (Olivier 1998: 67-71).

To the above characteristics, Bells (1997:14-15) also adds issues such as **flexibility and authenticity**. Flexibility, in terms of ensuring that the same performance and standard can be fairly assessed even through another 'instrument', and authenticity, in terms of ensuring that evidence being assessed is truly the work of the candidate. This is of particular importance where the majority of learners are studying through distance learning programmes.

Two additional characteristics are also identified by Marais (1999:18), namely, **appropriateness and efficiency**. These, together with the above-mentioned characteristics ensure the quality and success of assessment procedures.

#### 3.4.6 Recording and reporting progress and achievement

A record of cumulative evidence of learner achievement should be kept for each learner. The record should also include information on the holistic development of the learner. Reports are the means by which

communication between the relevant parties is established. When reporting on a learner's progress, the educator, through comments, should convey a clear impression of personal knowledge of the learner, summarise achievement and progress, and provide useful feedback to evaluate and improve learning and teaching (RSA 1998b:6; Van Rensburg 1998:94).

#### **3.4.7 Conclusion with regard to assessment**

Assessment is an integral part of the outcomes-based approach. Every educator should use it as a teaching aid. In order to do so it is imperative that all educators have a good knowledge base with regard to the process of assessment within OBE (Van Rensburg 1998:97). The need for specialised knowledge and expertise in order to ensure the quality of assessments is also highlighted by Marais (1999:20-21), who discusses assessment in the context of organisations. Thus training of staff within this area is imperative.

### **3.5 CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARD TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

South Africa has embarked on an OBE system in response to a number of factors. Amongst others, these include a lack of the traditional system to provide the necessary support and skilled labour to meet the economic needs of the country, as well as the inequalities entrenched in the educational standards for various ethnic groups. OBE is seen as a means of bridging the gap between education and training, as well as a means of redressing the inequalities of the past. From a global perspective, it is highlighted that South Africa needs a competitive workforce that can keep pace with technological changes. OBE is seen as providing the means of improving the workforce in order to be part of a competitive economy (cf 3.1-.3.2.2).

All of the above has demanded a paradigm shift from the traditional education system. This shift includes:

- a move to a less rigid and prescriptive curriculum and a more integrated approach in terms of subjects ;

- more stakeholder participation in the decision – making process;
- the integration of education and training;
- establishing linkages between formal education sectors, informal sectors and workplace training ;
- a more learner-centred approach;
- a change in the assessment method to one which indicates actual performance;
- a move away from excessive competitiveness between learners.

The above has been integrated in the White Paper on Education, which points to the need for convergence within education and training, and also acknowledges the need for divergence.

In terms of the current needs of the country, the outcomes-based approach is perceived as a more relevant and appropriate model for the following reasons:

- it is a learner-centred approach;
- time and assistance are provided for each learner to achieve the maximum potential;
- learners have advanced knowledge of the outcomes and focus on what should be learnt;
- an opportunity for flexible teaching methods is offered;

- multiple opportunities to demonstrate whether the outcome has been achieved are offered to learners;
- learner promotion is based on demonstrated achievements;
- learner achievement is ascertained solely on the individual learner's performance;
- the learner takes on greater accountability in achieving the required standard or outcome;
- freedom and flexibility for self-motivated learners to augment their learning to engage in enriching activities is accommodated;
- outcomes or culminating demonstrations of significant learning must be of acceptable quality;
- great expectations for all to succeed is emphasised;
- a wide range of stakeholder participation in determining the required outcomes are built in;
- the focus is on skills needed in day-to-day living and requirements of the work environment;
- emphasis falls on embedding quality problem-solving skills;
- it is future-focused and is able to address the changing needs of the community more readily;  
and
- it is a long-term commitment based on the notion of continuous improvement (cf 3.2.4).

OBE within the South African context is transformational based as it moves away from the existing curriculum as well as from the given structures of schooling. Through the SAQA act, the re-structuring of the education system is facilitated. The outcomes-based, integrated approach to education and training is realised in the form of the NQF. The establishment of a NQF gives testimony to the government's commitment to opening access, mobility and quality within the education and training system. It is also indicative of the country's commitment to global competitiveness, in terms of trying to keep pace with international trends, by improving its workforce.

Within OBE, assessment of learning achievements forms an inextricable part. The desired changes in education will be extremely difficult to implement if assessment is not correctly aligned with curriculum reform and teaching practices. There are certain requirements, which are central to the success of the assessment process:

➤ **The characteristics of assessment:**

**Validity, reliability, fairness, flexibility, authenticity, appropriateness and efficiency.**

This means that:

- the outcome and supportive learning and processes should be clear and defined before learning commences;
- the assessor and learner should know what will be assessed and how it will be assessed;
- the correct assessment methods to provide the correct type of evidence should be selected;
- there should be no discrimination against the learner;
- both the learner and assessors must be involved in the assessment process;
- the same performance and standard should be fairly assessed even through other instruments;
- the evidence being assessed should truly be the candidate's work (cf 3.4.5).

A combination of formative, summative, diagnostic and evaluative assessment is encouraged for OBE.(cf 3.4.3)

In terms of recording and reporting progress and achievement, the following is required:

- a record of cumulative evidence should be kept;
- information on the holistic development of the learner should be included;
- reports should be distributed among the relevant parties;
- the educator's comments should:
  - reflect personal knowledge of the learner;
  - summarise achievement and progress;
  - provide useful feedback to evaluate and improve learning and teaching (cf 3.4.6).

In order to fulfil the requirements concerning assessment, the educator should be well versed in the techniques applied. These include, amongst others:

- informal monitoring by observation;
- formal use of approved and appropriate standardised tests;
- oral questions and answers;
- interviewing and peer assessment.

The educator requires thorough training with regard to assessment and should have sound knowledge of what each technique offers and be able to use them in a balanced combination (cf 3.4.4 & 3.4.7).

The outcomes-based approach is also considered appropriate to the ABET sector which now forms an integrated part of the South African education sector (as presented in the NQF structure in paragraph

3.3.1.1). The concepts, structures and their various functions as discussed in chapter three are very important in the following section, which relates the situation of adult literacy in South Africa within the context of OBE.

### **3.6 ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

According to the Department of Education (1996:2-3), adult literacy has always been marginalised, and kept outside the borders of the formal education sector. This was especially the case in the eighties, where the nature of politics and education made the pursuit of adult literacy unusually frustrating and contentious. Past South African governments put in place policies designed to limit black people's access to education and hardly paid any attention to literacy. Past policies also fragmented education and training into different ethnic and racial sub-systems with unequal allocation of resources. This resulted in poor quality education in black schools and illiteracy in millions of adults, effectively limiting the intellectual and cultural development of South Africa as a whole.

The early nineties brought with them changes around adult literacy linked to national developments in the country (as discussed in paragraphs 3.6.3.1-3.6.3.7). There was serious work in research policy options. International and local donors were eager to contribute more of their resources, than was formerly the case, to adult literacy. Many literacy non-government organisations (NGOs) shifted their focus from oppositional politics, to promoting substantive learning achievements among learners. On the other hand, less politicised NGOs gained a new legitimacy, as long as they were seen to have relevant work programmes (French 1995:271-272).

#### **3.6.1 The scale of adult literacy provision – current providers and their capacity**

According to Van Heerden (1991:17) in a given year, at most about 1,1 per cent of the illiterate adult population, enrol in adult literacy courses in South Africa. Of these, only about twenty-five per cent

complete the courses, and literacy researchers generally estimate that less than 0,5 per cent of 'illiterates' are reached by literacy courses each year.

In Van Heerden's (1991:17-38) research on adult literacy in South Africa, a number of problem areas experienced by various contributors to adult literacy work are highlighted. These problem areas give us insight into the situation of adult literacy programmes as it stood in the early nineties, allowing for a better understanding of SAQA and the NQF's work frame, which strives to address these issues. Conclusions made in the light of these problem areas are briefly summarised as follows:

- there is a need for a variety of adult basic education programmes that respond to different levels of need;
- the need for adult basic education increases with political change and individuals feel the pressure to participate in the new dispensation by developing their skills, but only a small percentage of illiterate adults benefit from all adult literacy programmes in the country each year;
- adult literacy is currently in vogue and a number and range of organisations and individuals are seeking to legitimise a role for themselves in literacy provision. As there is little or no accreditation in the field it is difficult to assess where real skill, experience and expertise is to be found;
- a "critical mass" of information on effective literacy work is not available. Misinformation and oversimplification of the process involved hamper the field. Some agencies make astonishing and untested claims about their successes with adult illiterates, but serious literacy practitioners generally agree that effective adult literacy provision is a long term process;

- absolute success cannot be claimed by a particular agency, and different organisations and methods seem to have different strengths (Van Heerden 1991:17-38).

In a survey conducted by Harley et al (1996:250-277), it was found that there are a number of providers within the field of ABET. These include:

- the state, in terms of state night schools (adult centres), state-run night schools, prisons and other government departments;
- municipalities;
- parastatals, including libraries, universities and major national parastatals;
- companies, including mining companies;
- commercial training organisations;
- religious organisations, including centres of concern (Harley et al 1996:250-277).

Despite this seemingly large field of providers, none are without problems. There are considerable differences between the various sectors in terms of their approach to ABET and the resources, which they are able to make available to it. The night school sector is in crisis, with limited capacity in terms of both human and material resources, and a growing awareness of the need to change its curriculum and re-train its teachers. Despite this awareness, very little has changed within this sector. It does however remain the most significant sector in terms of number of classes run, and geographical spread. The companies sector is well-resourced materially and financially, and experience a fairly rapid growth in the number of ABET projects run. This is also true of the parastatal sector. However the lack of time to run programmes properly, irregular class attendance on the part of employees and lack of commitment on the part of

management are a few of the problem areas facing companies. The NGO sector is also experiencing a crisis in funding, and has cut back on projects and staff. The religious sector remains weak in terms of material and human resources. It relies heavily on volunteer staff, which is crucial to the sector. Since it caters largely for domestic workers who have little day-time at their disposal, classes can only be run once a week, which is insufficient for successful learning. The municipal sector is relatively under-resourced in terms of both material and human resources. This overview shows an uneven capacity, and varying strengths and weaknesses across the different sectors (Harley et al 1996:282,290-291).

According to French (1995:270-272), there has been too much “theorizing” (used in a pejorative sense) regarding adult literacy work in South Africa. It is argued that within this new dispensation theories regarding adult literacy have been neglected. This is the case since too much emphasis has been placed on the “practicality” of adult literacy work, or as the new term denotes, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). By neglecting theories, it is argued that, while on the one hand it has led to openness and tolerance, it also contributes to confusion and at times a failure of transparency in the sense that it is sometimes very difficult to see what influences, positions and interests are at play.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there has been a move away from the term “adult literacy” towards the term ‘adult basic education and training (ABET)’ and it is in the context of this move that adult literacy training is approached within this section of chapter three. Reasons given for this move are contained in the Department of Education’s policy document (1996:4). Within this document it is stated; “it has most recently been suggested that the term (ABET) subsumes both literacy and post-literacy as it seeks to connect literacy with basic adult education on the one hand and with training for income generation on the other hand”. There is also a need to draw links with lifelong learning and development. That ABET should include a holistic approach is also emphasised in findings in research conducted by Adult Learning Opportunities (ALO) on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). It was found that the approach to ABET in the mining industry “tends to define ABET as ‘language and maths’ and then disconnects them from the reality of the workplace, so that ABET becomes a form of social

responsibility". It is further stated that if ABET is to really make a difference, it cannot be thought of in isolation and must be linked to other strategic concerns (NUM & ALO 1997:37).

Sendall (1996:27) also makes a case for the term ABET in favour of the term Adult Basic Education (ABE) which was synonymous with literacy training. ABET goes beyond the boundaries and limitations of ABE "in trying to address the realisation of Section 32(a) of the Constitution". ABET seeks to equip adults with the equivalent of ten years of schooling (outlined in paragraph 3.6.3.8.d) to which they are entitled in terms of the Human Rights Bill.

As developments within the ABET process are still ongoing and are currently still being implemented (as becomes clearer within the course of the chapter), a broader view is taken of current developments within the field of ABET, as it is being implemented within the NQF.

### 3.6.2 The Tirisano Campaign

On July 27, 1999, the Minister of Education, Dr Kader Asmal, announced the start of a national mobilisation for education and training, under the slogan "*Tirisano*", working together (Daily Dispatch 2000a:2). This was in response to the national emergency within the education system. Amongst others, it was stated that the education system of education and training "has major weaknesses and carries deadly baggage from our past". Furthermore, large sections of the system are dysfunctional and there is a crisis at each level (Asmal 1999a:1-7).

Nine priorities have been identified within this campaign, including eradicating illiteracy within five years. The aim is that all South African adults should be literate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The situation at present is rather dismal in that millions of South African adults and youth cannot read or write in any language, and many more are functionally illiterate and innumerate (Asmal 1999a:9-10, Department of Education 1999:1).

According to Chisholm (1999:56-57) at first glance the nine-point plan comes across as a “SWOT- (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis”. However, more than this, it also embodies the discourse of revolution, Africanism and humanism. This, in Chisholm’s opinion, is significant in that the plan’s “language” displaces the vocational, technician and managerial courses that have become dominant in education, through the NQF and OBE. The plan does not merely focus on ‘competencies’, but neatly asserts the progressive dimension of OBE. Emphasis is not placed on education merely as an economic good and a necessity of economic growth, but something both intrinsic to democracy and a right of citizens. Solutions to problems are also sought in the plan. It avoids the tendency to reduce educational problems to cost questions only, for example, it emphasises voluntary service and new costed plans to support the eradication of illiteracy.

Literacy, according to Asmal (1999b:3) is amongst others:

*“about retaining dignity and self-respect in a lettered world. It is about functioning to the full as a human being among one’s peers. It is about the empowerment of the spirit, the informing of judgement, the development of skill and understanding, fulfilment of citizenship”.*

It is also stated that literacy is not an easy skill to retain and can be lost or rendered ineffective through disuse. The new ABET Programme as launched by the Education Department thus transcends literacy. It focuses on learning outcomes that empower and its learning programmes render qualifications that carry credit in the NQF. In this way, adult learners are thus able to continue to proceed with formal education. The Multi-Year Implementation Plan for ABET, as produced by the Department of Education (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.8) will enable approximately one million new learners to reach the equivalent of grade nine by 2003, provided the funds are available and practitioners are trained (Asmal 1999a:10).

The importance of supporting this campaign is emphasised by Asmal (1999a:10). However, it is also acknowledged that budgetary pressure has resulted in a number of provincial departments cutting back or closing ABET programmes. Sufficient funds have to be found to reverse this process, although it is not

foreseen that the government will find these funds in the near future in order to eliminate illiteracy through formal ABET programmes run by provincial education departments.

For this reason another strategy is proposed. Employers, firstly, are encouraged to run or support ABET programmes for their employees. This will be facilitated through the introduction of the skills levy, and the establishment of Sector Education and Training Authorities under the National Skills Authority. Illiterate South Africans who are unemployed will also have access to ABET programmes through the National Skills Fund (Asmal 1999a:10, Department of Education 1999:1).

Secondly, Asmal (1999a:10) also encourages the stimulation of the “civic virtue of voluntary service”, in support of illiterates. All sectors of the community are invited to assist in designing a major programme and to make facilities available. Once such a programme has been planned and costed, an appeal will be made to national as well as international grant-making agencies for financial assistance (Department of Education 1999:2).

In order to understand the broad processes currently taking place within ABET, it is important to have an understanding as to how these processes evolved and what the policies and guidelines were that influenced them. The following section examines some of the policies and guidelines that have influenced developments in ABET.

### **3.6.3 ABET policies and implementation influencing adult literacy training programmes**

As mentioned in paragraph 3.3, prior to 1990, ABET policy was practically non-existent. As stated in the Department of Education’s policy document for ABET, the years of neglect and lack of a comprehensive ABET system present a number of consequences:

- there are no national standards of provision, and therefore efforts to provide ABET have been fragmented and of minimal impact;

- there has been minimal, or no recognition, of the adult education sector as a whole, nor of adult educators;
- ABET provision suffers from an inadequate infrastructure, support systems and resources; few attempts have been made to link adult education to development and training. This has resulted in a lack of inter-departmental and institutional links with government, the private sector and NGOs;
- the focus of state-provided adult education has been an inappropriate, narrow and school-focused one. Despite its location in the schooling context, ABET has not benefited from either the educational resources or infrastructure of the formal school system (Department of Education 1997a:3).

Political changes in the country over the last number of years have brought about policy formulation in the field of ABET. The major policy players are, the State, including the previous National Party Government, The African National Congress (ANC) and the Government of National Unity (GNU), the private sector, the national training board, organised labour, NGOs, the South African Committee for Adult Basic Education (SACABE), as well as funders and educational institutions. Each of these have influenced policy proposals around ABET and therefore adult literacy training in various ways (Harley et al 1996:150-156).

In order to establish and have a clearer understanding of the current trends regarding ABET policy development and implementation, and therefore adult literacy training, the most relevant trends to the purpose of this study, are discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.6.3.1 The National Party Government's Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) – draft June 1991; final report November 1992

In the State's Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS) it is argued that ABET means eliminating backlogs in formal education. ABET is only discussed in terms of vocational training and distance education and training, with the definition of 'informal education' being confined to vocational training. Furthermore, it agrees that linking formal and non-formal education through a "nationally agreed qualification structure" is important "in developing every learner's potential" (Department of National Education (DNE) 1992: 7 & 27).

The ERS saw the primary responsibility for ABET as lying outside the State, with the State playing a minimal role in terms of "establishing nationally acknowledged criteria for minimum literacy skills ... determined by the national qualification structure and the possible institution of general compulsory education for at least the basic education period". It also expects that regional education departments would become increasingly involved in ABET programmes (DNE 1992a:34-35). According to Greenstein, et al (1994:83), the process involved in policy discussion with regard to the former government's ERS, is not broad enough.

3.6.3.2 The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) – December 1992

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report on ABET was published in December 1992, and was contemporary with the ERS and the first report of the National Training Board's (NTB) National Training Strategy (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.4). These reports were general in nature, providing only broad "policy options" with no recommendations or implementation plans, according to Harley et al (1996:158).

**Option A** proposed the provision of ABET as part of a national development policy aimed at the restructuring of the economy, redistribution, and political democratisation. ABET would need to be co-

ordinated with a national framework of human resource development and affirmative action. The State would thus be responsible for ABET and it would have to be located within the State structure. The need for democratic participation was also emphasised in the report, but stated that there was a lack of clarity about how civil society could be involved (NEPI 1992a:67-68).

**Option B** however, saw government structures as too cumbersome and bureaucratic for ABET to be located within the state. Instead, the government's responsibility would be to legislate for ABET, with such legislation determining structures and setting targets. This would ensure minimum interference but maximum support from the State (NEPI 1992a:72).

**Option C** perceived an ABET system largely based on the current State system. The State could play a co-ordinating role and most provision could be incorporated into a national system. ABET could be linked to the formal education system through incentives rather than legislation. The State system could also exist parallel to a differentiated field of business, NGO and other providers, who may not engage with the State option. Thus ABET would be a type of welfare provision, rather than part of an overall development strategy. Both the State and the other players in the field would have responsibility for and control of their own provision. Once again (as in option B) there would be options available for the location of ABET within the State (NEPI 1992a:76-77).

**Financing** of the various options were as follows:

- **Option A** would work if money was specifically allocated for ABET through the national budget;
- **Option B** would be successful if it were financed through the budgets of several ministries with an interest in ABET;

- **Option C** would require financing from the State budget specifically for State ABET, although the State could raise additional funds through charging for provision and materials (NEPI 1992a:68-77).

Chisholm (1999:58) notes that both the NEPI and ANC's framework for education and training (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.5) emphasise the importance of education to democratic participation on the one hand, and to international competitiveness on the other. However, it is stated that no matter how radical this reform might have been for skills training, and despite its best intentions, it either did not touch on critical sectors of the education system or had a stultifying effect. Instead of breaking down the barrier between the academic and vocational, it has contributed to the new managerialism and bureaucratisation of teaching and learning.

### 3.6.3.3 Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) – 1991-1994

At its national congress in July 1991, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) passed a resolution that *“there must be clear links between formal schooling, adult education, industrial training and other education and training systems”* (COSATU: 1991).

The resolution also included the beginnings of how COSATU envisaged this might take place, at least as far as ABET was concerned:

- ABET courses, which provide a general basic education, based on clear standards allowing advancement from one course to the next;
- nationally recognised certificates for ABET courses, equivalent to formal education certificates, which enable entry into training programmes;

- agreed principles for evaluation, the selection of teachers, and the development of programmes (Harley et al 1996:160).

COSATU reiterated the need to integrate education and training in more fundamental ways than had been previously proposed by stating that, "*whilst some employers acknowledge a need for education to be integrated with training, the conception of the nature of education is very narrow. It is limited to attitudes, values, basic numeracy, communications and life skills*" (COSATU Human Resources Committee 1992:92).

COSATU argued for the integration of education and training which focused on cognitive skills, so that workers would be equipped with the ability to think critically and solve problems, within the context of a broader substantive general knowledge. COSATU's justification for integrating the two was the need to upgrade skills of workers, which was not possible without a basic education. The upgrading of skills was also essentially needed for economic growth (COSATU Human Resources Committee 1992:96).

Integration of education and training could take place through a national system of clear national standards and certification, with a national system of qualifications. The curriculum would be outcomes-based, with clearly specified common core skills and content areas, which would accommodate the issuing of meaningful certificates by a national qualification structure. Within this competency-based system, the state would play an active role, financing it together with the business sector (COSATU Human Resources Committee 1992:86,95&102).

In a discussion document for NEPI in 1992, COSATU emphasised the role of ABET as the beginning process of education and training which should continue throughout a worker's life – what COSATU came to call "lifelong learning". In this document COSATU repeated its call for a national integrated system in which the State would play an important role. It argued that ABET should be located within the State, which would have the responsibility to regulate, co-ordinate, and allocate resources (Favish & Omar 1992:14-15).

COSATU also argued for partnerships between the State, employers and unions. It called for structures that were democratically determined and constituted at national, regional, local and sectoral levels for the implementation of policy and the development of detailed policies within the national framework (Favish & Omar 1992:15-16).

COSATU argued that employers and the state should be responsible for providing facilities for classes and paid time-off for workers, and should assist in paying for teachers and material development. The argument was that employers had benefited from the cheap labour system, and thus have a duty to contribute towards redressing inequalities and imbalances (Harley et al 1996:161). COSATU's proposal has profoundly influenced the current ABET policy as discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.7.

#### 3.6.3.4 The National Training Board's (NTB) National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI)

The National Training Board (NTB) was established under the Manpower Training Act (MTA) of 1981. This was a tripartite body to advise the Minister of Manpower on training questions. However, it did not address issues of training seriously as a number of seats on the board were occupied by white conservative craft unions (Bird 1992:46).

However, it was in their draft report of 1991, that the National Training Board (NTB) explored the idea of linking education and training, but in the limited context of vocational training. It did not propose the general articulation of "formal" education and "non-formal" education as did COSATU (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.3). The preliminary report of 1994, however, was a very different document, as COSATU had been involved in the task team that drew it up and was thus able to influence the process. The 1994 report thus contained most of the ideas integral to COSATU's proposals that:

- adult basic education and training should be more than just reading and writing, and should empower people to participate more fully in society;
- a competency-based approach should be used;

- there should be a national core-curriculum, with core subjects (Harley et al 1996:162-163).

As is clear within paragraph 3.6.3.7, these proposals have also influenced current developments in ABET.

### 3.6.3.5 The African National Congress's (ANC's) Policy Framework for Education and Training - drafts November 1993 and January 1994, final 1995

The African National Congress's (ANC's) policy framework carries considerable weight and has formed part of the education ideology influencing the South African system for the past few years, as becomes clearer within this paragraph and is evident within the Department of Education's ABET policy discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.7.

According to Harley et al (1996:168) and Greenstein et al (1994:83), it is clear that the ANC's recommendations in its *Policy framework for education and training* were influenced by COSATU's proposals, with obvious similarities. The ANC argued that mass-scale provision of ABET was a national priority, because literacy was a precondition for complete democratisation. ABET should form the foundation for life-long learning and all adults should have the right to ABET to a level equivalent to that of compulsory formal schooling. At this point learners should receive the same certificate as those completing the stage of their formal schooling, namely, the General Education Certificate (GEC) (as structured in paragraph 3.3.1.1).

The ANC envisaged a system where ABET and formal schooling were articulated within a national qualifications and certification structure, so that there was maximum horizontal and vertical mobility between the two systems. It proposed that there be three certificated levels below the GEC, so that learners had measurable targets up to GEC level, and so that learners who had no wish to gain a GEC could have their achievements recognised. It was proposed that these three levels should coincide with standard one, standard three and standard five of the formal schooling. An ABET division of the Department of National

Education and Training would have primary responsibility for developing a national framework for ABET, which should include:

- a national curriculum, with national materials;
- a national qualifications, accreditation and certification structure for learners and students;
- a financial framework;
- delivery systems (ANC 1994:88).

The ANC also proposed that other stakeholders should also be involved. An ABET Board as a sub-structure of a General Education and Training Council on which all stakeholders were represented, was also envisaged. This Board would be responsible for developing ABET policy. A National Institute would develop a national curriculum, which would be modular and based on outcomes, for Curriculum Development. The curriculum should include a general core curriculum, focusing on teaching the skills necessary for understanding and participation, in the structures and institutions of the wider society. This core would include, Numeracy, Languages, Social Studies, Development Studies, and Science and Technology (ANC 1994:88-90).

Greenstein et al (1994:83-84), are critical of the policy, stating that the focus appears to be structures rather than the content of education and training and leads to an “underplaying of policies and strategies to address racism, sexism and authoritarian control”. Furthermore, the policy’s marginal referral to the restoration of learning and quality teaching and policies to deal with out of school youth is criticised. The lack of a sound administration and financial framework are also seen as weaknesses within this policy framework.

Although Greenstein et al (1994:85) acknowledge that in terms of ABET major advances have been made towards an interactive planning model, the following problems are pointed out:

- the funding base for ABET is not clear and the absence of a costing formula does not allow for prioritisation between the major concerns of the framework;
- the top-down approach with the centralisation of ABET activity within the state needs to be balanced with the current decentralised activities of literacy and ABET in the rural areas, community initiatives and in society in general;
- the formation of SAQA requires a method of comparing the relative merits of given life experiences and a given number of years in formal institutions. A careful study of SAQA is needed in terms of cross articulation between different education paths in a highly differentiated and fragmented education system, and without national standards or qualifications.

Greenstein et al (1994:86) conclude amongst others, that with regard to ABET there is a need for training human resources for the new system, establishing governance structures harnessing local and NGO initiatives to participate in the national effort, conducting a survey to determine the needs of adult learners; and addressing the needs of the unemployed and the unorganised.

#### 3.6.3.6 The Government of National Unity's (GNU's) White Paper on Education and Training – March 1995

The White Paper, published for discussion in the *Government Gazette* on 15 March 1995, draws heavily on the NTB and COSATU proposals, both in the model it proposes and the philosophy underpinning this model. The White Paper makes a clear link between education and national economic development, stressing the role of the country's skills-base in the economy (RSA 1995b:25&31).

A major portion of the White Paper focuses on reconstructing, developing and transforming education as this is the challenge confronting post-apartheid South Africa (Pandor 1994:98).

The White Paper argues that ABET is a right guaranteed to all by the Constitution as our national development requires an ever-increasing level of education and skill throughout society. This requires an integrated approach to education and training on a far greater scale than there had been. In order to facilitate this integration the White Paper argues for a NQF. ABET also needed to be restructured so that it linked with the formal education system. This would be facilitated by the NQF by integrating ABET into the system of recognised, certifiable levels. By the time the White Paper was published, the NQF Bill had already been drafted and endorsed. The NQF proposals thus did not differ much from the proposals of the NTB (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.4). The only issue at this stage was whether ABET should be a sub-level of level one (the equivalent of the GEC level), or should be the first level (Harley et al 1996:174; RSA 1995b:31).

The State is clearly identified as having primary responsibility for ABET, but the role of other stakeholders is also acknowledged. Through the professional Directorate for ABET (as reported in the White Paper) the provision of a national focus point is made for the Ministry's commitment to the field, to undertake or sponsor research on structure and methods, to develop norms and standards, and to liaise with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Department of Labour, and the provincial departments of education (RSA 1995b:31).

The main organisational principle of a national ABET system was stated as the building of partnerships and there would be a representative national ABET Council as the authoritative voice of the field which would advise the Minister on ABET issues. Already the Ministry had established a national ABET task team, including provincial representatives, to facilitate the preparatory work already completed, and to plan the RDP Presidential Lead Programme for ABET. The White Paper stated that the Department would work with this task team in translating proposals into implementable policy. Furthermore, since in general, existing educational facilities could be used for ABET, major investment into new buildings would not be

required. Distance education, where possible, would also be implemented, according to the White Paper (Harley et al 1996: 175-176; RSA 1995b:31-32).

Although it is mentioned that use will be made of existing facilities, Van Niekerk (1996a:39-40) cautions that not only should venues be convenient, but they should also be conducive to adult learning. Adults can often feel embarrassed and fearful of being seen as “going back to school”, and may also experience travelling difficulties and expenses which are often reasons quoted for dropping out. Alternative possibilities in terms of using already existing venues in the vicinity or collaboration with other providers in the interests of rationalisation, should be explored.

### 3.6.3.7 The Department of Education’s policy for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)- Interim guidelines September 1995

On September 7, 1995 the Minister of Education at the time, Minister Bengu, announced the release of a *National adult basic education and training framework: Interim guidelines* as a national policy document (Bengu 1995:1). These guidelines had been drawn up by a working group of the National Stakeholders Forum (NSF) who accepted the proposed NQF as a development basis for the guidelines (Department of Education 1995:ii). As stated by Bengu (1995:1), the interim guidelines confirmed the view of ABET as a means of national reconstruction and development and also as the basic foundation for lifelong learning.

The interim guidelines adopt the competence-based, modular approach proposed by the NTB (as discussed in 3.6.3.4). The primary responsibility provision of ABET, according to the interim guidelines, lies with the State. However all other sectors/stakeholders also have a responsibility in the planning, monitoring and implementing of ABET programmes. These sectors will be represented on a National Stakeholder Forum or Council, which will undertake much of the work of setting levels, certificates and qualifications. This structure will be replicated at provincial, district and even local level, where relevant. According to the interim guidelines, until these structures are set up, the existing NSF will act as the interim national standards body for ABET (Department of Education 1995:6-8).

3.6.3.8 The Department of Education's policy for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and national multi-year implementation plan for adult education and training –final October 1997

Considerable attention is given to the Department of Education's (hereafter referred to as the Department) policy (hereafter referred to as the policy) as it guides the implementation of ABET within South Africa nationally. As previously mentioned (cf 3.6.3.7) and emphasised by the Department, it is clear that the primary responsibility of ABET lies with the State and that all other stakeholders have representation via the NSF. It is important to mention that the two main purposes of this policy document are:

- to help adult education practitioners and planners to promote, implement, monitor and evaluate vigorous ABET practices in their programmes, and
- to ensure that ABET occupies a central place in the development of the education and training system in South Africa (Department of Education 1997a:iv & 10).

The Department's policy was shaped by the interim guidelines (as mentioned in paragraph 3.6.3.7), as well as by broader education policy represented in the White Paper of 1995 (cf 3.6.3.6), the SAQA Act of 1995 (cf 3.3) and the National Education Policy Act of 1996, which sets out the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education in making national policy. Together with the Department's policy, a *Multi-Year Implementation Plan* (hereafter referred to as the Plan), was launched as part of the new ABET initiative, the *Ithuteng "Ready to learn" Campaign*. This campaign was launched in 1996 as the first pilot ABET programme nation-wide. While the Plan is focused on ABET, it is intended to be a universal plan that incorporates the multiplicity of existing adult education projects and programmes in the country. It is hoped that the existing projects and programmes will respond to the norms and structures as set out in the Plan so that adult learning can be delivered with greater efficiency and effectiveness ((Department of Education 1997a:2 & 6; Department of Education 1997b:1).

*(a) Policy goals*

According to the policy, its framework provides for an ABET system that brings the various elements together, that allow for efficient delivery, including the roles played by a number of stakeholders. It is also envisaged that the policy will serve the needs of a diverse range of learning constituencies, including:

- organised labour in the formal sector;
- self-employed and under-employed people;
- unemployed youth and adults in the urban areas and settlements;
- the rural unemployed; and
- women heads of households in urban and rural areas (Department of Education 1997a:2).

The policy also seeks to develop an enabling environment so that ABET programmes of good quality can flourish. Thus providers would be guided rather than controlled (Department of Education 1997a:2).

*(b) The Department's national definition of ABET in South Africa*

The Department has adopted the following definition of ABET:

*Adult basic education and training is 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 (Department of Education 1997a:5).*

Thus ABET provision goes beyond literacy work in the sense of basic reading and writing skills, but encompasses a holistic approach, in the context of participation and transformation within the broader society.

*(c) Foundations laid*

The responsibility for the provision of education is with the provincial governments. In meeting its constitutional obligation, the Department will work closely in support of the provincial departments who will plan and co-ordinate the implementation of ABET provision both within the General and Further Education and Training bands. The Department also intends working with the National Youth Commission and with the proposed National Education and Training Council and Adult Education and Training sub-council. To facilitate all of this, the Department has:

- established a national Directorate for Adult Education and Training (established in 1995 and renamed in 1996 (Department of Education 1997b:28);
- established a NSF to advise it;
- directed provinces to set up ABET directorates or sub-directorates;
- announced interim curriculum guidelines to direct pilot ABET provision;
- launched the *Ithuteng/ready to learn campaign* to pilot large scale delivery of ABET and allocated resources to deliver it;
- engaged in curriculum development and standards setting;
- set about transforming State adult learning centres to deliver ABET;
- developed a *National Multi-year Implementation Plan* for ABET (Department of Education 1997a:6).

It is also envisaged that the funding provision will be shared among a variety of partners co-ordinated through the ABET sub-council of the National Council of Education and Training (Department of Education 1997a:6).

The Directorate for Adult Education and Training has ensured that the focus within ABET has been broader on a number of levels:

- three categories of learning have been identified in which credits for learning achievement can be accumulated for the award of ABET sub-level certificates;
- ensuring that the learning outcomes at the three ABET sub-levels and the GETC level for learners in this category are contextualised according to the specifics of adults and out-of school youth and also allow for further contextualisation with regard to target group learner needs and local conditions;
- ensuring that the three categories of learning are suited to the eight areas of learning adopted by the Department ;
- ensuring that the ABET sub-level certificates accommodate an integrated approach to training; and
- ensuring that the skills, knowledge and abilities acquired in the ABET sector facilitate progression to further learning (Department of Education 1997b:28).

Furthermore, the provincial ABET sub-directorates have been able to implement real improvements in the delivery of adult education and training. Although not all provinces have been able to implement the *Ithuteng Campaign*, those who have been able to do so, have already increased the number of learners

enrolled at ABET sub-levels one and two. Problem areas as well as success areas for provincial ABET sub-directorates have been identified as follows:

The **success areas** for provincial ABET sub-directorates have been identified as:

- willingness and commitment to change;
- relevant training of ABET practitioners for sub-levels 1 and 2;
- implementation of an education management information system in some of the provinces;
- development of the necessary infrastructure in eight of the nine provinces;
- access to funds and budgets, including subsidies for learners; and
- the servicing of a broad range of learner needs and learner groupings.

**Problem areas** identified include:

- lack of efficient and adequate administrative and supervisory support;
- inefficient management and administration;
- absence of governance structures and accountability in some regions and districts;
- insufficient education management information systems at adult learning centres;
- staff shortages as practitioner vacancies are not being filled;
- lack of commitment to adult education and training amongst staff members;
- lack of capacity amongst staff members to implement the new system of adult education and training;
- differences in remuneration scales;

- insufficient appropriate learning and support materials; high dropout rates and poor results;
- the lack of clear distinction between ABET and the Further Education and Training band;
- a large percentage of the ABET budget is currently allocated to provisioning of learners at NQF levels beyond the GETC level;
- the lack of clear linkage with community colleges- even though these are seen as the logical reference point for adult learning centres- and no linkages with the “T” in ABET; and
- marginalisation of ABET at provincial budgetary levels (Department of Education 1997b:29-30).

(d) *A curriculum framework for ABET*

According to the policy, the Ministry of Education accommodates a wide national curriculum framework, which sustains and upholds curriculum development at both national and provincial level. Within this framework, principles and guidelines provide both a philosophical base as well as an organisational structure for the growth of various curricula in different contexts. An outcomes-based approach (discussed in paragraph 3.2.4) has been adopted since it is believed to best serve the transformation and integration of the education and training system in South Africa (as discussed in paragraph 3.2) (Department of Education 1997a:18).

The Department has adopted the term “learning programmes” as discussed in paragraph 3.3.1.3.f. The programme developers in ABET will have to ensure that programmes derived from the national curriculum framework have the flexibility and potential to provide the wide foundation and core concepts that learners need for their future education and training (the concept of lifelong learning). It is imperative that curriculum developers take into account the policies and criteria published by SAQA (discussed in paragraph 3.3) in terms of levels, level descriptors, critical cross-field education and training outcomes and

qualities to be developed within the learner (as discussed in paragraph 3.3.1.3) (Department of Education 1997a:18-19).

As previously mentioned (cf 3.3.1.1), in order to enable SAQA to proceed with the creation of an NQF, an eight-level framework was adopted, with levels one and eight respectively being open-ended. Level one accommodates three ABET certification levels. The recognition of ABET on the NQF was of particular concern and it was felt that it should be included for three main reasons:

- ABET provision generally lacks the accountability and institutional structures which can be assumed in schooling;
- ABET could be further marginalised if not included;
- important steps have been taken by various industry training boards to link substantive benefits to a training and education framework at ABET levels. This needed to be recognised within the NQF (SAQA bulletin 1997a:5-6).

Within the twelve broad categories of organising fields of learning adopted by SAQA (cf 3.3.1.4.a) the Adult Education and Training (AET) Directorate will endeavour to support initiatives of the various SGBs (cf 3.3.1.4.c) in these fields and sub-fields, and to develop unit standards (cf 3.3.1.3.b) at all levels of the NQF, particularly for the ABET sub-levels. Eight learning areas for which ABET unit standards should be developed, have been selected by the ABET Directorate. These learning areas have been drawn from the twelve learning fields as previously mentioned (Department of Education 1997a:21):

The specific outcomes for each of these learning areas are to be specified in the unit standards that will be registered with SAQA. Already unit standards have been developed in the fundamental category for ABET Language, Literacy and Communication levels one, two and three as well as ABET Mathematical Sciences (Numeracy) levels one, two and three. The standards have been gazetted and have been developed by the

ABET NSF (SAQA Update 1998:1-2). The SAQA Update (December 1999: 2) reports that the gazetted ABET standards for the two learning areas have been approved and are published in the Government Gazette (Republic of South Africa (RSA) 1998a: no 18989). In the core/contextual category, outcomes have been developed in three learning areas, namely, Technology, Natural Sciences and Human and Social Sciences (Department of Education 1997b:24).

It is imperative to note that the Department will not provide a core curriculum or syllabus within the eight learning areas and that ABET sub-level qualifications will not be decided upon by SAQA as it is focusing presently on the GETC and FETC levels. The rules of combination and the level descriptors, which SAQA ultimately decides upon, will prescribe which “fundamental/core/contextual and specialisation/elective categories will lead to the attainment of GETC and FETC qualifications”. This thus builds more flexibility into a system than in the past, where a prescriptive approach with regard to core curriculum and syllabus was adopted. It is also important to note that the adult GETC could draw from unit standards across all twelve organising fields and will not be limited to the eight learning areas as adopted by the Department (Department of Education 1997a:24).

*(e) Assessment for ABET*

Within the ABET sector, the assessment system is the cornerstone for transformation activities and programmes. Whereas, historically, nationally recognised certificates have not been available to adults who participated in literacy, adult basic education or workplace training programmes, unless they joined the adult night schools, the new framework no longer excludes certification to these adults (Department of Education 1997b:114).

The assessment process as set out in paragraph 3.4.2, will also apply to ABET, whereby the achievement of specific outcomes, measured against unit standards, will serve as the basis for assessing learners, and indirectly, to the effectiveness of learning processes and learning programmes (Department of Education 1997a:25).

The Department has produced an assessment policy in the GET band for grades R to 9 and ABET. This policy document was prepared in consultation with a wide spectrum of key stakeholders and the public at large. The policy has been developed in response to a need to phase in assessment practices that are compatible with OBE. As the previous assessment policy had many shortcomings as an instrument for assessment, including complex rules and regulations for subject groupings and combinations, a lack of transparency and accountability, as well as inadequate assessment practices, many inefficiencies were introduced in the learning system. These shortcomings together with the requirements of the new curriculum for grades R – 9 and ABET, have necessitated a new assessment policy (RSA 1998b: no r 1718).

Within the Government Gazette the following criteria are outlined against which adult learners' assessment is to be conducted:

- the combined assessment of learning achievement in the learning categories will constitute an ABET qualification;
- at ABET levels one, two and three, assessment will be conducted internally and moderation of the results will be done by the provincial ABET specialists. A record of learning shall be kept for every learner;
- at ABET level four (GETC), assessment will be of a summative nature (as discussed in paragraph 3.4.3) which will be externally moderated;
- RPL (discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.8.f) is an important application of assessment in ABET. Evidence of such learning may come from any source, including life experience and unstructured learning. A framework in this regard is in the process of being developed;

- this assessment policy is to be applied in conjunction with the Ministry's ABET policy and draft ABET assessment guidelines (RSA 1998b: no r 1718).

Within the assessment policy, the need for a paradigm shift (as discussed in paragraph 3.2.3) is once again emphasised. This shift in assessment practice is seen as a logical and essential part of transformation. Thus the continuous assessment model will apply to ABET. This model requires a paradigm shift from promotion decisions based on the results of a single test or examination, to the ongoing formative assessment of the learner which is associated with feedback to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of a learner's performance (Department of Education 1998:6&14).

With regard to moderators, Marais (1999:18) proposes a clear, usable model for internal organisational moderators. Three cumulative levels of moderators are identified, namely, the content assessor, the assessment designer and developer and the internal moderator. Each has their assessment functions, which are identified as follows:

- Content assessor
  - implement assessment procedures;
  - score the assessments;
  - provide feedback to learner;
  - provide feedback to the process assessor in the form of an assessment feedback report;
  
- Assessment design and developer
  - moderate and ensure quality of the content assessor;
  - ensure that the content assessor complies with the assessment procedures as stated in the assessment guide and assessment manual;
  - determine the assessment strategy;
  - design and develop assessment tools;
  - select and motivate choice of external assessment tools;
  - ensure that any assessment tools used fulfil quality criteria;

- substantiate the above;
- Internal moderator
  - liaise with the relevant ETQA (cf 3.3.1.4.d);
  - manage and ensure quality of both the process and content assessors;
  - manage and decide on appeals for re-assessment;
  - motivate decision on appeals in a formal document;
  - responsible for record keeping procedures and administration (Marais 1999:19).

As can be seen from the above functions, and as stated in paragraph 3.4.4, specialised knowledge and expertise is required to ensure quality of assessments. Thus training in assessment is an important and integral part of developing staff. The training and re-orientating of teachers and education support services personnel in terms of teacher-driven assessment, is also emphasised in the assessment policy document (Department of Education 1998:23&27).

*(f) Recognition of prior learning (RPL)*

There are various ways of establishing the authenticity and credibility of a learner's prior learning, regardless of how it was acquired. All of these involve obtaining evidence for the assessment of the content of learning, and if appropriate, the accreditation thereof by SAQA (cf 3.3.1.3.g). However, written tests proved inadequate and inappropriate in the UK and USA and has led to research and the development of alternative methods which could be of value in the South African context (Genade 1998:72; Bowen 1996:34).

Within ABET, RPL is a specialised sub-set of assessment. For the purpose of current implementation, the RPL system will focus on the recognition of learning achievements in respect of the eight learning areas in which outcomes and assessment criteria already have been, or are in the process of being established.

“Challenge testing” has been proposed to be the dominant, though not only, method of RPL assessment for

the next four years. The challenge method is one of the simplest and most cost-effective methods. The method works as follows:

- candidates are given copies of the outcomes and performance criteria for the learning area and level for which they seek recognition;
- sample assessment activities are given;
- when candidates feel sufficiently prepared, they represent themselves for assessment;
- the assessment tools and activities are the same as for those who are registered in learning programmes; and
- credits achieved through RPL assessments will be recorded on the Candidate's Record of Learning, without distinction as to how the standard was achieved (Department of Education 1997b:117).

There are two critical issues in respect of RPL, which should be noted in addition to the challenge method. Firstly, all adult learning centres and providers should have accredited placement tests that are used for learners wishing to enrol in new courses. Should the placement tests' results indicate that the learner should be placed at a higher level, exemption certificates will be issued for the levels in that learning area below the level at which the learner has been enrolled. These exemptions will count towards the RPL Record of Learning. Secondly, all other methods of RPL will be evaluated and form part of a nationally co-ordinated project to develop a complete RPL and a relevant RPL method as well as a bank of RPL assessment exemplars (Department of Education 1997b:117).

The 'portfolio' assessment method as an alternative to written tests, is also discussed by Genade (1998:72).

A portfolio refers to a document which is made up of ‘work samples’ which demonstrate the learner’s competence in an area. The following tasks must be performed by the learner:

- systematic reflection on experience to identify significant learning;
- the expression and presentation of this significant learning are to be in concise statements to serve as a formal claim to certain skills and knowledge;
- the collation and organisation of the evidence to support these claims must be in a form that can facilitate assessment and thereafter accreditation (Genade 1998:72).

A narrative written on the part of the learner should form part of the portfolio in order to demonstrate the learner’s ability to generalise learning from a specific task or context into a different context (Fehnel 1994:26). There are three ways in which assessments of prior learning can be presented for credit evaluation, namely:

- a portfolio detailing learning acquired informally from life experience;
- records of formal learning; and
- test-scores of tests that were written (Finlayson 1989:338).

All of the above can be included in the learner’s portfolio of prior learning (Genade 1998:72). This portfolio, although it is not explicitly stated, seems similar to the ‘record of learning’ as proposed by the Department.

Within South Africa, the focus of accrediting learners’ prior learning lies within a “credit exchange discourse, the underlying ideology of which is linked to economic development”. This model should lead

to credible, flexible and cost-effective means of assessing and accrediting prior learning and ensuring quality control. The credit exchange model is based on personal competencies, assessed through an RPL process, and is compared to the planned learning outcomes of an accredited programme offered by an educational institution. Competencies achieved can be exchanged for course credits and possible exemption from a part of a programme. A prerequisite of this approach is the very careful description of the outcomes of a programme so that the matching, and exchange process can occur (Trowler 1996:19).

(g) *Materials for ABET*

Although there is a large amount of developed education and training materials available, all have not been well researched. Since most materials were developed before the conceptualisation of the NQF, they do not adequately take into account core competencies and outcome standards. They are also inadequate for particular settings and lack suitable curricula and syllabi. However, since within the NQF context, standards and outcomes have been prescribed, (although not the means of arriving at these), opportunities are also opened. This allows for flexibility to best meet the education and training needs of learners within various settings and can add value to learning. Opportunities have been established for the research, design and development of relevant materials and programmes for a specific context. The research, design and development of such materials and programmes is a highly skilled and specialised task requiring specialists in this area (Van Niekerk 1996b:39).

According to Vacarrino (1995:30), the materials used in adult learning programmes should be **authentic**, in that they should actually be materials that are genuinely used outside the classroom. It is the belief of Hubbard, Jones, Thornton and Wheeler (1983:89) that authentic materials act as a motivating device. Tutors can show their learners “how easy it is to understand *something* from authentic material rather than how difficult it is to understand *everything*, then students are more likely to want to understand more”.

However Swan (1990:95) cautions against using authentic material only. Instead, both scripted and authentic material should be used at various points for various reasons. Both Swan (1990:95) and Hubbard

et al (1983:89) discuss authentic and scripted materials within the context of language learning. However these authors use it within the context of adult basic education and training programmes and thus their statements are relevant to materials as is being generally discussed within this thesis, as it also pertains to the same context.

The use of authentic materials is encouraged in order to give learners a “taste of real language in use”, and equips them with genuine linguistic data for their unconscious acquisition processes to work on. Scripted materials however, are useful for presenting specific language items effectively. The combination of the two types of materials empowers learners to see how language is used and represented outside the classroom (Vacarrino 1995:32).

It is essential that the ABET learning programmes and materials are well-designed if the goals of ABET are to be met (cf 3.6.3.8.d&g). Within the new integrated and flexible curriculum model that is proposed for ABET, a wide variety of approaches to materials is accommodated. It allows material developers to tailor learning and support materials to the various institutional contexts and learners’ needs. These materials will be increasingly modularised, allowing potentially for a variety of modular units of learning materials which meet the needs of a diversity of learners and institutional types, and which can be combined in the most effective way (Department of Education 1997a:27).

The **appearance** of the material is also important. These should be neat and “adult in appearance”, and should not give the learner the impression that they are attributed to the status of children (Hutchinson & Waters 1987:126; Bramley 1991:91). **Illustrations** with materials are important in that they help the learner understand complex concepts. Careful note should be taken in terms of the spacing around illustrations, and the content of the illustrations. In terms of the contents, these should also form part of the text and should not be included just for the sake of doing so (Vacarrino 1995:33).

These materials however, **must** contextualise the learning outcomes, based upon an accurate analysis of the learners’ needs and an assessment of their capabilities and prior knowledge. Time contact is also an

important factor that has to be considered in materials development. Materials should also be carefully structured into appropriately sized modules or units so as to accommodate different levels of knowledge and learning rates. A self-instructional component should also be built into materials. Low-cost, innovative and well-designed materials are encouraged and the Department is prepared to provide leadership on the provision of these (Department of Education 1997a:27-28; Department of Education 1997b:98-99).

ABET learning and support materials will be audited for the following purposes:

- to confirm the levels of materials;
- to evaluate materials against critical and specific learning area outcomes;
- to evaluate the materials against objective criteria;
- to provide guidance and criteria for the assembling of learning materials for full learning programmes;
- to provide a comprehensive directory of available materials, developers and publishers; and
- to identify issues with regard to the relationship between materials, curricula and qualifications as they emerge for inclusion into policy debates and research and development programmes (Department of Education 1997a:28-29).

Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1992:30) suggest that materials should be evaluated according to three phases:

- *materials -as- workplan*: this refers to the theoretical value of a programme;

- *materials –in- process*: this generates information about the ways in which learners actually use and respond to a programme; and
- *outcomes from materials*: this represents the relative achievements of learners.

Thus as previously mentioned specialised training is also required within the field of materials development.

(h) *Instructional delivery for ABET*

Vacarrino (1995:34) states that instructional delivery, or teaching and learning activities, refer to **how the content is taught**, in other words, the methodology used. The Department (1997a:29) refers to instructional delivery as the way in which teaching and learning occurs within the ABET system. Participatory and learner centred methods are encouraged in order to develop transferable thinking and learning skills, and a broad conceptual base as a foundation for critical thinking, problem posing and problem solving. In order to achieve this the Department advocates the following principles:

- **learner-centredness**. The learner is put first, building on knowledge and experience and responding to needs. General and specific characteristics of learner groups should be taken into account, with attention being given to the way in which cultural values and lifestyles affect their construction of knowledge. According to Cunningsworth (1995:16), the progression from dependence on the teacher and on the coursebook towards growing confidence and independence can be difficult, but it is crucial to the individual success of learners and to the success of teaching programmes;
- **relevance**. Learning programmes should be appropriate to the current and anticipated future needs of the individual, society and economy. These programmes should equip learners with skills to participate in all sectors of society;

- **differentiation, redress and learner support.** The learners individual learning ability should be considered and be allowed to cope with the performance standards at their own pace rather than at the pace of the majority of learners in a class. The creation of opportunities for all learners thus needs to be facilitated, in order to strive towards the attainment of similar learning outcomes;
  
- **nation-building and non-discrimination.** Not only should learning programmes protect and advance basic human rights, they should also encourage development of:
  - mutual respect for diverse religious and value systems, cultural and language traditions;
  - multilingualism and informed choices regarding the language(s) of learning;
  - co-operation, civic responsibility and the ability to participate in all aspects of society;
  - and
  - an understanding of national, provincial and local development needs;
  
- **critical and creative thinking.** Learning programmes should promote the learners' ability to think logically, analytically, holistically and laterally. Programmes should also acknowledge the provisional, contested and changing nature of knowledge. Thus there is an urgent need to balance individualised, independent thinking with social responsibility and the ability to function as part of society. Smith (1995:46) points out that learning should be fun and that games and puzzles, amongst others, should be incorporated into learning programmes to develop creative thinking, problem-solving skills and thinking of alternative solutions. Many adults have not been taught to think creatively and this should be facilitated in the learning process (Vacarrino 1995:43);
  
- **flexibility and progression.** Hutchinson and Waters (1987:76) also use the term "variety", as a synonym for the term 'flexibility'. This is a vital element in keeping the learners' minds alert and focused on the task that they are doing. Within the construction of learning programmes, provision should be made for an increasing range of learning possibilities to

attain outcomes that would lead to recognised qualifications (Department of Education 1997a:29).

(i) *Training and orientation for ABET*

In order to successfully implement ABET programmes it is vital that all ABET practitioners at all levels of the system be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. In view of this, new national standards have been set for ABET practitioners. This will facilitate their career-pathing through the accumulation of standards registered by SAQA. The process of developing standards for ABET practitioners has begun. These will be extended to address all their key roles identified as:

- strategists;
- managers;
- administrators;
- group learning facilitators;
- individual learning facilitators;
- needs analysts;
- learning experience designers;
- learning materials developers;
- assessors;
- evaluators (Department of Education 1997a:31-32; Department of Education 1997b:142).

The above should not be seen as a hierarchical arrangement, as although these performance roles are clearly distinguishable, many ABET practitioners perform more than one role (Department of Education 1997b:142).

Adult education is increasingly becoming a profession in its own right. However, there are not many professionally qualified practitioners (adult educators/trainers) available. It is vital that practitioners not only have subject matter expertise (teaching subjects), but are also skilled in the management of learning

and learning institutions. Many “crash courses” are offered to equip trainers to deliver a particular and often very rigid learning programme. This is highly ineffective, leading to very little transfer to the workplace and high drop-out rates. Adult educators need the confidence and skills to evaluate, adapt, improvise and generate learning materials and practices for meaningful, relevant and contextualised learning to occur. There is thus a need for professional development structures and programmes for educating and training staff which must also be aligned with the NQF policy on staff capacity (Van Niekerk 1996b:39).

Within the Department in the meanwhile, in-service training programmes to re-orient adult educators on OBET approaches are encouraged. Currently ABET practitioners are relying on external provision of training. As previously mentioned, this has often resulted in the delivery of pre-packaged training programmes which are not **context specific**, an integral part of adult education. However, within the Department there is a commitment to build the capacity to train ABET practitioners within the State. The establishment or development of existing national and provincial training units as central agencies in this regard, is being explored (Department of Education 1997a:32).

In terms of current realities, French (1995:283) also states that there will be the need to rely on practitioners with low levels of education and training. One of the greatest challenges in building national institutions in adult literacy and basic education is to reactivate motivation within educators and leaders. Resources for lengthy training will be few and there will be the temptation to use prescriptive, lock-step programmes and workbooks. However, experience suggests that without a certain depth of education in which rationales and theories for the major features of these materials are internalised, these practitioners will undermine the best-laid plans. It is imperative to develop leadership who have sufficient theoretical insight to enact programmes in the spirit in which they were designed, and to act with creative resourcefulness in adapting programmes to contexts.

(j) *Professional and technical support for ABET*

It is imperative that a back-up system of professional and technical support for the ABET sector be built. The State ABET system is unable to perform all activities within the ABET realm itself. Resources within society located at local, provincial, national and international levels need to be identified and used (Department of Education 1997a:33).

Presently most research and support capacity is located within a diverse range of institutions including institutions of higher education, NGOs and private consultancies. However, much of the ABET research has had a limited focus. There has also been a lack of clarity about whether research bodies should simultaneously act as support agencies. Despite these difficulties, the Department is committed to research within this field and sees the need for linkages to be forged and strengthened between the producers of research and knowledge about ABET and the providers of ABET in the field (Department of Education 1997b:178).

In particular, the Department wants to promote research in the areas of:

- controlled, longitudinal impact studies;
- learner participation, retention and achievement rates;
- effective practitioner practices;
- support systems for ABET;
- recognition of prior learning; and
- integration of education and training (Department of Education 1997a:33-34).

In order for research support to be truly effective, research within ABET should be of an on-going, cyclical nature, from the planning stage running throughout the programme. This form of research, known as action research, is a research technique and procedure well suited to programme development (Van Niekerk 1996b:38). It can be defined as “a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention” (Cohen & Manion 1990:217).

(k) *Monitoring, evaluation and information systems*

A key responsibility is assigned to the Minister for monitoring the implementation of national policies and evaluating education provision and performance, in terms of the *National Education Policy Act, Act no.27* of 1996. Furthermore, the Department sees accountability, evaluation and assessment as central to the processes of educational transformation in the country. Within ABET programme planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation play a vital role (Department of Education 1997a:37).

Due to this vital role, there is not only a need for improved methods of evaluating, but also for the recognition that evaluation is part of a continuous feedback task. It should be developed and conducted **internally and formatively**. It should take into account the aims and objectives of programmes and projects. These aims and objectives have to relate to the development goals of the nation, its provinces and institutions (Department of Education 1997a:38). As discussed previously in this section, action research can be considered as an important process within evaluation and monitoring provision and performance (Van Niekerk 1996b:38).

Currently the bulk of ABET related record keeping is done manually. However, the Department encourages the implementation of a comprehensive national Education Management Information System (EMIS), integrated with provincial and institutional Management Information Systems (MISs) for the storage and retrieval of descriptive and evaluative data on ABET. The EMIS should be integrated with and complimented by a System of Integrated Materials (SIM) to provide qualitative control for assessing and

verifying quantitative data in the EMIS (Department of Education 1997a:38; Department of Education 1997b:186).

Within the GETC phase, assessment monitoring is seen as a function of the Quality Assurance Directorate. This Directorate will monitor and document the operation of the system with a view to improvement. There is still the need to formulate a strategy for the evaluation of the new system and for improvement (Department of Education 1998:26).

(1) *Financial implications for ABET*

The financial cost for the provision of out-of-school-youth and adults who require basic education is deemed a collective responsibility. It is envisaged that the funding for this provision will be shared among a variety of partners co-ordinated through the ABET sub-council of the National Council for Education and Training. Cost-effectiveness in ABET provision is vital, and frugality and a realistic assessment of cost factors are vital to the successful provision of ABET in South Africa (Department of Education 1997a:41).

The financing of the Plan will take place within the context of international trends relating to the financing of social services such as education. One of these trends is "cost-sharing" as described in the previous paragraph. Other ways of encouraging efficiency and effectiveness in funding include strategies such as direct, full-cost funding of state-owned centres and matching or challenging grants to NGOs (Department of Education 1997b:215; 234-235).

According to Meyer (1995:14) various forms of tax incentives are often mooted for funding of education and training. One of the fundamental questions surrounding all funding of education and training concerns who the primary beneficiary is. Where society as a whole is the primary beneficiary, it is generally considered that State-funding, accessed from the general tax base, is appropriate. On the other hand, where an individual or an organisation is the primary beneficiary, they should carry a significant portion of the costs. Particularly in the case of ABET, a strong argument can be made for tax incentives since education

is for the general benefit of society and therefore the responsibility of the State (this has been previously stated in paragraph 3.6.3.8).

Greenstein et al (1994:82) state that the emphasis on adult basic education and training, and vocational and technical skills on the part of the government should not come at the expense of other concerns.

### **3.7 CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARD TO ADULT LITERACY TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Adult literacy in the past never formed part of the formal education system. For a number of reasons, it was marginalised and it was only in the early nineties that changes around adult literacy linked to national developments in the country were brought about.

Despite these changes there were still conspicuous problems within adult literacy training or ABET, as the term more commonly used. These problems include:

- lack of programmes that respond to different levels of needs;
- only a small percentage of illiterate adults benefiting from programmes;
- lack of accreditation in the field to assess where real skill ,expertise and experience is to be found;
- a lack of information on effective literacy work;
- questionable “success” by agencies and organisations as each used their own methods with different strengths;

- although there are a number of providers none are without their problems, including (cf 3.6.1):
  - limited capacity in terms of human and material resources;
  - need for a changed curriculum and re-training of teachers;
  - lack of time to run classes;
  - irregular class attendance by learners;
  - lack of commitment from management; and
  - lack of funding.

In response to the above, amongst other reasons, including the need for an internationally competitive workforce and the need for an integrated approach to education and training (as discussed in paragraph 3.2-3.2.), a number of processes, together with policies and guidelines were established (discussed in paragraphs 3.6.3-3.6.3.7). These eventually culminated in the establishment of SAQA and the NQF as discussed in paragraph three.

Within the NQF it can be seen that the provision of ABET is now largely determined by the Department of Education and its policy for ABET. This means that ABET is no longer marginalised but forms part of the national education system and is recognised as such. The Department's policy forms the pivotal point around which adult education provision will take place nationally. This is so since the State is ultimately responsible for ABET (cf 3.6.3.8).

The purposes and goals of the policy include:

- to help adult education practitioners and planners to promote, implement, monitor and evaluate vigorous ABET practices;
- to ensure that ABET occupies a central place in the development of South Africa's education and training system;

- to provide a framework that allows for an ABET system that brings various elements together;
- to serve the needs of a diverse range of learning constituencies; and
- to develop an enabling environment so that good quality programmes can flourish (cf 3.6.3.8.a).

A number of developments have taken place and structures have been established in order to facilitate ABET nationally (cf 3.6.3.8). Within these structures ABET sub-directorates have been established to implement real improvements in the delivery of adult education and training. These sub-directorates have not only experienced success but have also had problems. From their experiences it can be concluded that:

- the success for improvements in the delivery of adult education and training depends on the establishment of structures such as sub-directorates which (cf 3.6.3.8):
  - are willing and committed to change;
  - have the necessary staff and staff capacity;
  - offer relevant training of ABET practitioners;
  - implement an education management information system ;
  - develop the necessary infrastructure, including necessary efficient and adequate administrative and supervisory support;
  - have governance structures and accountability;
  - have access to funds and budgets;
  - service a broad range of learner needs and learner groupings;
  - have appropriate remuneration scales;
  - have sufficient adequate and/or appropriate learning materials;
  - have a clear distinction between ABET and the Further Education and Training band;
  - have clear linkages with other institutions and with training.

Besides the above, the success of ABET also depends on a national curriculum framework which sustains and upholds curriculum development at both national and provincial levels. From this broad framework, learning programmes will have to be derived, in accordance with the following principles:

- have the flexibility and potential to provide the wide foundation and core concepts that learners need for future education and training;
- the policies and criteria published by SAQA have to be taken into account in terms of levels, level descriptors, critical cross-field outcomes and qualities to be developed in the learner; and
- the specific outcomes for each learning area are to be specified in the unit standards to be registered with SAQA.

As the framework is flexible in terms of the NQF model, it allows for the adult GETC to draw from unit standards across the twelve learning fields rather than being limited to the eight areas as adopted by the Department (cf 3.6.3.8.d).

An important cornerstone of ABET is the assessment system. This system reflects the paradigm shift from the old assessment practices, which are not compatible with OBE. The new assessment policy for ABET requires the following:

- internal assessment at levels one to three with moderation by provincial ABET specialists, with summative assessment at level four;
- a record of learning for each learner;

- RPL application with evidence from any source. This can be established via a number of ways, including:
  - challenge testing;
  - portfolio assessment;
  
- Specialised knowledge and expertise on the part of the assessor to ensure quality of assessments (cf 3.6.3.8.e).

RPL forms an important sub-set of assessment. In this regard, alternative methods to written tests had to be developed in order to establish the authenticity and credibility of the learner's prior learning. Credibility, cost-effectiveness and simplicity/flexibility are factors sought in RPL assessment at present. A number of methods are proposed (cf 3.6.3.8.f).

- Challenge testing
  - candidates are given copies of the outcomes and performance criteria for the learning area and level for which they seek recognition;
  - sample assessment activities are given;
  - when candidates feel sufficiently prepared, they represent themselves for assessment.

The assessment tools and activities are the same as for those who are registered in learning programmes; and

  - credits achieved through RPL assessments will be recorded in the Candidate's Record of Learning, without indicating how the standard was achieved;
  
- Portfolio assessment
  - which is systematic reflection on experience to identify significant learning;
  - the expression and presentation of this significant learning are to be in concise statements to serve as a formal claim to certain skills and knowledge;

- the collation and organisation of the evidence to support these claims must be in a form that can facilitate assessment and thereafter accreditation;
- a narrative on the part of the learner should form part of the portfolio. This narrative should demonstrate the learner's ability to generalise learning from a specific context into a different context; in addition to this
- all forms of credit evaluation can be included in the learner's portfolio.

In order for RPL assessment to be successful, it is imperative that the outcomes of a programme be very carefully described so that accreditation is correctly carried out.

Regarding **materials** for ABET the following conclusions can be made:

- research into education and training materials is imperative;
- highly skilled specialists should be involved, in order to research, design and develop materials and programmes;
- materials should be developed taking into account core competencies and outcome standards;
- curricula and syllabi should be suited to the needs of the particular setting;
- materials should be both authentic and scripted
  - so that they act as a motivating device;
  - to demonstrate real language in use;
  - to present specific language items effectively;
- materials should be increasingly modularised
  - to meet the needs of a diversity of learners and institutional types;

- to be combined in an effective way; and
  - have a self-instructional component;
- materials should be neat and “adult” in appearance with illustrations that help the learner understand complex concepts; and
  - materials must contextualise the learning outcomes (cf 3.6.3.8.g).

The **instructional delivery** of ABET should also promote participatory and learner-centred methods in order to develop transferable thinking and learning skills, critical thinking, problem posing and problem solving. Thus the following principles are encouraged:

- learner-centredness- putting the learner first;
- relevance - in terms of learning programmes;
- differentiation, redress and learner support - in terms of the learner as an individual;
- nation-building and non-discrimination - promoted in the learning programmes;
- critical and creative thinking - in terms of the learning programmes promoting the learners' abilities to think logically, analytically, holistically and laterally; and
- flexibility and progression - in terms of keeping the learners' minds alert and focussed on the task at hand (cf 3.6.3.8.h).

**ABET practitioners** also have to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for ABET programmes to be successfully implemented. For this the following is required:

- it should be acknowledged and recognised that practitioners fulfil a number of roles;
- practitioners should have subject matter expertise as well as skills in the management of learning and learning institutions;
- it should be recognised that “crash courses” are an ineffective method of equipping practitioners;
- professional development structures and programmes for staff education and training, should be put in place:
  - to develop practitioners who have the confidence and skills to evaluate, adapt, improvise and generate learning materials and practices for meaningful, relevant and contextualised learning to occur.

This education and training should be in line with the NQF policy on staff development;

- in-service training to re-orient practitioners on OBET should take place;
  - this training should be context specific;
- motivation within current educators and leaders should be reactivated;
- rationales and theories for major features of training materials should be internalised by practitioners
  - so as not to undermine the best –laid plans;
  - to enact programmes in the spirit in which they were designed; and
  - to act with creative resourcefulness in adapting programmes to contexts (cf 3.6.3.8.i).

Regarding **professional and technical support**, it must be recognised and acknowledged that a back-up system of professional and technical support is needed at local, provincial, national and international levels.

Research forms part of this support system and is necessary for the following reasons:

- to carry out controlled, longitudinal impact studies;
- to measure learner participation, retention and achievement rates;
- to assist in effective practitioner practices;
- to develop support systems for ABET;
- to assist in RPL; and
- to promote integration in education and training.

For the above, action research is recommended as it is of an ongoing, cyclical nature well suited to programme development (cf 3.6.3.8.j).

With ABET programme planning, **monitoring, evaluation and information systems** play a vital role. In order to do this successfully the following should be implemented:

- improved methods of evaluation;
- recognition that evaluation forms part of a continuous feedback task;
- evaluation should be conducted internally and formatively;

- evaluation should consider the aims and objectives of programmes and projects
  - these aims and objectives should relate to national, provincial and institutional development goals;
  
- a national EMIS , integrated with and complemented by a SIM should be implemented
  - for storage and retrieval of descriptive and evaluative data; and
  - to provide qualitative control for assessing and verifying quantitative data (cf 3.6.3.8.k).

In terms of the **financial implications** the following can be concluded:

- ABET is considered a collective responsibility and thus provision costs will be shared amongst a variety of partners co-ordinated through the ABET sub-council of the National Council for Education and Training;
  
- cost-effectiveness in ABET provision is vital to its success
  - thus financing will take place within the context of international trends; and
  
- tax incentives should be considered for ABET providers (cf 3.6.3.8.l).

### **3.8 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

Currently within the national South African education system there are major changes towards an integrated approach to education and training. This approach entails a paradigm shift to OBE under the auspices of SAQA and is facilitated through the NQF. All forms of education and training are now recognised under this umbrella body.

As such ABET now also forms part of and is recognised as part of the national education system, and therefore is no longer marginalised in that sense. As with other sectors, the provision of ABET is presently

guided through the Department of Education's policy which is still in the process of being implemented. This makes it a difficult task to assess the effectiveness of the policy as developments are still of a current nature and have not as yet stood the test of time.

The same conclusion can be drawn of SAQA and the NQF in general which is currently in the process of being implemented. None-the-less, structures have been put in place (as discussed in this chapter), and these structures currently guide the provision of education and training, including ABET within the South African context. These structures, together with policies and other guidelines as discussed, form an important backbone for the provision of ABET within the Border/Kei region of the Eastern Cape, and are considered in the light of research findings in chapter four.

Chapter three provides a review of the literature, in terms of current developments in the South African education system, regarding adult literacy training. The fourth chapter investigates the effectiveness of adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ADULT LITERACY TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN THE BORDER/KEI REGION OF THE EASTERN CAPE

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in chapter one (cf 1.5), this chapter investigates the effectiveness of literacy training programmes in the Border/Kei region. The circumstances and problems encountered within this area of the Eastern Cape Province (hereafter referred to as the Province), in relation to ABET, are investigated and possible solutions that could be implemented to solve contemporary problems are examined. The method of research is a combination of literature study, observation and interviews. Reference is made to the Department of Education's Policy for ABET and national multi-year implementation plan (cf 3.6.3.7-3.6.3.8), as these have been established to be the national guidelines for the provision of ABET.

As mentioned in the first chapter (cf 1.1) the Border/Kei area of the Province is largely rural, with the combined region carrying the largest as well as second-largest population of the Eastern Cape. Within this, the African community is largely Xhosa-speaking, consisting mainly of women, young children and old people. Subsistence agricultural farming is the main form of sustenance for the rural communities.

Although fifteen per cent of the population is functionally urbanised, the majority of the people live in the impoverished rural areas, characterised by high unemployment, low levels of remuneration, poor access to social and economic services, inadequate medical facilities and regular droughts, amongst other negative factors. The high unemployment rate is attributed to mainly two factors, namely, (a) the inability to find work due to lack of skill and (b) not being able to find suitable work (CSS 1996:68-71&76; Erasmus 1996:6-7&49; Lloyd & Levin 1996:8; Moodly 1997:1-6).

There is also a high level of illiteracy within the Border/Kei region (cf 1.1.1). As research has indicated (cf 1.1.1) literacy, or the lack thereof, can affect the socio-economic development of a community.

Furthermore, the rapid changes within South Africa pressurises individuals to become more active citizens, which is dependent on people being, at the very least, functionally literate. For this reason, amongst others,

which are discussed within this chapter, various sectors of the community have concentrated their efforts on ABET.

However, despite these efforts, as stated in paragraph 1.1.2, there are many problems affecting the effectiveness of these adult literacy programmes. Chapter four examines the provision of ABET within the Border/Kei region. Various sectors of the community have been interviewed to reach a holistic picture. These sectors include the Provincial Office of the Department of Education (hereafter referred to as the Provincial Department), the regional education departments, the NGO sector, including commercially-based and community-based NGOs, educational institutions of higher learning and workplace-based sectors. These are the main providers of ABET within the Border/Kei area. Interviews with personnel, attendance of meetings, together with observation and literature study are the main methods of gathering data from these sectors.

The next section looks at ABET services within these sectors, together with factors that have contributed to their success or failure. The areas under which these sectors are discussed are guided by the National Department of Education's policy and implementation plan as mentioned.

## **4.2 THE PROVISION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE BORDER/KEI AREA**

As previously mentioned (cf 4.1) various sectors offer ABET within the Border/Kei area. These ABET providers are discussed under the following section.

### **4.2.1 The Department of Education: Provincial Department of Education – Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) sub-directorate and Regional Departments of Education**

As established within the policy guidelines and multi-year implementation plan (cf 3.6.3.8) an ABET sub-directorate has been established within the Provincial Department. This sub-directorate works closely with

the regional ABET departments who in turn work closely with the districts (Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training 1998:2-6). Daniels (2000), the Training Coordinator within the ABET sub-directorate, in an interview, states that the Province consists of six regions, with an ABET regional office in each region. These offices each have a regional manager, and adequate full-time professional staff involved in training, curriculum and advocacy. Each of the forty-one districts has at least one ABET representative. One of the advantages of this Province is that it is very well staffed in terms of officials.

#### 4.2.1.1 Current ABET programmes within the Border/Kei region

According to Daniels, and as stated in the provincial multi-year plan ( Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training 1998:2-4), based on the national multi-year implementation plan, practitioners have only recently been able to break through the high level of illiteracy, as ABET is no longer marginalised but forms part of the education structure. The vast scale of the Province as well as the historical situation, also contributes to the high illiteracy levels. It should also be considered that the ABET sub-directorate has only been running for five years. For the first few years the practitioners have been thoroughly trained. Through the Ithuteng campaign (cf 3.6.3.8) many centres have been established. Whereas there was a big demand for this literacy training at onset (approximately 100 000), the demand has since dropped.

Daniels notes that the reason for the decrease in demand could be attributed to the fact that those who were receiving literacy training (that is the communities themselves) were not really interested in literacy training, which was not linked to life skills training, and did not attend the duration of the training. Often the daily pressures of life kept them away. People interviewed by the ABET sub-directorate stated that they were more interested in developing practical life skills, such as farming or building. The people in the rural areas had developed survival mechanisms, so literacy did not seem a major draw- card for them. In addition to this, the demand for literacy training has not come up from the ground level. This view is reiterated by Wedepohl (1984:21) who argues that many literacy programmes have failed, because they have tried to teach reading and writing as a mechanical skill, separated from real life. For adults, relevance to daily life and to issues of central concern greatly increases motivation and successful learning.

The ABET sub-directorate adopted a change in strategy. As the ABET sub-directorate's focus is not just to learn to read and write, but to improve the economy, a more integrated approach was adopted. Literacy training was integrated with other skills programmes, so that people indirectly develop literacy skills (Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training 1998:4-7).

Furthermore, according to Daniels, the Tirisano campaign (cf 3.6.2) will complement the work done by the ABET sub-directorate, which focuses on Levels one and two, and is not as formalised as the current system. This campaign will take a while to set up and implement and includes immense challenges. Through funding obtained from the European Union (EU), the **Ekwelo project** was introduced by the National Department of Education. Currently it is a pilot project and includes integrated learning programmes (Eastern Cape Department of Education 2000:1-2). Within the Province it is presently running under the auspices of the ABET sub-directorate, however once the programme has been finalised, the project manager for the Province will take over, according to Daniels.

The Ekwelo project meets the needs of the ABET Programme in terms of the introduction of student training. The Cascade Model is being used, which according to Daniels, is the best method for training currently. This model and its implications are discussed more fully in paragraph 4.2.1.2.

Daniels emphasises that a positive aspect within the ABET sub-directorate and its regional and district teams, is that there are sufficient practitioners and learners on hand. However, as previously mentioned, the learners are not motivated enough, unless the training includes some form of skills which will benefit them in their everyday lives. The NQF has made it possible for the integration of these skills within learning programmes, by providing a flexible curriculum framework which has opened up huge potential to introduce relevant and exciting programmes (cf 3.6.3.8.d).

Ganda (2000), the official responsible for advocacy, publications and mobilisation around ABET programmes within the ABET sub-directorate, in an interview, states that programmes have evolved from the previous night school system where adult learners attended ABET classes in the evenings. A

transformation process has taken place and adult learning centres have now been established. Programmes now focus on life-long learning rather than act as a continuation/replication of the day classes in which younger learners were taught and the syllabi transferred to nightschools. These programmes target adult learners who are over the age of sixteen.

Ntebe (2000), Regional Coordinator of the central region, in an interview, also states that the new approach differs greatly from the former Department of Education and Training system, where the syllabus was rigid. In an interview, Manyadu (2000), the official responsible for advocacy and social mobilisation in the central region, strengthens this view by stating that previously the dayschool syllabus was just transferred to the nightschool. However, within OBE there has been a transformation in the curriculum, which is presently still unfolding. New learning areas are being proposed as opposed to subject areas in the past. These learning areas were developed after national consultation with the relevant stakeholders. However, as mentioned in paragraph 3.3.1.4.a, Curriculum 2005 (Chisholm et al 2000:8) recommends that the eight learning areas in the GET band be reduced to six, in order to provide sufficient time for the development of effective reading skills, foundational mathematics and core concepts in science. Should this recommendation be implemented, it could affect the choice of learning areas in ABET.

Furthermore, according to Manyadu, a milestone has been reached in that exit qualifications equivalent to the qualifications of mainstream learners have been put in place. This motivates adult learners to continue with lifelong learning.

#### 4.2.1.2 Training of practitioners

Within the ABET sub-directorate, Daniels ensures that ABET practitioners are equipped to fulfil their role. This applies to full-time, as well as part-time practitioners. These practitioners are informed on relevant events. The full-time practitioners in turn train the part time ones in the districts. Ntebe also states that the practitioners are previously unemployed members of the Provincial Department, who are being re-trained

in terms of adult education and OBE. They are re-trained on a yearly basis to remain constantly updated in terms of new developments.

It has also been stated that, at present, the Cascade Training Model is used. Ten people from the Province were trained by the National Department of Education. These returned to their stations and assisted in developing other practitioners; down to the level of the district practitioners (Daniels 2000). Training was done in three phases after which a manual was developed consisting of three modules, namely learning design, assessment and learning materials (Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training 2000:1-2).

These modules are integrated due to the intricate linkages between the areas. The purpose of the manual is to standardise the information given to people (Eastern Cape Department of Education 2000:1). However, according to Ganda and Daniels, the Cascade approach tends to lead to the dilution of valuable information. At each level key information and concepts can be lost with this approach. It is an information booklet, rather than a training booklet. The individual regions modify the manual according to their area's needs.

Furthermore, according to Ntebe, the present method of training differs from that of the past in that a holistic approach has been adopted. Whereas the present programmes are uniformly run over the whole Province, in the past training was responsive to a particular situation. Particular training programmes would be developed for particular purposes. At present the ABET sub-directorate is trying to standardise the training, so that it is available on a much larger scale. The approach to training is also of a more interactive and participatory nature than in the past.

Although disadvantages of the Cascade Model have been mentioned, the Curriculum 2005 report (Chisholm et al 2000:58) is extremely critical of the model, recommending that it be strengthened and adapted. Reasons for the recommendation include:

- it is inadequate for delivering effective training;

- the ‘cascading’ of information results in the ‘watering down’ and/or misinterpretation of crucial information; and
- in the case of Curriculum 2005 (cf 3.2.2) trainers lack confidence, knowledge and understanding to manage the training process.

#### 4.2.1.3 Curriculum framework

The purpose of training practitioners, according to Daniels, is to ensure that they are able to design their own programmes. Although the unit standards set the national standard, it is up to each centre to design the curriculum. The ABET sub-directorate has adopted an integrated approach. Each centre has to develop an integrated learning programme for that particular centre which would integrate all learning areas.

Educators should be able to design and implement these learning programmes. An orientation manual has been developed to assist practitioners in this regard (Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training [S.a.]:6).

Ganda and Manyadu state that the adult learning centres are community-driven, rather than practitioner-driven, in that the needs of the community are considered when programmes are introduced. This is also emphasised by Ntebe, who states that the needs of the individual are being considered in terms of the outcomes-based approach. Although various levels have been built into the framework, there is flexibility in that the learner can choose according to personal or community needs (Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training [S.a.]:8).

#### 4.2.1.4 Materials development

According to Daniels, each region in the Province has the capacity for materials development. Staff was also trained according to the Cascade Model, having attended national workshops on the concept and have developed materials. District teams, that is, the ABET district coordinator, together with ABET

practitioners (employed on a contractual basis) were trained according to the Cascade Model. Each region, therefore, is equipped with this capacity. The ABET sub-directorate is also currently looking at modifying the information manual (cf 4.2.1.2) in terms of feedback through an evaluation workshop. The aim is to make it more practical.

Within the regional office, according to Ntebe, a specialist co-ordinates the development of material. The specialist works together with practitioners within the various districts. Manyadu states that the materials used within the region are all relevant in terms of OBE. The practitioners are trained to use these materials and it is therefore their prime responsibility to use the materials in a creative manner to achieve the outcomes.

Although the capacity for materials development is available, systems for the auditing of these materials (cf 3.6.3.8.g) have not been established according to Daniels and Ntebe.

#### 4.2.1.5 Assessment

There is a need for further training in the area of assessment, according to Daniels. Practitioners have been trained on continuous assessment, in terms of developing portfolios, for example. However, as assessment forms an integral part of OBE (cf 3.6.3.8.e), further training is needed. Recommendations from the regions indicate a need for more detailed training on assessment.

Daniels also highlights problems with regard to assessment. Since at this stage the assessment system is not in place and an ETQA (cf 3.3.1.4.d) has not been established, there is still uncertainty around assessment. The recognition of the GETC qualification is still questionable and not in place and there is no system to recognise credits obtained as well as to consider RPL. There is also no system to register assessors. Preparation work has been done though for a provincial assessment policy based on the national assessment action plan. There is also an effort to establish a provincial moderation team. However, more

direction is needed from the National Education Department. Funding is currently being requested from the National Education Department for training on assessment.

Assessment training will be done according to the Cascade Model, according to Manyadu. However as previously mentioned (cf 4.2.1.2) criticisms have been leveled against this model and it should be strengthened and adapted. Presently pilot projects (cf 4.2.1.1) are also being used to workshop practicalities with regard to assessment, for example, giving practitioners more guidelines on assessment, assessing integrated learning programmes, the role as registered assessors and assessing practical subjects. These processes are not straightforward and the practitioners learn as they progress. This is an advantage of the pilot projects where practical work, as well as an integrated learning programme, is assessed. The pilot projects also facilitate the development of portfolios for those being assessed (Eastern Cape Department of Education 2000: 60-71).

Daniels states that assessment is a key objective for the ABET sub-directorate for the year. Practitioners have been introduced to changes in general and issues are raised in workshops. The workshops offer effective learning opportunities.

#### 4.2.1.6 Monitoring and evaluation of the ABET process

As mentioned previously (cf 3.6.3.8.k), within ABET programmes planning, monitoring and evaluation play a vital role. According to Ntebe, the ABET sub-directorate is examining the whole monitoring and evaluation system which is currently inadequate. At present the integrity of the persons involved are relied upon. The district coordinators are depended upon to monitor and evaluate the process within their individual districts. Although reports are received from districts, the problem of transport makes it difficult to make regular visits to these centres. There is the need for a new system of monitoring and evaluation for these centres.

Daniel states that the model proposed includes initial reports from each centre, collated into reports from each district, moving on to the regions. This would form the basis of the evaluation process. A hierarchical

structure is being looked at. At present the progress is slow. However, there are currently various ways in which ABET activities are monitored. Regional meetings and workshops, consisting of both regional and district teams, are held from time to time. This allows for discussion on the development and implementation of the ABET process within these areas. Progress, development and ideas are discussed. This is an active approach in terms of the discussion topics and the formation of teams. It is a hands-on approach where learning programmes as well as training programmes are produced. Another form of monitoring being looked at is the examination of statistics. This includes monitoring the attendance of learners and keeping a register for claims.

Furthermore, Ganda states that provincially, every two months, a national meeting is held where all provinces come together and submit detailed reports. The programmes are monitored by the National Office of Education, which is a great benefit to all provinces as it creates a forum where ideas emanating from various staff members can be shared. It also gives a sense of motivation to establish the action taken by other provinces with regard to specific problem areas.

The person responsible for advocacy within the regional office, is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of ABET services, according to Ntebe. A report is then made to the Regional Coordinator who in turn communicates with the ABET sub-directorate. Practitioners are also responsible for submitting progress reports to the regional office. Structures such as community development councils (CDCs) consisting of members of the community, also assist in the monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

According to Manyadu, although there is ongoing training with regard to the use of the EMIS system (cf 3.6.3.8.k), the system is not fully utilised as staff are not completely familiar with its functions and the necessary equipment to fully utilise this facility is not available. There is also a need to upgrade human resources' skills with regard to computer literacy. Rather, monitoring and support is initiated through the CDCs who identify and record all activities at the adult learning centres. This role though is not confined to the CDCs.

#### 4.2.1.7 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and certification

Learners in the projects are not currently receiving accreditation, rather only interim accreditation is being awarded, according to Daniels.

Although according to Tshivhase (1996:156) the certification of practitioners is a necessity, it is not a reality in South Africa. Daniels states that in terms of practitioners, training is only recognised in terms of an attendance certificate as practitioner unit standards are still not in place. Only once the SGB (cf 3.3.1.4.c) standards have been registered, will practitioners' qualifications be recognised. Currently practitioners are still furthering their qualifications through tertiary educational institutions, as only accreditation by such institutions is recognised. Any training by the National Department of Education or the ABET sub-directorate is currently not recognised and cannot be accredited.

However, as discussed in paragraph 4.2.1.12, not all qualifications obtained at tertiary education institutions are currently recognised by the Provincial Department.

According to Daniels, although these structures are facilitated within the NQF, in terms of practicalities, they are still in the process of being implemented, while the ABET sub-directorate continues its duties.

#### 4.2.1.8 Funding with regard to ABET

Tshivhase (1996:130) states that should literacy be presented as a part of a package which promises tangible change in the quality of life, then financing is an essential and important ingredient.

Within the ABET sub-directorate, Ganda states that external funding contributes positively to the provision of ABET. A positive aspect of external funding is that the ABET sub-directorate is able to lay a solid foundation and much of the funding filters through to the district level. A rough estimate puts expenses for educators and basic materials at forty-two per cent. Due to the Cascade Training Model a core of people within the Province situated at remote locations, have the capacity to run the programmes.

Furthermore, according to Daniels, the ABET sub-directorate has formulated a strategy around fundraising. It is argued that ABET forms an integral part of development and there is a need to develop this concept of an integrated approach to funding. Funding is also required to develop the centres into more viable places of learning, as well as for capacity building. A means of doing this is to link ABET with projects. With any development issue in the Province, there has to be an ABET component. By linking an ABET programme to a development programme, such as the Wild Coast Spatial Development Node, for example, where there is funding, it is an opportunity to get better equipment, better opportunities, better training and the opportunity for obtaining a wide exposure.

However, according to Daniels, the current projects within the Provincial Department do not only have an external funding component. The Provincial Department does contribute financially and otherwise towards these projects, in terms of salaries and learning materials, for example. At present there are two pilot centres and there is hope of establishing ABET centres in the development nodes. According to Ntebe (2000), the regional and district offices receive annual budgets from the Provincial Department, most of which is allocated to the payment of salaries.

A further strategy, according to Daniels, is to work through Transitional Local Councils (TLCs), for example, the Alexandria partnership between the TLC, political structures and ABET. Use will also be made of untapped sources, which at the smallest scale consists of church groups and local businesses, amongst others. At a larger scale the focus is to develop proposals for the industrial sector.

#### 4.2.1.9 Linkages

The ABET sub-directorate works very closely with other organizations in order to promote ABET, according to Ganda. Workshops are an ideal forum for distributing information on current developments and these are open to all interested parties. The ABET sub-directorate also tries to supply relevant material to organizations to the extent that it is possible. Training is also provided where it is needed.

According to Manyadu, the responsibility for the provision of ABET does not lie solely with the Department of Education, but is a collective responsibility. It is not within the Provincial Department's capacity to provide all that is necessary. Therefore there is a need to co-operate with industry and NGOs, amongst others, to provide more resources and proper monitoring. This will enable access to the remotest areas of the region.

The provincial multi-year implementation plan (Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training 1998:8) also emphasises the need for partnerships with all sectors of society in order to build an effective, appropriate and relevant adult education and training system for South Africa.

#### 4.2.1.10 Research

According to Manyadu, there is a great need for research within the field of ABET. However, within the regional education department currently, staff-members lack the necessary skills to do research. There is a need for training within this area. Currently staff are also overwhelmed by their workloads and it could prove difficult to undertake research. However research needs to be done in areas such as:

- the relevance of the learning programmes to the learners' lives;
- the needs of the learners; and
- the impact of the education department's services on the community at large.

Currently, according to Manyadu, the Department of Education works closely with the HSRC with regard to research. Financially, as it is not viable presently for the Education Department to carry out research activities of its own, it relies on organizations, such as the HSRC and other forms of research reports, in order to assess whether an impact is being made on the community, as well as on recommendations for improving the provision of ABET within the region.

#### 4.2.1.11 Positive characteristics in the provision of ABET

Manyadu states that due to the multi-year implementation plan (cf 3.6.3.8), direction has been given to ABET at a provincial as well as regional level. This has allowed the Province to develop an implementation plan of its own based on the national policy. This has also resulted in the development of regional forums which have been established into districts, giving a definite structure to the provision of ABET. These forums are made up of various stakeholders and are fully representative of all sectors of society. The structure facilitates the monitoring of ABET activities within the region.

Furthermore, according to Ntebe, the structure of the NQF has provided ABET with a definite place within the broader framework of education. This has facilitated support from all sectors of society, including the communities who use the adult learning centres. Due to the granting of a qualification, learners are also motivated to attend classes as they have something definite to work towards, which is nationally recognised.

Other positive factors, according to Manyadu, include:

- available personnel and a proportionately allocated budget;
- on-going training provided by the Education Department, as well as massive induction and orientation within the region;
- exposure to the NQF and OBE curricula, during regional and provincial workshops;
- availability of necessary, though limited resources, for example, the car-pool system for visiting areas;
- the empowerment of districts through the available human resources within these districts;

- the provision of learning and support materials to the adult learning centres;
- the availability of trained practitioners;
- the employment of unemployed practitioners, alleviating their plight and strengthening resources within ABET;
- the provision of physical infrastructure, for example, offices, within the region; as well as
- the recognition of the ABET sub-directorate as being a legitimate part of the structures within the Education Department, and the provision of resources that accompanies this recognition.

According to Daniels, one of the greatest strengths in the ABET sub-directorate, including the regional and district teams within the Province, lies in the staff who are enthusiastic about adult education, self-motivated and work in a dedicated manner. The rate at which they work is phenomenal. The regions organise and facilitate workshops, meetings and any other necessary events with feedback within an impressive time period. The staff have incredible commitment despite the obstacles that they face in terms of transport, distance of venues, conditions of employment, working away from homes and families, and attending workshops. The staff is efficient in carrying out their responsibilities. The reason for such enthusiasm is that people are working with a vision for adult education. The Cascade process also allows for training to be filtered to all levels of the ABET sub-directorate, regions and districts. Furthermore, funds are also available for this process and seeing the impact of all this continues to motivate people.

Daniels and Ntebe also state that the ABET sub-directorate now also has a policy of employing previously unemployed educators, motivating them to participate actively in the programmes. Teamwork has also contributed positively to the success of the ABET sub-directorate with the more than 3000 staff within the Province working closely together. Where other governmental education departments have been paralysed

in the Province, the ABET sub-directorate has managed to keep its head above water, as a result of the external funding.

Ganda states that the government's commitment to eradicate illiteracy is a positive motivating factor which has filtered through the Department of Education from the national to provincial and regional levels.

The relationship with other organizations has also boosted the ABET services within the region. The fact that the Provincial Department is involved in all processes with regard to transformation in ABET is also an encouraging factor.

#### 4.2.1.12 Factors hampering the provision of ABET in the Border/Kei region

Within the ABET sub-directorate, its regions and districts, there are a number of factors which hamper the provision of ABET. One of the difficulties is running the community based projects efficiently over the vast expanse of the Province even though the ABET sub-directorate is committed to supplying ABET to anyone requesting it. This includes a special programme focusing on rural women. However, the reality of supplying services required, are extremely challenging. For example, there are centres scattered all over the Province where there is either very poor or a lack of infrastructure. This includes the lack of roads to access the centres (Eastern Cape Department of Education and Training 1998:10-11).

Manyadu also states that it is difficult to reach all sectors of the region within the rural areas. This is further exacerbated by a lack of transport within the regional office, demanding careful planning in order to get transport to visit the various areas.

The lack of physical infrastructure within the Province is emphasised in articles in the Daily Dispatch (2000b April 14: 1&10), where areas within the Border/Kei region of the Eastern Cape were proclaimed disaster areas due to flooding which caused massive damage to infrastructure. Furthermore, the newspaper also reports that, in its Inter-Provincial Comparative Report 2000, the DBSA states that the Eastern Cape was one of the worst three provinces in accessing services. Factors contributing to this included the

backlog infrastructural service provision, which is the **precondition for improved economic growth, welfare and quality of life**. Rural areas lack basic levels of services, due to the cost to provide an accessible and affordable service, as well as the lower income levels of these communities.

Furthermore, according to Daniels, government officials do not have the basics needed to effectively carry out their duties. This includes the lack of equipment, such as computers, as well as the necessary administrative infrastructure. This hopefully will be rectified in time. A major problem is also the lack of transport to get to the centres (as previously stated).

The conditions of employment which the educators endure is also a hampering factor, although this is a national problem. Due to the lengthy and complicated process, educators are seldom paid on time. In addition to this they are paid on a scale according to their qualifications, some of which are currently not recognised by the Department of Education. This was emphasised in an interview, by gXabe (2000), current Acting Head of the Department of Adult and Continuing Education (DACE) at the University of Transkei (UNITRA), who states that the DACE is still negotiating the recognition of qualifications obtained by the Department of Education's employers, at UNITRA. These are factors which can be very de-motivating, but despite this the staff continue performing their duties. Daniels (2000) states that the National Office of the Education Department commissioned the HSRC to research the issue of salaries countrywide. It was found that the procedure for salaries was totally unacceptable, and possible solutions are being examined. Ensor (1995:103) also states that it is important that practitioners be recognised and paid appropriately to ensure the effectiveness of programmes.

The lack of regular payment of salaries to ABET educators is also emphasised in the Daily Dispatch (2000c May 10:12) and by Dwadwa (1998:5), where it is stated that it is common for salaries to be received for as long as up to three months after it is due. Furthermore, there is no specific date of payment and salary payments can be made haphazardly at any time. In addition to this, the situation is exacerbated by the high taxes imposed on part-time practitioners, who have not been appointed on a full-time basis despite the fact that they have worked for a number of years within the Education Department.

There is also a need, according to Ganda, to involve local enterprises more actively within ABET so as to harness more support. Furthermore, there is a need to look at developing individuals more fully in terms of skills.

Budgetary constraints according to Manyadu, also hamper fulfilling requests for additional adult learning centres within the villages. In addition to this, currently there is the problem of failures/dropouts from the previous night school system. These learners are repeating grade twelve/standard ten, which currently falls within the FETC band. However, as these learners have to be accommodated within the ABET sector, the regional office finds itself stretching its already limited budget. This problem will be phased out by the year 2001.

#### 4.2.1.13 Conclusions with regard to the Department of Education's provision of ABET within the Border/Kei region

As discussed in paragraph 4.2.1.1, there is a need for **transformation within ABET programmes** in order to sustain them. This is evident from the high dropout rates as well as the request for skills training. In order for this transformation to be successful, a number of requirements need to be fulfilled. These include:

- the incorporation of skills training into ABET programmes, in other words, an integrated approach;
- the demand should come from the people who need training, in conjunction with the Provincial Department;
- the training programme should be relevant to the daily lives of those requiring it;
- sufficient practitioners and learners are needed to support the programme;

- the need for adult learning centres as opposed to the night schools of the past education system;
- the transformation of the curriculum from a rigid to a more flexible approach in order to include relevant learning areas; as well as
- programmes should focus on lifelong learning rather than be a continuation/replication of the day classes.

The above-mentioned requirements are either already being practised or are currently being put in place by the Provincial Departments, together with its regional and district departments. Initiatives such as the Ekwelo project, are the means by which transformation is currently being implemented.

With regard to **practitioners**, it can be concluded that there is a sufficient number of persons in order to fulfil this role. This has been boosted by the fact that unemployed practitioners have been re-employed and re-trained in terms of OBE and adult education. However, caution should be considered in terms of the **training model** for practitioners. Although the Cascade Model (cf 4.2.1.2) has been utilised and is regarded as effective by the ABET sub-directorate, it should be strengthened and adapted according to the Curriculum 2005 report. The strength of the Cascade Model for the ABET sub-directorate lies in:

- its flexibility to train a number of practitioners at a time, who in turn can train others;
- training which is also adaptable in terms of being carried out in phases in terms of a modular approach;
- that it allows for the integration of modules due to the intricate linkages between the areas; and

- that it lends itself to a more holistic and standardised approach which is inter-active and participatory.

However, the Cascade Model is criticised and improvements need to be made in the following areas:

- it needs to be adapted and strengthened to prevent the ‘watering down’ and /or misinterpretation of crucial information;
- to effectively manage the training process, the following aspects of the trainers should be strengthened:
  - confidence;
  - knowledge of the training process; as well as
  - understanding of the training process.

Although the purpose of training practitioners is to equip them with skills to design their own programmes, it is important that practitioners are able to design learning programmes that address the needs of the learners. The **learning programmes** should be community-driven, with a degree of flexibility that considers individual needs as well (cf 4.2.1.3). As mentioned in paragraph 3.6.3.8, programme developers in ABET, as well as practitioners, will have to ensure that programmes derived from the national curriculum framework have the flexibility and potential to provide the wide foundation and core concepts that learners need for lifelong learning.

The Province seems to be adequately equipped and have the capacity for **materials development** (cf 4.2.1.4). Once again this was achieved via workshops using the Cascade Model (discussed previously).

Although there are specialists at the regional level, it is the practitioners’ responsibility to use the materials effectively and creatively, in order to achieve the outcomes. However, there is no evidence of a system put in place in order to audit learning and support materials as discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.8g.

As **assessment** is the cornerstone for transformation activities and programmes and therefore requires specialised knowledge and expertise (cf 3.6.3.8e), there is still a need for further training in this area.

Although the NQF framework has been established, many problems still arise around the issue of assessment and the following needs to be put in place in order to address these (cf 4.2.1.5):

- a formal assessment system;
- an ETQA for assessment;
- recognition of the GETC qualification;
- a system to recognise:
  - credits towards the GETC qualification;
  - accrediting RPL; as well as
  - the registration of assessors.

Although there is an effort to establish a provincial assessment policy based on the national assessment action plan, more direction and funding for this activity, as well as for training, is needed from the National Education Department. Although the Cascade Model is being considered for training, the criticisms and recommendations mentioned (cf 4.2.1.2) should be considered and adapted accordingly.

With regard to the **monitoring and evaluation** of the ABET process (cf 4.2.1.6), there is a need for an adequate system. However, as mentioned previously (cf 3.6.3.8.k), even at a national level, a strategy is still being formulated for the evaluation of the new EMIS and SIM system. However, to fully utilise the computer-based system, the human resources' skills with regard to computer literacy has to be upgraded. Currently, the system of verbal reports, and the integrity of people are relied upon.

The **recognition of prior learning** (cf 4.2.1.7), a specialised sub-set of assessment, is currently not fully implemented in terms of learner assessment within the Provincial Department. Credible ways of establishing the authenticity of the learner's prior knowledge as required by SAQA (cf 3.6.3.8.f) are still to be implemented. Currently, learners only receive interim accreditation. There is also a need to acknowledge the practitioners' training in terms of **accreditation or certification**. However, presently only formal qualifications obtained from academic institutions are recognised. Although the structures for RPL and certification have been facilitated through the NQF, they are yet to be fully implemented.

As stated in paragraphs 3.6.3.8.1, **funding** for the provision of ABET is shared among a number of partners. A number of projects, such as the Ekwelo project, have been established through partnerships with external funders and NGOs. In order to sustain funding and utilise funds to maximum capacity a number of strategies are suggested (cf 4.2.1.8):

- ABET should form an integral part of development and an integrated approach to fund-raising is required;
- through linking with projects, funding should be utilised to develop centres into more viable places of learning, as well as for capacity building;
- development in the Province should include an ABET component; and
- untapped community resources, such as TLCs, church groups and local businesses, should be included in partnerships.

In terms of **linkages and research** (cf 4.2.1.9 & 4.2.1.10), both are seen as important to the sustenance of ABET within the Province. Linkages, through workshops, are ideal as a means of distributing information on current developments as well as supplying relevant materials to other ABET sectors. Linkages are also suitable for training. In general, linkages provide a means of collective responsibility for ABET within the

Province, including the pooling and sharing of resources and monitoring. Although research is deemed as important, there is a need to develop these skills within the Provincial Department. However, the overwhelming workload makes this a daunting task. Therefore linkages with research institutions, such as the HSRC, are a means of accessing necessary information.

In general there are a number of factors that promote ABET within the Provincial Department. These include (cf 4.2.1.11):

- the availability of the national multi-year implementation plan facilitating the development of a regional implementation plan for the Province;
- the development of regional forums, giving a definite structure to ABET provision;
- representation of all sectors of society on the regional forums facilitating the monitoring of ABET activities within the region;
- the definite placement of ABET within the broader framework of education, through the NQF;
- the granting of a nationally recognised qualification, motivating learners;
- availability of personnel and a proportionately allocated budget;
- on-going training provided by the Education Department, as well as massive induction and orientation within the region;
- exposure to the NQF and OBE curricula in terms of regional and provincial workshops;

- **availability of necessary, though limited resources;**
- **the empowerment of districts through the available human resources within these districts;**
- **the provision of learning and support materials to the adult learning centres;**
- **the employment of unemployed practitioners, alleviating their plight and strengthening resources within ABET;**
- **the provision of physical infrastructure.**
- **the motivation of the staff due to:**
  - **a vision for ABET;**
  - **the availability of funds to carry the process forward; and**
  - **the visible impact of the projects within the Province.**
- **the commitment of the National Department of Education to the eradication of illiteracy; and**
- **the involvement of the Provincial Department within all processes of transformation regarding ABET.**

However, a number of factors have to be addressed in order to improve the provision of ABET. These include (cf 4.2.1.12):

- **improvement in the physical infrastructure in many of the rural areas of the Province;**
- **the need for additional modes of transport to facilitate visits to outlying adult learning centres;**

- the need for additional basic equipment;
- an improvement in the conditions of employment;
- the need for the recognition of qualifications and training;
- more active involvement with local enterprises in order to harness support for ABET; as well as
- access to additional funding and ways of improving budgetary constraints.

#### **4.2.2 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

Two types of NGOs are investigated within the Border/Kei area. These include the commercially-based NGO, Siyaphambili (East London and the surrounding area), and others within the NGO sector which tend to be more community-based, such as the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust (PABET) - (Umtata and surrounding area), Project Literacy (currently working on the Ekwelo Project in conjunction with the ABET sub-directorate – Bisho), Zingisa (King William's Town and surrounding area), and Lilugenlethu (East London and surrounding areas). These NGOs are a fair reflection of the ABET activities within their sector as they not only function in the urban areas but extend to the surrounding rural communities and beyond as can be seen further in this section.

Although the community-based NGOs have many things in common, they do not necessarily cater for the same needs within the community. This too becomes clearer within this section.

##### **4.2.2.1 Programmes offered**

As previously mentioned (cf 4.2.2) all NGOs do not cater for the same needs. According to Motala (1992:7), the roles played by NGOs vary, and their success is dependent on how effectively they can

address community needs, and mobilize the local community in its own projects. The community-based NGO, Project Literacy, for example, currently oversees the Electives Project (Ekwelo – as discussed in paragraph 4.2.1.1) of the Provincial Department. In an interview, Zibi (2000), the Provincial Director of Project Literacy, states that two learning areas have been identified within this project, namely, small, micro and medium enterprises (SMME), together with Agriculture and Applied Technology. These learning areas were identified as a result of research done by the National Department of Education, and are in response to needs specific to the Eastern Cape Province. These skills are therefore integrated into the learning programmes.

According to Zibi, within the Eastern Cape, twenty-five centres have been targeted as areas in which the project has been introduced. Nineteen of these centres fall under the direct auspices of the Provincial Department, while the remaining six are non-departmental centres. These centres are spread throughout the Province with three education department centres within each region, together with an additional centre in Willowvale. These links between departmental and non-departmental centres are created via the Centre for Investment and Marketing in the Eastern Cape (CIMAC), which is a public relations agency for the government and government projects. The key area of the project is ABET and the primary motive is investment within the Province. The role of Project Literacy is to manage the process involved in the project for the Provincial Department.

In an interview, Grenfell (2000), Managing Director of the Siyaphambili Institute of Human Resources Development (hereafter referred to as the Siyaphambili Institute), states that it is a commercially-based organisation, providing adult basic education training programmes to companies mostly in the Province. The organization has evolved out of a non-profit organisation which focused on the strategic issues that relate to human resource development in the Province. Through this process, the Siyaphambili Institute was established, based on the need for providing adult basic education training programmes.

According to Grenfell, the Siyaphambili Institute responds to a particular need of a company. The organization is not structured in any way to operate as a community-based organisation in the true sense of

the word. It's resources and access to finance is dependent on funding and finances from services provided.

In an interview with Sinika (2000), the Acting Head of The Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, it was confirmed that the organization was established to meet the basic literacy and numeracy needs of the people within the surrounding, poverty-stricken, urban community, as well to alleviate the high illiteracy rate in the surrounding rural areas. The programmes offered, include teaching reading and writing skills in English and mother-tongue Xhosa, as well as numeracy. Learning centres are based within the community, allowing easy access to the learners.

In an interview, Tile (2000), the Project Coordinator of the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust (PABET), states that the organization functions within an urban, as well as the surrounding rural communities. The organization offers adult education and income generating projects to the communities. The programmes offered include, teaching reading and writing skills in English and mother-tongue Xhosa, and empowering communities with skills through income-generating projects, including poultry farming and netwire-making. These programmes run in conjunction with each other so that learners are motivated in practical situations, rather than finding themselves in a classroom situation constantly. Existing facilities within the communities, including schools and church halls, are used as learning centres.

The Regional Coordinator of the Zingisa Educational Project, Somhlahlo (2000), states in an interview, that the organization aims at empowering people in terms of 'popular education'. This evolved as a result of a process spanning a number of years in which the organization moved from programmes such as literacy training, through to skills empowerment through the production of various goods. However, due to a number of factors (discussed in paragraph 4.2.2.13), the organization currently concentrates on 'popular education', that is, offering services to the rural communities in terms of analysing government policies, new acts, human rights and accessing information not usually filtered through, which assists in making learners (and the community) more self-reliant.

#### 4.2.2.2 Foundation issues

Zibi states that within Project Literacy, a management team has been established, with various action plans and activities having been set. The Provincial Management Committee (PMC) consists of nine members, which include representatives from each of the six regions, together with representatives of management. At the regional level there are regional ABET officers who act as coordinators. At the district level there are district ABET coordinators. These persons are also provided with training on broad programme management.

Furthermore, according to Zibi, within the Ekwelo Project, various sub-committees also exist, including a training team with members from the Provincial Department, as well as four Project Literacy practitioners and specialists who are invited when needed. The Project Literacy practitioners are trained by their organization. They develop most of the materials, together with the Provincial Department practitioners.

The Zingisa Educational Project, according to Somhlahlo, effectively offers its services throughout the zones in which they operate, due to the establishment of committees known as People's Participation Planning and Action (PPPA). A number of zones have been identified which consist of various areas, each with its own PPPA. The functions of the PPPA are to manage development in the areas, monitor progress and assist trainers. As the members of the PPPA are from the communities themselves, they feel responsible for the success of the services provided.

As the Operations Manager of the Siyaphambili Institute, Moonsamy (2000), in an interview, states that the organization looks closely at the needs of the clients. Programmes are then offered which meet the requirements of the clients as well as those of the NQF. Although the clientele is diverse, varying from the motor industry through to the plasticians and fibre-glass manufacturers, amongst others, there is always the need for fundamental education in terms of Communication in English and mother-tongue Xhosa, with further development at the higher levels. As it is important that these programmes are fully supported by all stakeholders within a company, the Siyaphambili Institute together with the client, sets up a steering

committee consisting of relevant members who market the programme within the client's company. This is vital to the success of the programme, as it curbs dropout rates and motivates learners to attend.

Scheduling of the programme is also very important according to Moonsamy, of the Siyaphambili Institute. Most clients offer programmes partially during working hours with a fifty-fifty share on the part of the client and the learners. This indicates commitment to the programme by both management and the learners. Clients also grant financial assistance to employees.

#### 4.2.2.3 Reasons for the introduction of ABET programmes

Previously, according to Moonsamy, of the Siyaphambili Institute, the prime reason for adult basic education was social responsibility. However, it is presently driven by the need for competency in terms of world class standards as well as legislation. This is clearly visible within industry, where according to Grenfell, with the Skills Development Act of November 1998, the organizations are being forced through their Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to focus their human resource development requirements and not just provide literacy or numeracy as a "nice to have". They are being forced to work within a human resource development framework. These SETAs have been established by the Minister of Labour in terms the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998c:19420).

The purpose of the Skills Development Act , no 97(RSA 1998c: 19420) is:

- to develop the skills of the South African workforce;
- to increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment;
- to encourage workers to participate in learnership and other training programmes;

- to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education;
- to ensure the quality of education and training in and for the workplace;
- to assist in employment; as well as
- to provide and regulate employment services.

According to Grenfell of the Siyaphambili Institute, within the motor industry, this is already well developed. The motor industry clearly have things in place in terms of how literacy relates to the core contextual programmes. Learning programmes differ within organizations depending on their electives or specialisations. Some learning programmes are generic, while others are tailored towards the organization's operational requirements. However, the learners still need to go through the basics/fundamentals of adult education. It is only as learners get through to the higher levels that programmes are tailored to what the individuals do in those companies.

Workers within these companies, according to Grenfell, are able to carry out what they are supposed to do and are all productive in most cases. However, what organisations are finding is that as the nature of work changes, employees need to be functionally literate. Assessments carried out by the Siyaphambili Institute indicate that within the organisations with whom the institute works, eighty per cent of the workforce on the shop floor are functionally illiterate, that is, have below a standard five level of education. This is reflected constantly within every organisation which the Siyaphambili Institute visits. Grenfell also states that although the companies are advanced in terms of technological development, many still work within an environment which requires knowledge of the tools being used. The workforce is able to perform the jobs they have been doing for years and are doing it relatively effectively. But as the nature of work changes, so too does the need to be better educated and better skilled.

The community-based NGO, Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, as previously mentioned (cf 4.2.2.1), responds to the need for literacy and numeracy within the community. This is also the case with the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, according to Tile. Literacy as well as training skills are offered in areas relevant to the community.

The Zingisa Educational Project, however responds to a need which has evolved from their previous services (as mentioned in paragraph 4.2.2.1). According to Somhlahlo, research indicated that although learners were capacitated in terms of basic literacy skills, and trained in terms of basic production of goods, they were still disempowered in terms of their knowledge regarding 'popular education'. Nkopo (2000), of the Zingisa Educational Project, in an interview, states that holistic development is needed within rural communities, in terms of integrating reading and writing skills, with survival skills, including the production of goods and conscientising communities in terms of 'popular education'.

#### 4.2.2.4 Training of practitioners

In terms of the Siyaphambili Institute, Grenfell states that most of their practitioners were previously trained by Project Literacy, until the Institute developed the ability to train its own practitioners. The practitioners are familiar with Project Literacy's methods and approaches and the use of their materials.

Sinika states that the practitioners at the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre are also trained by various organizations, including Project Literacy. The organizations are also introducing practitioners to the outcomes-based approach, and in-service training is carried out with regard to new developments. This is also the case with the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, according to Tile, who states that various organizations have been involved in the training of their practitioners. Further training has taken place after the introduction of SAQA, the NQF and OBE in order to familiarise practitioners with the concepts and empower them with the necessary skills.

Practitioners of the Zingisa Educational Project are trained by various organizations, according to Somhlahlo. Training is facilitated through external funding from various sources. These practitioners then operate on the “train the trainer” approach, similar to the Cascade Model (cf 4.2.1.2), and train practitioners within the communities. Workshops are held on ‘popular education’ issues and facilitators are updated on recent developments. Due to the poor infrastructure within the rural communities, communication is negatively affected and a number of strategies have been established to curb this problem. Community Development Committees (CDCs) have been established with various ‘desks’ such as welfare, education and transport, and members of these desks are trained and filter the information through to the rest of the community.

#### 4.2.2.5 Materials development

According to Grenfell, learning materials are developed by trained staff within the organization. The Institute has the capacity and the approach to learning materials has always been one of “take the benefit of whatever exists from the learning materials” point of view. Materials for the core programmes are utilised from various materials developers, including Project Literacy’s English Literacy Programme (ELP) materials are also utilised, especially in terms of the “Breakthrough to Literacy” programme.

Moonsamy, also states that the Quality Assurance Division of the organization also ensures the quality of the materials. Although these materials are not externally evaluated, success rates of learners undertaking the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) examinations are good indicators of the effectiveness of the material.

The Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre uses materials developed by organizations such as Project Literacy, according to Sinika. Recently produced materials on assessment by the IEB is also used. According to Tile, the organization also depends on external funding for material and uses IEB materials as well.

#### 4.2.2.6 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and accreditation

Grenfell indicated that there was no formal certificate to indicate that practitioners have attended training sessions. Neither was there any form of formal recognition for their knowledge and skill which comes from experience. Formal qualifications are obtained via institutions of higher learning, (as mentioned in paragraph 4.2.1.7).

With regard to learners, however, according to Grenfell, the Siyaphambili Institute has facilitated RPL within the learning programmes. Since RPL is fundamental to the continuation of a person's educational training, the organization provides assessments which determine what learning outcomes learners are able to perform and then the learning programmes are built upon these. Moonsamy states that the placement assessments evaluate the learners' prior knowledge, after which they are assigned to particular ability groups.

Sinika of the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, also states that difficulty is experienced in terms of getting recognition for the practitioners' training and experience. Although this opportunity is facilitated in terms of SAQA and the NQF, in practical terms it has not as yet materialised. Tile, of the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, states that practitioners who want their qualifications recognised usually register with an institution of higher learning, as their current qualifications and experiences are not recognised, nor accredited. The training is only recognised by the organizations who train them.

#### 4.2.2.7 Assessment

At the Siyaphambili Institute, according to Grenfell, continuous assessment is applied within the learning programmes, which indicate the individual learner's ability to grasp the various concepts to show that they have met the various outcomes. This approach is not formalised in terms of being part of the end-of-course assessment. The organization uses the IEB examinations, a means which reasonably accurately determines whether the individual is able to perform the outcomes that they are required to perform, to

receive accreditation. Most organizations with which the Siyaphambili Institute works, insist that this examination be written. The reason can possibly be found in the Curriculum 2005 report (Chisholm et al 2000: 53). In this report it is stated that, as assessment is internal and formative, there is a lack of assessment against a set of external standards. The reason for this, is that the latter is seen as constricting. However, it has been found that there is no alternative credible method of demonstrating whether learning is taking place and to what extent.

Although the continuous assessment approach in terms of portfolios (cf 3.6.3.8.e) is available, according to Grenfell, it is not without difficulties. It is open to abuse and it is difficult ultimately to assess it at the end of a process. Continuous assessment is however used, according to Moonsamy, to ascertain whether the learner has understood the outcome and to determine the level of internalisation.

According to Sinika, the IEB examinations is also the final form of assessment for learners at the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre. Continuous assessment is used at the lower levels after which the learners write the IEB examination at level four. The main reason for this is that there is a lack of funds for the learners to write the examination at each of the levels.

Tile, of the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, also states that assessment is done on a continuous basis, with the IEB examination written at all levels. However, Ensor (1995:12) states that there is a possibility that formal learning and examinations, such as those set by the IEB examinations, may not be relevant in rural areas, where the level of unemployment is high and more employment-skills training is needed. It is suggested that the focus in these areas should be on learner needs and that practical assessment in the course of classroom activity should be considered. Practitioners should be provided with access to a range of assessment methods and encouraged to reflect continuously on their activities and results.

#### 4.2.2.8 Monitoring and evaluation

In order to manage progress within the Ekwelo Project, the process has been divided into four focus areas, according to Zibi, namely:

- (a) Teacher upgrading/training of practitioners, in terms of:
  - (i) designing learning programmes and (ii) implementing learning programmes.
  
- (b) Specialist training for SMME and Agriculture. This empowers practitioners so that they can pass on these skills to the learners. The ultimate aim is to reach adult learners in these various areas in order to empower them for self-employment, and to conscientise them in modern ways of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology.
  
- (c) Training of principles/coordinators of the adult centres.
 

This training focuses on general management as well as institutional management in order to cope with the challenges of the centres.
  
- (d) Community training at the level of the Central Government Council (CGC), the governing body of the centre. The CGC is trained in terms of project management and centre management at a basic level. In addition to this the CGC is also trained in terms of SMMEs.

According to Zibi, much reliance is put on district coordinators as they are a close link between the community and the centre, and can also provide a monitoring and support role.

Within the Ekwelo Project, according to Zibi, a monitoring coordinator has been appointed. This person works centrally but also visits the various districts and liaises with the various teams. These teams consist of two trainers as well as a district coordinator. Part of their role is to form a monitoring and support team. These persons also form part of a broader team, consisting of all the areas, to form an overall team which

focuses on monitoring and evaluation. Project Literacy nationally, as well as the Provincial Department also work together in terms of monitoring and evaluation. This process takes place mainly in the form of reports which come from the people involved in the project, regarding progress or stumbling blocks which they experience (Project Literacy 1999:1-13).

Zibi states that since the Ekwelo Project was only launched in July 1999, and the pilot stage is only set to end after a three year period, that is, 2002, the overall success of the project cannot be determined as yet. It cannot be evaluated in its entirety and monitoring occurs within the process at various levels. The ultimate aim is to have a pool of people who are specialists in their own capacity, who will continue to work with the other villages. Furthermore, the aim is also to duplicate this in all provinces and the Eastern Cape is the "guinea-pig" in this. Presently, duplication of the aims of the project as well as implementation of the project itself is occurring simultaneously and is a challenge.

According to Grenfell, the Siyaphambili Institute has developed a Quality Assurance Division (mentioned in paragraph 4.2.2.5) within the organisation. This division ensures, amongst others, that the learning materials are in line with the requirements of the NQF and meet standards that are recommended by SAQA. Furthermore, it also ensures the existence of an assessment process to ensure that learners receive the necessary assessment during, or at the end of the learning programme, and that the practitioners are trained in the development of the assessments.

The Quality Assurance Division, according to Grenfell, provides the necessary infrastructure and the mechanisms for support and assistance. Practitioners who go out into the field are evaluated by this division, based on the way in which they implement the learning programmes. As the practitioners are trained by the organization, internal mechanisms and support systems for their evaluation are put in place. These include a process of in-service visits as well as reporting mechanisms for the monitoring and co-ordination of programmes. External administrators are not used for purposes of evaluation.

Grenfell also states that the coordinators and operational managers monitor the programmes. These persons are equipped with multi-dimensional skills and knowledge. The reason for this, is that the staff of the Siyaphambili Institute all have classroom experience, and have the background knowledge of the way in which a programme should be provided. They also have sound training backgrounds. All of them are moderators for the IEB and have a broad knowledge of the assessment of practitioners in the co-operative training field.

Monitoring and evaluation is also carried out by fieldworkers, according to Moonsamy, of the Siyaphambili Institute. These fieldworkers evaluate the services provided and report back to the organization.

Although minimal, external evaluation does occur to an extent within the Siyaphambili Institute, as Grenfell states. At the beginning of a learning cycle, objectives are proposed for a particular company depending on the needs of that company. Measurements, in terms of the performance of the learners and the programmes, are set against these objectives and agreed upon. On completion of a learning programme, the performance of the organization is evaluated according to these measurements.

Within the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, according to Sinika, monitoring and evaluation of progress of the learners is done through the IEB examinations. There is no other external form of monitoring and evaluation. The performance of the learners who undertake these examinations is also an opportunity to indicate the performance of the practitioners and the centre in general. Representatives of the IEB also visit the centre to evaluate and add to the materials. Furthermore, the response of the learners to the programme is used to gauge whether it is positively or negatively received.

Within the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, however, according to Tile, monitoring and evaluation is the function of the Project Coordinator. The staff reports on progress on a weekly basis to the Project Coordinator, who submits a report to the Board of Trustees. External monitoring and evaluation does not take place specifically, unless the IEB examinations are used as an instrument to measure success.

According to Somhlahlo, the Zingisa Educational Project has set up various committees to monitor and evaluate progress within the programmes offered. These include PPPAs and CDCs consisting of 'desks' (as mentioned in paragraphs 4.2.2.2 & 4.2.2.4) who report to the workshops and the Regional Coordinator on a regular basis. These committees operate within the communities and are a reliable source of monitoring and evaluation.

#### 4.2.2.9 Funding

As stated by Motala (1992:7), the community-based nature of NGO activity and its dependence on external funding are factors which define its limits. The Ekwelo Project is mainly funded externally by organizations outside the country. According to Zibi, it is also partially funded by Project Literacy. The Provincial Department offers support in other forms, besides providing the salaries for its own practitioners. In addition to responsibilities already mentioned (cf 4.2.2.1), it is also the responsibility of Project Literacy to provide support materials, basic equipment and tools to start small businesses (for example, sewing machines) and to encourage learners to practice the skills that they are taught. As the Provincial Director, it is the role of Zibi, to access these resources as external funding is not necessarily allocated to these.

According to Grenfell, although most of the NGOs have done effective work in the past, they have not benefited with the changing funding strategies from overseas funders. Since the State is primarily responsible for ABET, donor funding primarily goes into government, through which it is directed into use by the State or those NGOs who have the capacity to provide the services and directions the funders require. However, as a commercial provider who provides services to industry, the Siyaphambili Institute is not directly affected by donor-funding but relies rather on the demands of commerce and industry. However, since the State has the monopoly over ABET and therefore ABET funding, it has led to many NGOs closing down.

Funding, according to Sinika, of the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, is a major problem currently. Presently the organization cannot offer the learners anything beyond programmes in basic literacy and numeracy skills as funds are needed to progress. However, even though the organization has appealed to the Provincial Department, there has as yet not been a positive response. Donors are no longer prepared to fund individual organizations, since, as previously mentioned, the State is primarily responsible for ABET.

Tile, of the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, echoes the problems with regard to funding. As the organization is heavily dependent on external funding for its projects, the new financial constraints due to the State's responsibility, has meant that donor-funding is dwindling at a rapid rate. The Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust is currently looking at forming a partnership with the Provincial Department as a means of support.

The Zingisa Educational Project is also heavily dependent on external funding. Funding is also obtained via networking with various organizations within the field of adult education. However, since most funding is now channeled via the State, the organization is also experiencing financial difficulties, according to Somhlahlo.

#### 4.2.2.10 SAQA – related issues

According to Zibi, a number of Project Literacy members form part of the ABET task team in terms of OBE. They ensure that all requirements in terms of SAQA and the NQF are met. This spans not only materials, but assessment as well as curriculum planning.

According to Grenfell, the introduction of SAQA and the NQF has given direction to the ABET sector. The Siyaphambili Institute has always been a leader in the field of providing education, based on the philosophies and concepts promoted by SAQA and the NQF, and more specifically outcomes-based education. ABET was the first field that provided learning programmes following their guidelines.

Furthermore, according to Grenfell, since the Siyaphambili Institute has always been working along the lines of what SAQA and the NQF promote, no significant changes have been made in the way in which the organization's services are provided. As the organization was at the time of establishing SAQA, already part of the process of forming, strategising and transforming education and training, it was well-positioned.

Moonsamy of the Siyaphambili Institute, states that the NQF has provided clearer direction in terms of ABET. Previously it had operated on an ad-hoc basis, lacking standardisation and the acknowledgement in terms of a nationally recognised qualification. The structure was also haphazard. However, with the introduction of the NQF, more direction has been provided. There are definite levels which are nationally recognised and accepted. The curriculum may not be prescribed, but a good guide is provided with regard to this. Flexibility has also been built into the system in terms of the use of various media and materials in order to reach the set outcomes.

In terms of representation on SAQA bodies, according to Grenfell, the Siyaphambili Institute is well represented through the Adult Education Trainers' Association of South Africa (AETASA) which represents the organization on various bodies. Communication and feedback regarding SAQA takes place via AETASA as well as through the communication channels that SAQA puts out, such as bulletins, newsletters and journals.

The Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, according to Sinika, does not have any representation on SAQA bodies and depends on communication and representation via the Centre for Adult Basic Education and Training (CABET) for the recognition and acknowledgement of the organization by SAQA. However, the life-span of CABET is relatively uncertain given that many NGOs are currently disintegrating as donor funding is difficult to access. The staff of the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre are not very knowledgeable of SAQA-related issues and need training on issues related to SAQA, the NQF and current developments in ABET.

The Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, according to Tile, also has no representation on any SAQA related bodies. Registration with SAQA has also not yet proceeded. The main reason is the lack of finances with the future of the organization being questionable.

It is the intention of the Zingisa Educational Project, according to Somhlahlo, to register a curriculum emanating from training needs within the community with SAQA, in the near future. However this is still within the planning stage and strategic planning workshops are being held. There is no representation of the organization on any of the SAQA bodies and other sister- affiliates are relied upon for information on SAQA –related issues. According to Nkopo, the organization depends on the CABET to represent the organization. However, (as previously mentioned), there are also uncertainties with regard to this representative body due to financial constraints.

Regarding the multi-year implementation plan, according to Grenfell, the Siyaphambili Institute was involved as a stakeholder and was an integral part of the process. This plan has provided individuals as well as the organisation with a guide as to how ABET will be provided in the workplace. It forms part of the building blocks on which ABET can be effectively and efficiently provided and has not affected the organization negatively.

#### 4.2.2.11 Relationship with state-providers

As mentioned in paragraph 3.6.3.7, the State is now primarily responsible for the provision of ABET. According to Grenfell, this does not impact negatively on the Siyaphambili Institute. The State does not have the resources or the capacity to provide ABET to the extent that it is needed. For this reason the NGO sector is still supported as industry-based or commercial-based providers.

However, according to Grenfell, the multi-year implementation plan is ambitious. This is said considering that there is so much that is needed in terms of ensuring that the adult population, which Grenfell estimates as 67 % functionally illiterate, is adequately reached. It is a big challenge to try and pull together all the

previous strategies and plans around adult provision and to call the stakeholders together. The multi-implementation plan has provided the focus and a lot has happened since 1994 and earlier in terms of education and especially adult education provision. The NGO sector, more especially the ABET NGO sector, is more consistent. There are one or two larger NGOs who have survived, largely at the expense of the smaller organisations. The reason for this is the lack of donor-funding as discussed in 4.2.2.9.

According to Sinika, of the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, although communication is received on an irregular basis from the Department of Education, there is no active engagement between the NGO and the ABET sub-directorate. The organization is also currently experiencing financial difficulties since donor-funding is being directed through the State and the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre does not have any current donors.

As previously mentioned (cf 4.2.2.9), according to Tile, the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust is also currently seeking links with the Provincial Department, especially in terms of forming a partnership that will assist in accessing funds.

#### 4.2.2.12 Research

According to Grenfell of the Siyaphambili Institute, research plays an important role in the provision of ABET. However the organisation does not have the capacity and in many respects the time to undertake research. Opportunities for effective research are available from different fields. This includes perspectives both from an educational, as well as from a social point of view. There is a need for research in terms of the impact that illiteracy and basic education has on the broader sphere within in which people live. Relevant research information is utilised within the organization in terms of accessing materials and implementing new ideas into the learning programmes, amongst others.

Sinika, of the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, also adds that there is a need to look at the 'training' part of ABET, and that research can help assess the needs of learners within this section. The 'training' section of ABET is also not being fully implemented by the centre due to the lack of funds.

Tile, of the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, states that research can play an important role in alerting relevant stakeholders to the problems surrounding ABET, especially within organizations offering literacy training. It is also a means of offering possible direction in terms of solutions to these problems.

#### 4.2.2.13 Factors impeding progress

Within the Ekwelo Project, according to Zibi, there has been an increase in demand for staff, with an additional two persons needed for administration purposes alone. Within the centres themselves there is also the need for additional resources. However, it is not always easy to meet these needs as funders have very specific rules to which Project Literacy has to adhere. For example, within this project there is a very real need for pesticides, which is not catered for by funders. Negotiations with various organisations and funders have to be entered into, in order to meet this need.

Within the Border/Kei area, according to Grenfell, there are many obstacles in terms of eliminating illiteracy. Asmal's timeframe (cf 3.6.2) is a little optimistic since logistically it is almost impossible. This is said, given the resources available, considering the budgets that the Provincial Department has and the effectiveness of reaching the large numbers of illiterate people. In some cases the motivation and mass provision of adult education, is limited by the number of limited resources that are available. The infrastructure needed to provide mass literacy for about a million people in this Province who are functionally illiterate, is also lacking. As the State is primarily responsible for providing ABET to these people, commercial providers and others cannot do very much, given their limited resources. For the commercial providers the focus is industry. It is within this environment that organizations such as the Siyaphambili Institute are reaching learners. Although a large number is reached, there is a long way to go to reach the minimum number of people who are functionally illiterate.

Furthermore, according to Grenfell, learning to read and write and going through a learning programme is not an easy, straightforward process. The adults who are in these programmes start from the basics, for example, learning to hold a pen or a pencil, and going through a process of learning which is taken for granted that people have done when they were young. It is a long, hard road for a person to move through the various levels to become functionally literate and be able to get to level three or level four or go beyond. These adults are not all in full-time programmes. They are not going back to school in a sense of spending four or five hours in a classroom. Their time is two hours a day for three to four or five times a week. A learning programme runs over six months, two hours a day, totalling 200 – 240 hours of classes. For a person who is totally illiterate to move through to an ABET level three, for example, can take two years or more.

According to Sinika of the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, funding is a major factor in offering relevant programmes to learners. A high drop-out rate is currently being experienced as learners need to move beyond the basic literacy and numeracy level. However, the organization is not able to cater for these needs which include skills which are relevant to the learners' daily lives.

Due to the shortage of funds, Sinika also states that practitioners are leaving the organization, as their salaries are not paid at regular intervals. There is also the need for practitioners to be recognised in some way for competency, in terms of work that they do, despite the fact that they do not possess a qualification from an institution of higher learning.

According to Tile of the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, services to the community are hampered by a number of factors. These include a shortage of staff and an overload in terms of their workload. Staff are expected to perform a number of functions, including fundraising, training and monitoring of learners. The lack of time to perform these functions is also an obstacle. All of this impacts negatively on their quality of work. Furthermore, there is a lack of support from the Board of Trustees in terms of support services, including offering advice and direction in terms of finance as well as staff motivation.

As previously mentioned (cf 4.2.2.1), the Zingisa Educational Project evolved due to a number of factors. Although literacy training had been previously offered, due to the lack of funds, learners were unable to write the IEB examinations. This was a big demotivating factor and caused a high drop-out rate. Furthermore, according to Somhlahlo, although the need for skills training has been identified, financial constraints impede the offering of these services.

Nkopo and Somhlahlo also state that within the Zingisa Educational Project, there is the need for capacity building in terms of the staff. Funds, in order to start smaller initiatives to encourage the communities, is also needed. A more solid infrastructure needs to be established within communities so that their voices can be heard by the government. Closer networking with government is also required as currently there is duplication of resources within certain sectors, which needs to be rectified. Although the State is primarily responsible for ABET, often state-practitioners are not necessarily as well equipped with an understanding of the adult learners within the community, as the practitioners within the organization.

The poor infrastructure within rural areas (cf 4.2.1.12) is a major factor impeding the provision of services to these communities, according to Moonsamy.

#### 4.2.2.14 Factors promoting progress

According to Zibi, within Project Literacy and the Ekwelo Project there are a number of factors that promote progress and contribute to its success. These include:

- adequate practitioners.

Twelve experienced and skillful practitioners from the ABET sub-directorate, as well as experienced trainers from Project Literacy form part of the training team. There is no need to form a new training team. This also impacts positively on the cost-effectiveness of the project;

- effective management.

The project is well managed, with effective management at the national level of Project Literacy, as well as a strong ABET sub-directorate within the Provincial Department;

➤ **adequate district staff.**

Within the districts there is adequate staffing, with an ABET coordinator employed on a full-time basis in each of the districts;

➤ **staff commitment.**

The commitment in terms of staff support is positive. Workshops and meetings are well attended and the people are motivated. The reasons for this are numerous. These include:

- the project is seen as relevant to their jobs (on the part of the practitioners);
- the project has stemmed from within the Provincial Department and the communities and the needs are seen as relevant to the communities, rather than something which has been forced upon them and that they have to “buy into”;
- the project is nationally supported and the National Director of ABET within the Department of Education supports the staff;
- the project is viewed as something which contributes to the community as well as developing the status of members of the communities, who are seen as playing a positive role and contributing to the upliftment of their communities. This also improves the status of those involved in the project within the community;
- Project Literacy staff also try to remain committed to their word by delivering the services which have been agreed upon. There are no failures and postponements as far as possible and Project Literacy as an organisation strives to remain reliable at all times. The Director is also actively involved in the project, visiting the districts and encouraging and supporting the communities as much as possible. All activities are also done within the ambit of the NQF rules and regulations.

Sinika, of the Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre, also states that practitioners are committed to their learners. They show consistency and willingness to work despite not receiving any payment. Networking with other NGOs is also a major factor in promoting ABET. This ensures a support system with sharing of resources and keeping up to date with developments. The commitment of practitioners at the Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust, according to Tile is also a strength. Practitioners have shown this by continuing to provide services despite the fact that they have not received payment for a number of months. Furthermore, there is sufficient material and office equipment to provide the necessary services.

According to Nkopo, within programmes offered by the Zingisa Educational Project, the communities are directly represented in terms of the PPPAs and take responsibility for these services. This flat structure which is created via the PPPAs, also facilitates flexibility in working with the community as many of the participating members are empowered and pass the knowledge on to others. There is also a positive atmosphere due to this active, participatory approach within the communities. This is promoted by the fact that the practitioners are also members of the communities and take ownership of the programmes. Furthermore, all members of the community are trained, including councillors, traditional leaders, filtering through to the entire area. Issues are also brought up from grassroots level, rather than from the organization. The needs of the communities are addressed rather than programmes being forced upon them.

Forming a steering committee consisting of relevant stakeholders, according to Moonsamy, is a major factor ensuring the success of any ABET programme. A positive response from all stakeholders is ensured if the reasons for the programme are understood.

According to Somhlahlo, of the Zingisa Educational Project, much support is harnessed through linking with other organizations. These organizations assist with funding, donation of materials, and the sharing of information. A rural development support network has also been established for community outreach and educational purposes. Close networking with institutions of higher learning within the Province also facilitates the training of practitioners and assists in research in the field of ABET.

#### 4.2.2.15 Conclusions with regard to non-governmental based ABET

As is clear from this section, there are various differences between commercially-based and community based NGOs. Whereas commercially-based NGOs are dependent on the industrial and commercial sector for survival, the current lifeline of community-based NGOs is donor funding. Not only do these two types of NGOs serve different sectors, the programmes also differ depending on the needs that they address. Whereas Project Literacy, for example, oversees the Ekwelo Project on behalf of the Provincial Department (cf 4.2.2.1), other community-based NGOs work independently. Due to the focus of community-based NGOs, more pressure with regard to funding is experienced by them, in comparison to the commercially-based NGOs.

Regarding programmes (cf 4.2.2.1), most of the NGOs currently offer literacy and numeracy skills, however some have deviated from this due to other community needs which have arisen. However, even those who currently offer literacy and numeracy programmes, experience that learners are not satisfied with these programmes being offered on their own but need to develop other skills as well. Some NGOs focus on developing skills in the areas of 'popular education' and income-generating projects.

It is important that structures are put in place as these also assist in the extent to which skills infiltrate a community or company. Project Literacy, for example, has set up a management team with representatives on various structures throughout the regions. In the case of the Zingisa Educational Project, PPPAs are the means by which effective services are rendered. The Siyaphambili Institute assists clients in setting up steering committees which market the programmes before they are offered (cf 4.2.2.2).

As mentioned within this section, there are various reasons for ABET programmes. These include (cf 4.2.2.3):

- the introduction of the Skills Development Act within the industrial and commercial sector;

- functional literacy needs within companies;
- community literacy and numeracy needs;
- training needs relevant to the community, for example, poultry farming;
- the need for income-generating projects; as well as
- ‘popular education’ needs to empower the community.

In order to offer these services, **practitioners** are trained either by the organizations for which they work, or by other NGOs. Most are of the opinion that the methods of training are outcomes-based and that practitioners are familiar with concepts related to SAQA and the NQF (cf 4.2.2.4).

Although, in terms of the ABET policy document (cf 3.6.3.8), **learning materials** should be audited (cf 3.6.3.8g), none of the organizations have external auditing facilities. Some organizations depend on the IEB examination results as a means of determining the effectiveness of the materials being used (cf 4.2.2.5). There is a need for the establishment of external auditing structures to determine the quality of the learning materials.

As in the case of the Provincial Department practitioners (cf 4.2.4.5), NGO practitioners are not formally accredited for their prior learning or training received from other NGOs. Only formal qualifications obtained via institutions of higher learning are recognised and acknowledged. This is despite the fact that **RPL** has been facilitated via SAQA and the NQF (cf 3.3.1.3 & 3.6.3.8.f). In the case of learners, most organizations have placement tests to determine the learner’s prior knowledge and place them according to their abilities.

The ABET policy document also facilitates the use of **continuous assessment** as the form of assessment (cf 3.6.3.8.e). However, most NGOs still opt for the external IEB examination as the main form of examination. The examination is outcomes-based and the learners receive a formal qualification at each of the ABET levels. Some NGOs though, utilise continuous assessment as the main form of assessment at the lower levels due to financial constraints. The combination of the two seems acceptable to the NGOs (cf 4.2.2.7). It is also suggested that in rural areas the IEB examinations may not be relevant and that the emphasis should be on practical assessment. However, assessment should take place so as to allow learners mobility in the NQF framework.

As previously mentioned (cf 3.6.3.8.k) **monitoring and evaluation** is an integral part of ABET programmes. The various NGOs are at different levels in terms of monitoring and evaluation, with some organizations being better structured than others. The IEB examination plays an important role in terms of monitoring and evaluation, although this is not its prime function. However, as some organizations do not have formal structures for this purpose, the IEB examination is the milestone by which efficiency is measured. The IEB though, does offer a monitoring and evaluation service in terms of materials used. Certain NGOs however, have established structures in order to effectively carry out this extremely important task. These include:

- The Ekwelo Project:
  - dividing the project into smaller focus areas to effectively manage progress;
  - to manage the process in larger, expansive areas with poor infrastructure, district coordinators are appointed;
  - a monitoring coordinator is appointed at a central level in order to liaise with other district coordinators;
  - teamwork is extremely important for effective monitoring and evaluation; and
  - reports are an important form of record-keeping.
  
- The Siyaphambili Institute:

- a Quality Assurance Division has been established to ensure that the requirements as set by SAQA and the NQF are met ;
  - operational managers who are multi-skilled and knowledgeable, monitor the ABET programmes;
  - fieldworkers also form part of the monitoring and evaluation process and submit reports to the organization; and
  - external monitoring and evaluation (although on a limited scale) give an indication of quality within the organization.
- The Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust:
- a project coordinator is responsible for monitoring and evaluation; and
  - reports are submitted to the Board of Trustees.
- The Zingisa Educational Project-
- committees, such as PPPAs and CDCs consisting of 'desks' monitor and evaluate progress; and
  - report backs are made to workshops and the Regional Coordinator at regular intervals.

As the Ekwelo Project is only in its pilot stage it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of its monitoring and evaluation process. However as is clear from the above, structures and teamwork amongst these, is stressed within the monitoring and evaluation process. Constant feedback in the form of reports are a means of facilitating the process. In terms of the ABET policy (cf 3.6.3.8), internal and formative monitoring and evaluation is evident in most of the organizations. However, use is not made of the EMIS system and external monitoring and evaluation is either limited or absent.

**Funding** (cf 4.2.2.9) is an extremely problematic issue in terms of NGOs, particularly community-based ones. The main reason for this is the fact that the State is now responsible for ABET and donors mostly channel funds via the State. NGOs, such as Project Literacy who are contracted by the State, are receiving

funding and are able to continue with ABET programmes. Funding sources are however still sought for resources which are not supplied/funded by the Provincial Department or donors.

Many NGOs are under threat of closure due to financial constraints. Although many have applied for assistance to the State, the response has not been positive and the future is still not clear. Only NGOs such as the Siyaphambili Institute, a commercial provider, is not affected. There is a need to liaise with the State for the survival of NGOs. Most are looking at forming partnerships with the State, a move which is encouraged within the ABET policy, as a means of collective responsibility for ABET (cf 3.6.3.8).

Networking with other organizations is also currently an option being examined. However, this is currently not considered viable due to the uncertainty regarding the survival of NGOs in general.

In terms of SAQA-related issues (cf 4.2.2.10), NGOs are at various levels of progress. NGOs which are currently experiencing financial constraints and are uncertain of the future, have the least representation (if any) on SAQA-related bodies. They are currently dependent on CABET, whose life-span is also uncertain for representation. Their knowledge regarding SAQA-related issues is very limited. Training is needed in terms of this.

The Siyaphambili Institute and Project Literacy however, not only have representation on SAQA-related bodies, but have also been part of the process of establishing the multi-year implementation plan (cf 3.6.3.8). Feedback concerning the transformation of ABET within the NQF include (cf 4.2.2.10):

- direction has been provided for ABET;
- nationally accepted standards and levels have been set;
- flexibility has been built into the system in terms of the use of materials and media to reach the set outcomes;
- communication channels via representative bodies and SAQA media are accessible; and

- the multi-year implementation plan provides the building blocks on which ABET can be effectively and efficiently provided.

Even though the benefits of SAQA and the NQF in terms of ABET is acknowledged, there is still an urgent need for training on these issues by NGOs. As stated in 4.2.1.9, the Provincial Department does offer training, however, as discussed in the next paragraph there are factors hampering the relationship.

Although the State is primarily responsible for the provision of ABET, it does not have the capacity or the resources to provide it to the extent that it is needed. Therefore, as mentioned in paragraph 4.2.1.9, there is a need for linkages in order to pool resources. Furthermore, as stated in paragraph 3.6.3.8.1, in terms of the ABET policy document, the financial cost for the provision of ABET is considered to be a collective responsibility and is to be shared amongst a variety of partners.

For commercial-based providers such as the Siyaphambili Institute, this does not impact negatively, as they have the resources and capacity to continue providing their services within the industrial and commercial sector. However, in terms of the community-based providers, the lack of direct donor-funds (cf 4.2.2.9) has meant closure for many. Furthermore, currently there is no active engagement between NGOs and the Provincial Department, except on an artificial level (cf 4.2.1.9). Although linkages with **state-provided ABET** is being pursued, there is no clear agreement or policy on this (cf 4.2.2.11).

Most of the NGOs do not have the capacity for **research**, although the importance of this activity is acknowledged. The lack of time, funds, capacity and work overload are some of the reasons cited for not undertaking research. To the NGO sector, research is relevant for the following reasons (cf 4.2.2.12):

- to determine the impact of illiteracy and basic education on the broader sphere of society;
- accessing materials and implementing new ideas into learning programmes;
- assessing the ‘training’ needs of learners in ABET;

- highlighting problems surrounding ABET and bringing them to the attention of the relevant stakeholders; as well as
- offering direction in terms of solutions to problems.

In order to facilitate ABET within the NGO sector, the following areas should be given attention (cf 4.2.2.13):

- linkages between organizations to pool resources;
- increasing the administrative human resources;
- examining the possibility of a more realistic timeframe in which to eradicate illiteracy;
- improving the physical infrastructure within areas which are currently inaccessible. This is crucial to the effective provision of ABET. If rural areas cannot be reached despite the availability of the necessary resources, it defeats the purpose of ABET;
- closer partnerships between the Provincial Department and other organizations so as to reach a larger number of learners within the Province;
- alternative solutions to the current funding problems;
- recognizing prior learning and training of practitioners who have not received formal qualifications from institutions of higher learning;
- support and guidance from personnel/management in the top positions of organizations is crucial to the success of NGOs;

- offering relevant learning programmes addressing skills needed by the particular community;
- additional staff training in terms of SAQA and NQF –related issues so as to offer relevant services to the community; as well as
- representation on SAQA –related bodies so as to actively engage in the current transformation of ABET.

On the other hand there are a number of positive factors which currently promote progress within the provision of ABET. These need to be acknowledged as such and include (cf 4.2.2.14):

- an adequate number of committed practitioners. Commitment is promoted by the following factors:
  - projects that are relevant to the job;
  - having input into the types of projects offered;
  - support for projects at all levels;
  - projects are viewed as relevant to the community, as well as promote the status of those who are involved;
  - the delivery of reliable services by the NGO in terms of meeting deadlines, supplying the necessary resources, and so forth; as well as
  - personal involvement by the Project Director on all levels of the project.
- effective management in terms of Project Literacy and the Siyaphambili Institute;
- networking with other NGOs. Benefits of this include:
  - shared funding;
  - donation of materials; and
  - the sharing of information.

- establishing structures which facilitate progress within the delivery of the programmes/projects; and
- training community members to actively participate in and take ownership of projects.

These positive aspects need to be continuously promoted and improved in order to ensure the successful provision of ABET.

#### **4.2.3 Workplace-based literacy training/ adult basic education and training**

Whereas the Provincial Department and NGOs offer ABET within various and general sectors of society, workplace-based ABET focuses on individual companies. The emphasis is also different as workplace-based programmes focus on skills needed within the particular company. This section offers a closer study of the ABET programmes within the workplace by focusing on two major companies within the Border-Kei region, namely Daimler-Chrysler and a public utility company, which according to the company protocol does not allow publicity.

##### **4.2.3.1 Adult basic education and training programmes**

In an interview, according to the Public Utility Representative (2000), ABET manager of the Southern region, ABET programmes offered at the company aim at improving literacy rates and qualification levels amongst the workforce. In line with requirements within the NQF, the public utility company has selected a curriculum consisting of core components, including Communication and Numeracy skills, as well as electives within the learning field which are relevant to the company. Credits are accumulated in line with the guidance of requirements for the GETC. The Public Utility Facilitator (2000) states that the need for development through ABET, was first initiated by the unions (as discussed in paragraph 3.6.3.3) and was further driven by the Skills Development Act (cf 4.2.2.3).

The need for the above, according to the Public Utility Representative, was established by means of focus groups formed in various areas within the Border/Kei region. Based on reports from these focus groups the learning areas were elected. As most employees are still in need of basic education and training, programmes are concentrated within the GET band and are not extended to the FET band. Training skills which are job specific, are carried out by specialists within the company.

According to the Public Utility Facilitator, the programmes also include areas of interest to the workers. These programmes run over a period of time (usually eight weeks) and workers have to commit themselves to the programme for the entire duration.

The Coordinator for Adult Basic Education at Daimler Chrysler, Tenjiwe (2000), in an interview states that learning areas in the Communication Studies and Languages, as well as the Mathematical fields are covered within the Adult Basic Education programme. These include mother-tongue Xhosa and English Communication and Numeracy, all at various levels. The 'training' part of ABET is done by core trainers, as these are job-specific, requiring specialists who have practical skills within the relevant areas. The programme is a full-time one, over a period of three months at a learning centre which is away from the workplace. Although life-skills form a part of the learning programme, it is not assessed.

#### 4.2.3.2 Training of practitioners

According to the Public Utility Representative, as well as the Public Utility Facilitator, practitioners are trained by NGOs who are contracted by the company. These include NGOs, such as Project Literacy, which are seen to be able to provide the best training facilities. Links are also being established with the ABET sub-directorate in order to provide more relevant training, amongst other facilities, to the practitioners.

The Public Utility Facilitator also states that links with the ABET sub-directorate also assist in providing courses on new learning areas. This will facilitate the recognition of qualifications obtained within the

company, by the NQF. Furthermore, linkages will increase the awareness of what the learning areas entail as the integrated approach demands more in terms of the knowledge –base of the practitioner.

Within Daimler-Chrysler, according to Tenjiwe, facilitators are also trained by NGOs, including Project Literacy and the Siyaphambili Institute. The Siyaphambili Institute also offers in-service training to update practitioners on ongoing developments in ABET.

#### 4.2.3.3 Materials

According to the Public Utility Facilitator, materials are developed by the NGO responsible for the training of practitioners. Materials development and use of materials are part of the training package offered to practitioners by the NGOs. As all NGOs that the Public Utility Company has contracted for training, are outcomes orientated, materials are in line with requirements according to SAQA and the NQF.

According to Tenjiwe of Daimler-Chrysler, all materials provided by the Siyaphambili Institute are outcomes-based, facilitating the transformation to OBE within the company. Unit standards (cf 3.3.1.3.b) are included and outcomes that the learners are to reach, are clearly set.

#### 4.2.3.4 Assessment

The standard assessment tools are provided by organizations such as Project Literacy, according to the Public Utility Representative. The company has a central learning centre where employees are firstly assessed in terms of placement tests to allocate them to the relevant level on the GET band. The IEB examination is written at the end of the third level and a nationally recognised qualification is therefore obtained. Assessment is a method of data collection as well, and forms a means of creating a databank of employees within the company.

At levels one and two, according to the Public Utility Facilitator, internal examinations are conducted. These assessments are carried out in order to ascertain whether the outcomes have been reached. The reason for not writing the external examination at these levels are the budgetary constraints.

In an interview, according to Moses (2000), Adult Basic Education Coordinator of Daimler-Chrysler, placement assessment is carried out in order to establish the level at which the learner should be placed. Within the various levels there are also various learner groups depending on the learning characteristics of the group. Continuous assessment is carried out and takes various forms. The aim is to ascertain whether the outcomes have been reached. Learners are then graded and rotate within the learning groups according to individual performance. The IEB examination is also written at the end of the various levels.

#### 4.2.3.5 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and accreditation

As previously mentioned (cf 4.2.3.3), according to the Public Utility Representative, learners are assessed and accredited according to placement tests as well as an external examination. The learners' prior knowledge is therefore considered when being placed at the various levels within the GET band. The qualification granted at the end of the IEB examination also indicates that learners are accredited on completion of a level.

However, according to the Public Utility Representative, currently the qualifications obtained by practitioners are only recognised by the relevant NGO who offered the training, and by the company itself. There is no recognition outside these parameters, neither are the practitioners accredited. These issues will only be implemented once there is definite direction from SAQA and the NQF. The Public Utility Facilitator (2000), states that practitioners need to be accredited as many are looking at the field of ABET as a professional field in which further development is likely to occur.

At Daimler-Chrysler the above-mentioned situation is reiterated. Tenjiwe states that the qualifications obtained via NGOs are neither accredited nor recognised outside the NGO or Daimler-Chrysler. Most

practitioners register with recognised institutions of higher learning to obtain nationally acknowledged qualifications.

#### 4.2.3.6 Monitoring and evaluation

The success or weaknesses of the ABET programmes within the public utility company, according to the Public Utility Representative (2000), is currently difficult to monitor and evaluate. Structures are currently being put in place in order to carry out this very important task. One of these is the databank (as previously mentioned – cf 4.2.3.4).

The Public Utility Facilitator states that the future establishment of learning corners at the place of work will also facilitate the monitoring process. The advantage of these learning corners will be that learners will have ongoing access to a place of learning and in that way learning will become a sustained and lifelong process. Presently, the only form of external evaluation is the IEB examination written by the learners. This gives an indication of the success of the ABET services offered by the company.

According to Tenjiwe, at Daimler-Chrysler, a coordinator representing the management monitors and evaluates ABET within the company. Progress reports are completed by the practitioners and forwarded to the coordinator, who in turn does a presentation to the management. The results of the IEB examinations are also used as an indicator of progress within the company. Areas which need to be addressed are then tackled in in-service training workshops after which a report is written to the practitioners.

#### 4.2.3.7 Factors promoting the provision of Adult Basic Education and Training

According to the Public Utility Representative, there are a number of factors which facilitate the provision of ABET within the company. These include:

- the provision of facilities at the company's own learning centres;

- well-trained and dedicated practitioners employed by the company;
- co-ordination of ABET activities within the region;
- support of ABET by top management;
- a clear vision of development of employees;
- the opportunity for further development in terms of the FETC.

According to the Public Utility Representative, workers are motivated to embark on life-long working as it offers further development and opportunities for promotion.

Tenjiwe states that the following factors promote ABET within the workplace:

- an adequate number of practitioners employed by the company;
- the availability of adequate learning and training material;
- support from the management in terms of financial assistance towards improving qualifications and running necessary practitioners' workshops, as well as listening to grievances, amongst others;
- the availability of adult learning centres which are fully equipped; and
- limited funding constraints.

#### 4.2.3.8 Factors hampering the provision of Adult Basic Education and Training

According to the Public Utility Representative, there are a few areas which need to be improved in terms of the provision of ABET. These include:

- the understanding of the importance of ABET by line supervisors. Once this importance is fully appreciated more co-operation will take place between line supervisors and the ABET section of the company;
- learning centres are not necessarily situated at the place of work, demanding that workers take off for a period of time that could be avoided if the centres were more closely situated; and
- time spent at the learning centres cuts into production time, affecting targets that have to be reached within a particular period.

Furthermore, according to the Public Utility Facilitator, there is a need for an extension of the learning programme. Therefore learning corners manned by mentors are being looked at as an option to providing ongoing learning opportunities at the place of work.

However, despite these factors, the ABET programmes have a positive spin-off for the company as well as the learner in terms of productivity and qualifications, amongst others, according to the Public Utility Representative.

According to Tenjiwe of Daimler-Chrysler, there are a few factors which need attention. These include:

- more in-depth training on continuous assessment;
- a lack of materials within mother-tongue Xhosa Communication;

- a need for an increase in salaries as the workload is demanding and covers a number of areas, including administration, acting as advisors/councillors in addition to the usual workload.

These obstacles though can be overcome and are minimal, according to Tenjiwe.

#### 4.2.3.9 Conclusions with regard to workplace-based adult education and training

As previously stated, workplace-based ABET is specifically for the purpose of the benefit of a particular company. Programmes are company-orientated, and include Communication and Numeracy skills, together with relevant electives. The skills training specific to the job, is done by specialists and is not linked to the ABET programme (cf 4.2.3.1).

Practitioners are trained by NGOs which are seen as having the ability to provide the best training facilities and are familiar with SAQA and NQF-related issues (cf 4.2.3.2). However, there is no system of accrediting this training nor recognizing their prior learning outside the parameters of the company or NGO who offers the training. As previously stated (cf 4.2.2.15), although this is facilitated via the NQF, it has yet to be put into practice. Practitioners still obtain formal qualifications from academic institutions, in addition to their training.

As the workplace-based ABET sectors work closely with NGOs they also depend on them for materials, once again accepting that these are of a good standard. There is no structure for auditing these materials (cf 4.2.3.3). The assessment tools are also obtained from NGOs, who train practitioners in terms of continuous assessment methods, although the formal IEB examination is written by learners (cf 4.2.3.4).

An organized system of monitoring and evaluation is lacking within workplace-based ABET. Structures are yet to be established for this purpose and currently use is made of the results obtained from the IEB examination to determine progress. Alternatives being considered include the establishment of a databank and of learning corners to facilitate this process (cf 4.2.3.6).

From the above it can be concluded that the workplace-ABET sector is heavily dependent on NGOs to provide them with the necessary facilities in order to promote ABET within the companies. As stated by the commercial provider, the Siyaphambili Institute, this is precisely their role. However, the workplace-based ABET sector does have positive internal factors which contribute to the success of ABET provision. These include (cf 4.2.3.7):

- the provision of facilities at the company's own learning centres;
- well-trained and dedicated practitioners;
- the availability of adequate learning and training material;
- co-ordination of ABET activities within the region;
- support of ABET by top management;
- a clear vision for development of employees;
- the opportunity for further development in terms of the FETC; as well as
- limited funding constraints.

However, in order to improve the provision of workplace-based ABET, a number of factors need to be addressed. These include (cf 4.2.3.8):

- line-supervisors need to be conscientized in terms of the importance of ABET. This can assist in co-operation between themselves and the ABET section of companies;

- learning centres should be closer to the workplace. Benefits of this include:
  - an opportunity for continuous/lifelong learning; and
  - a reduction in time spent at the learning centres, leading in turn to an increase in production time.
  
- more in-depth training on assessment;
  
- an increase in materials; and
  
- a re-examination of salary scales with regard to practitioners.

The close networking though between companies and commercially-based NGOs ensure the effective provision of ABET to employees. Currently this form of partnerships seems beneficial both to the NGO sector as well as to the companies who contract them, as can be concluded from the discussion within this chapter.

#### **4.2.4 Institutional-based Adult Basic Education and Training**

Within this section, a closer examination of ABET as offered at institutions of higher learning within the Border/Kei region is offered. These are academic institutions which offer various forms of ABET which as can be seen within this section, can differ in focus.

##### **4.2.4.1 ABET programmes at institutions of higher learning**

In an interview, according to gXabe (2000), Acting Head of the DACE at UNITRA, the institution offers formal qualifications to practitioners within the field of ABET. These range from certificate to degree

programmes at an undergraduate level, and as electives at the postgraduate level. The aims of these programmes range from:

- meeting the needs of a range of people who seek professional and academic training in adult education and social/community development;
- furthering the academic careers of those who have less formal qualifications but have extensive experiences;
- deepening the understanding of planning, implementation and evaluation of ABET;
- enhancing competence through the acquisition of various techniques and methods appropriate and effective to community workers and adult educators; as well as to
- examining the cultural, economic, social and political aspects of education development (University of Transkei [S.a]:1-10).

According to gXabe, most practitioners from the NGO-sector participate in the above-mentioned programmes. Teachers within the Provincial Department, who have been inactive in terms of academic training for a number of years, are also re-trained in terms of current developments.

Although the DACE, according to gXabe, has identified the need for a full Masters programme, a number of factors have restricted its implementation. These include limited finance and a lack of human resources.

Besides offering formal qualification programmes, gXabe states that the DACE is involved in the community, and staff are fieldworkers within a number of projects. The community outreach programmes stress the 'training' part of ABET, and is a link between the institution and the community. Most of these programmes are offered within the rural communities and involve women who are empowered with skills

including literacy skills, economic development, economic self-help schemes, environmental awareness, beadwork, knitting and sewing, amongst others.

Kobese (2000), Acting Head of the Adult Basic Education Extension Programme (ABEEP) at the University of Fort Hare, in an interview states that the department was established as a European Union (EU) funded experiential project through the Kagiso Trust. This project is to provide informal distance education to communities within the former Border/Ciskei area. The aim is to utilise the resources of the institution for the benefit of the people living within the urban and rural communities within the area. A needs analysis was carried out in 1993 with the following findings and conclusions (University of Fort Hare 1993: 7-30):

- care and patience is necessary when gaining entry to local communities - people tend to be suspicious at first, but once the proper channels have been followed and the purpose is known, they are supportive;
- the level of formal education is very low;
- people tend to see their main problems as being related to poverty and unemployment;
- great importance is attached to education which is seen as a means to generate income or increase the chances of finding employment;
- many would like to start a small craft or business enterprise as a means of generating income;
- there is a demand for school equivalency courses;

- there is a high demand for practical courses which would teach income generating skills , especially in such subjects as poultry-farming and sewing and to a lesser extent home and community improvement subjects; and
- there is a moderate demand for literacy/numeracy instruction.

ABEEP concentrates on four areas, namely, home/community improvement; craft/income generating skills; school equivalency and literacy/numeracy activities (University of Fort Hare 1993:29). According to Kobese, these programmes are still running though with limited funding at present. The school equivalency programme was initiated since it was found that the literacy/numeracy level of some of the workers at the institutions are also low. ABEEP offers formal ABET programmes to these workers. However, financial constraints also limit the subsidising of these programmes. Retrenchments at the institution also saw a high drop-out rate in the attendance of these classes.

In an interview, Achmad (2000) states that a formal qualification is offered to practitioners in the field of ABET at the Eastern Cape Technikon. The aims of the programme include:

- to meet the needs of a range of people who seek professional and academic training in adult education;
- to further the academic careers of those who have less formal qualifications but have extensive experiences;
- to deepen the understanding of planning, implementation and evaluation of ABET;
- to enhance competence through the acquisition of various techniques and methods appropriate and effective to adult educators; as well as

- to examine the cultural, economic, social and political aspects of education development (Eastern Cape Technikon [S.a.]: 1-2).

#### 4.2.4.2 Materials

The staff within the DACE, according to gXabe, develop their own materials. The knowledge and experience that educators bring from the field of ABET is relied upon in the development of these materials.

At the University of Fort Hare, a Materials Coordinator and Assistant Materials Coordinator (Graphics), form part of the team who supervise and assist in the development of course material. The literacy programme is guided by Project Literacy and Fundani instructional materials, while in the other areas (cf 4.2.4.1) existing materials are used. ABEEP intends forming a partnership with the Academic Development Centre and a number of departments from different faculties within the university to produce, amongst others, skills in planning and preparing distance teaching materials (University of Fort Hare 1998: pamphlet).

According to Kobese of ABEEP, in terms of the Secretarial Certificate Course within the area of vocation and training (cf 4.2.4.1), the Border Technikon also assists in developing and supplying the relevant materials.

According to Achmad, at the Eastern Cape Technikon, staff develop their own materials. Current workshops in terms of the 'capacity building through curriculum development project' (mentioned in paragraph 4.2.4.7) are also utilised to assist staff in developing materials according to the requirements of the NQF and OBE. References are also made to textbooks relevant to ABET.

#### 4.2.4.3 Assessment

According to gXabe, of the DACE – UNITRA, assessment takes a number of forms. These include individual and group projects as well as a formal examination. At the University of Fort Hare, as previously mentioned (cf 4.2.4.1), learners doing the formal literacy /ABET programme write the IEB examination as an external form of assessment. Internal assessments are also carried out on a continuous evaluation basis.

Learners who were involved in the Secretarial Certificate Course (mentioned in paragraph 4.2.4.2), underwritten by the Border Technikon, were also assessed and certificated by the institution.

Accreditation granted the learners access to formal courses within the Technikon, states Kopese of ABEEP.

Although continuous assessment takes place in various forms, according to Achmad and Tshotsho (2000), within the Department of Education at Eastern Cape Technikon, formal examinations are written at the end of each academic year. These examinations are moderated either internally or externally.

#### 4.2.4.4 Recognition of prior learning and accreditation

According to Kopese, although the ABEEP staff are recognised and accredited in terms of qualifications obtained at formal institutions of higher learning. Staff who have been trained by Project Literacy and other NGOs in terms of literacy and numeracy training, have as yet not received formal recognition of these qualifications. Trainers want recognition for their experience and training but as the process within the NQF has not been finalised, this is difficult to attain at present.

gXabe of the DACE – UNITRA, also states that the formal qualifications of academics attained at institutions of higher learning are recognised. However, presently there are problems with the Provincial Department (as mentioned in paragraph 4.2.1.12). Learners who have received formal qualifications from the DACE, are currently not recognised or accredited by the Provincial Department.

According to Achmad, at the Eastern Cape Technikon, all qualifications are recognised and accredited. As most learners do not have experience or prior learning within the field of ABET, the need for placement tests or accreditation is not necessary.

#### 4.2.4.5 Monitoring and evaluation

According to Kopese, within ABEEP there is ongoing internal monitoring and evaluation of programmes offered, as the Department has to situate itself within the new vision and mission of the institution so as not to become obsolete. Externally, ABEEP also consults with the community and with organizations, so as to place itself not only within the institution, but within the surrounding community. Monitoring and evaluation takes the form of workshops, meetings, interviews and examining the progress of projects, amongst other methods.

gXabe of the DACE – UNITRA, states that the Department also has to place itself strategically within the institution with the restructuring of higher education and the institution itself. Given the current negative factors hampering progress (cf 4.2.4.10), the Department constantly has workshops and meetings to monitor and evaluate programmes offered. Linkages are also sought with the Provincial Department (cf 4.2.4.8) as with other institutions and organizations to strengthen its services.

According to Achmad, at the Eastern Cape Technikon, the Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC), an external body, monitors and evaluates all activities at the institution, including all ABET activities. Internally, a formal monitoring and evaluation structure has been established in terms of the Quality Assurance Department. This Department is responsible for the maintenance of good standards within all aspects of the institution. In this way, the ABET sub-sector strives to adhere to all the necessary requirements as stipulated by both the internal and external structures.

#### 4.2.4.6 Funding

The community outreach programmes are supported by UNITRA, according to gXabe, in terms of the provision of institutional services. These include human resources as well as the provision of transport where necessary. External funds are also received from various donors. Students are also involved within these programmes as part of their practical training. They make various donations to these projects, for example, providing seedlings and pioneering the water project in the villages. After thorough consultation with the entire village, including the headsman and chiefs, a proposal has been written for a forestry project. This is a current and ongoing initiative.

As previously mentioned (cf 4.2.4.1) ABEEP projects at the University of Fort Hare were funded by the EU through the Kagiso Trust. However, according to Kobese, due to current financial constraints it is becoming difficult to sustain these projects. Learners who were writing the IEB examinations were previously subsidised by the institution (cf 4.2.4.1). However, due to a lack of funds these learners can no longer be subsidised and difficulties are experienced in writing the IEB examinations. Alternative strategies are currently being examined. Amongst others, these include linking with the Provincial Department (ABET sub-directorate), as a facility through which the learners can be assessed.

The secretarial course within the area of vocation and training has also been terminated due to a shortage of funds for the payment of practitioners and the purchasing of equipment, according to Kobese (2000), of ABEEP. Donorship of equipment was received from the municipal services but proved inadequate. With regard to the Sewing Course (extended to the Ilingelihle Project) within the area of vocation and training, equipment was donated by the EU and various other sponsors. Although these projects are supposed to be self-sustaining, according to Kobese, there is still a degree of reliance on ABEEP to provide facilities such as transport, practitioners and funds.

The Eastern Cape Technikon has received external funding towards capacity building through curriculum development (Van Wyk & Harvey 2000:2). According to Tshotsho, staff of the Department of Education

at the institution are currently being trained in terms of curriculum development and examining issues which are relevant to ABET, under the auspices of this project.

#### 4.2.4.7 SAQA-related issues

gXabe of the DACE, states that OBE has always been practised, though in an informal manner, as is evident from the community outreach programmes. SAQA and the NQF have now afforded opportunities to formalise offerings within the field of ABET and to recognise and accredit experience and prior knowledge accordingly. A number of workshops have been held around SAQA –related issues and the DACE is in the process of implementing the requirements in a more structured manner. However, there is no need for major re-structuring as OBE methods have always been implemented.

However, there is the fear that the structural organization of OBE is more academically orientated. gXabe states that in the workplace for example, workers may have the necessary skills, but in terms of the SAQA and NQF requirements, it may be required of them to have formal qualifications. The view that the NQF runs the risk of further marginalising people with lower educational levels is also expressed by Ensor (1995:77) who states that the training component was designed to meet economic needs, and not necessarily the needs of the learners.

gXabe states that these workers may however, not be in a position to reach the outcomes stated within a level, to receive a formal qualification. Academic institutions, therefore should do research and come up with strategies to train workers. Learning programmes aimed at workers should be devised by these institutions. The current problem is that NGOs are training these workers, providing them with qualifications, which are not formally accredited, nor recognised. Institutions should look at linking with these NGOs in order to make the best use of facilities and introduce a formal qualification. There is therefore, a challenge to institutions of higher learning to come up with learning programmes for workers.

Presently, ABEEP is seeking to increase its staff complement in order to include amongst others, a Practical Skills Training Coordinator. This will assist in determining current and future training needs, as well as building a repertoire of courses that respond to the needs of the rural and urban learners. These courses will be developed to the standards and requirements of the NQF, so as to acquire national accreditation (University of Fort Hare 1998:1).

Currently at the Eastern Cape Technikon, the project on curriculum development is utilised as a means of gaining access to SAQA-related issues. Through this project a number of channels have been opened to inform and update staff on these issues (Steyn & Naidu 1999: 1-3). According to Achmad, the Department of Education, including its ABET sub-division, is currently involved in restructuring in terms of meeting the necessary requirements. However time constraints make it a difficult process as other work demands cannot be neglected.

#### 4.2.4.8 Links with the Provincial Department and ABET sub-directorate

Criticism with regard to learning programmes is also leveled at the Provincial Department and the ABET sub-directorate, as gXabe of the DACE, states that the Provincial Department does not work closely enough with the NGO-sector nor with academic institutions. Each sector still works in an isolated manner with more restrictions being put on the other sectors by the Provincial Department. Finances, for example, are restricted since all funding is currently being channelled through the government who do not necessarily support all organizations within the NGO sector. Qualifications obtained from UNITRA, for example, are also not being recognised in any form by the Provincial Department as previously mentioned (cf 4.2.1.12).

However, the Provincial Department, according to gXabe of the DACE, does invite interested sectors to attend workshops and seminars on various issues. The practical programmes though, which are proposed, have not materialised.

As previously mentioned (cf 4.2.4.6), ABEEP is currently also seeking linkages with the Provincial Department, for amongst other reasons, as a means of channeling learners within the literacy/numeracy focus area, so as to alleviate the problem of accessing funding for the IEB examinations as well as a means of gaining accreditation.

At the Eastern Cape Technikon, according to Achmad, tentative linkages with the Provincial Department of Education are being made. Currently the ABET sub-sector of the institution's Department of Education has representation on the community's council, on which the Provincial Department is also represented.

However, besides attending workshops and inviting speakers to the institution, there are currently no formal linkages with the Provincial Department.

#### 4.2.4.9 Strengths in the provision of ABET

According to gXabe (2000) of the DACE-UNITRA, the factors that promote the provision of ABET within the institution include:

- experienced and qualified staff;
- close networking with the community and other organizations; and
- consultation with the relevant stakeholders within the community before introducing projects.

Kopese of ABEEP, states that the Department has a number of strengths. These include:

- community involvement in terms of its outreach programmes. The university is positively accepted and supported by the community;

- a good track record in research, especially in the field of developmental research, ensuring that relevant programmes are offered by the department; and
- input from the community in developing materials for the awareness programmes, creating a sense of ownership and responsibility on the part of the community, ensuring that projects are sustained.

At the Eastern Cape Technikon, according to Achmad, the provision of ABET is promoted by:

- qualified and experienced staff;
- funding in terms of staff development;
- availability of relevant materials; and
- commitment on the part of the staff.

#### 4.2.4.10 Factors hampering the provision of ABET

There are a number of areas which need to be improved in order to facilitate the provision of ABET at the Institution, according to gXabc. These include:

- limited finances;
- limited human resources and an overloaded workload;
- a need for closer networking with the Provincial Department;

- more experience within community work by staff members; and
- more contact with other organizations within the field of ABET.

Kopese of ABEEP, also states that there are a number of factors hampering the provision of effective ABET services at the University of Fort Hare. These include, amongst others:

- a lack of leadership as currently ABEEP is run by an Acting Head, due to financial constraints and staff restructuring;
- a need for stronger partnerships with the community in terms of literacy linked to training;
- lack of funds to initiate projects;
- overload of staff in terms of academic, administrative, research and other demands; and
- a shortage of staff.

At the Eastern Cape Technikon, according to Tshotsho and Achmad a number of areas need attention in order to improve the provision of ABET. These include:

- staff overload, as besides the lecturing load, a number of other demands are made on staff;
- lack of necessary equipment;
- more effective budgeting of funds;
- need for students to buy necessary materials, including books;

- closer community involvement and networking.

#### 4.2.4.11 Conclusions with regard to institutional-based ABET

Most institutions of higher learning offer formal, academic programmes towards a qualification. The aim of these programmes is to generally improve the quality of ABET services by all involved in the ABET sector. In addition to this, certain institutions are also involved in community development in order to address ABET needs and to empower communities with the necessary skills in order to become self-sufficient. Most of these initiatives are in the form of projects which were initially externally funded. However, currently these funds are no longer as readily available, leading to an increasing dependence on institutions to assist in community development (cf 4.2.4.1).

Most of the **materials** used within the formal learning programmes are prepared by the educators who are knowledgeable and experienced in this area. However, for project materials, the skills of specialists are employed (cf 4.2.4.2).

In terms of **assessment**, the institutions make use of a combination of continuous evaluation methods combined with a formal examination at the end of each academic year for formal academic programmes. However, in terms of project-related assessment, the IEB examination is written. The problem of financial constraints is already inhibiting the writing of this examination at all of the GET levels and continuous assessment is utilised at the lower levels. Partnerships with other institutions of higher learning also facilitated the accreditation of learners for further education courses at those institutions. However, financial constraints have also inhibited this pathway to further education and training (cf 4.2.4.6). Alternative strategies are currently being examined to facilitate external assessment in terms of project-related programmes. Part of this strategy includes partnerships with the Provincial Department (cf 4.2.4.3).

The problem of **accreditation** and **RPL** is not as prominent at institutions of higher learning as it is within the other sectors. Educators possess formal qualifications from higher education institutions, which are nationally recognised. However, in certain cases the qualifications of learners are not being considered relevant to their job description and they are not being compensated in any form for them (cf 4.2.1.12 & 4.2.4.4).

**Monitoring and evaluation** play a prominent role at institutions of higher learning. Reasons span from finding their niche within the institution as a whole, to being externally evaluated by accredited bodies. Structures are in place to oversee this activity (cf 4.2.4.5).

In certain areas **funding** is becoming problematic and alternative strategies need to be examined. Community-based projects in particular, are being affected and more reliance is placed on institutions for assistance. None-the-less the institutions are still dependent on external funding in order to sustain activities within them (cf 4.2.4.6).

Institutions of higher learning seem to be familiar with **SAQA-related issues**, and are currently in the process of formally implementing the necessary requirements. Awareness of these issues are facilitated through workshops. There is a need to form partnerships with NGOs who offer training which is as yet not accredited, in order to offer relevant learning programmes to learners who may not have the academic acumen to reach the outcomes as set within the NQF (cf 4.2.4.7).

Not only should **partnerships** be formed with NGOs, but with the **Provincial Department** as well. Currently this is lacking with each institution working in isolation. As previously stated, linkages do occur on an artificial level, but an in-depth policy on partnerships needs to be put in place (cf 4.2.4.8).

There are a number of factors which promote the provision of ABET at institutions of higher learning. These include (cf 4.2.4.9):

- experienced and qualified staff;
- close networking with the community and other organizations;
- consultation with the relevant stakeholders within the community before introducing projects;
- a good track record in research, especially in the field of developmental research, ensuring that relevant programmes are offered;
- funding in terms of staff development;
- availability of relevant materials; and
- commitment on the part of the staff.

Much dependence is placed on the staff to ensure the success of ABET programmes. However, there are areas which need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of ABET programmes and projects.

These include (cf 4.2.4.10):

- the issue of limited finances;
- limited human resources and an overloaded workload;
- a need for closer networking with the Provincial Department, which should be included within a policy document;
- the need for more experience within community work by staff members;

- more contact with other organizations within the field of ABET;
- the need for proper leadership;
- a need for stronger partnerships with the community in terms of literacy linked to training;
- a need for the necessary equipment;
- more effective budgeting of funds; and a
- need for to conscientize learners as to the importance of purchasing the necessary materials, including books.

Within the re-structuring of higher education, the burden on departments offering ABET programmes, especially community-based projects, is especially problematic. The academic budget does not cater for these projects, the need for donor-funding. In order to continue offering this vital service it is important that these offerings be recognised as relevant to academic institutions so as to have formal funds allocated.

#### **4.3 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

Currently due to the introduction of SAQA and the NQF, a transformation process is taking place within ABET programmes. This process demands changes regarding the training of practitioners, materials development and assessment, amongst others. Depending mostly on financial strength, the ABET sectors are at various levels of development. While the Provincial Department, for example, continues to offer ABET programmes in conjunction with Project Literacy, other NGOs who are community-based as well, are fighting for survival. Although these organizations are currently looking at links with the Provincial Department there is a need for a policy on partnerships in this regard.

Workplace-based providers and commercial-based NGOs seem to be at an advantage in comparison to community-based NGOs. This is since they are not as dependent on donor-funding but are capable of generating their own funds or are dependent on payment for services rendered. They are able to perform the functions required in terms of OBE on their own. This includes, as previously mentioned, training practitioners, developing materials, running assessment workshops, and so forth.

A factor that all the sectors, except for institutional-based providers have in common, is the lack of recognition of training and RPL for practitioners. This needs to be urgently addressed as it affects practitioners negatively. Currently, the availability of practitioners is an asset to all the sectors, but the lack of recognition of their training and prior learning could easily reverse this situation.

Regarding institutions of higher learning, there is a need for the recognition of community-based work and the necessary funding that accompanies this. Should this not be recognised and accepted, it could possibly mean that community-based projects run under the auspices of academic institutions, may dwindle.

Although practitioners are well trained, there is still room for training, specifically with regard to assessment and the use of materials. Various forms of assessment should be considered and should allow learners mobility in the NQF framework. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are also lacking, except perhaps in the institutions of higher learning and commercially-based NGOs. However, the auditing of materials is lacking in all sectors and needs to be addressed.

There is also an urgent need to integrate the education and training parts of ABET in a meaningful manner, as currently in most sectors the two are still treated as separate entities. This has also led to a decline in the support of adult education classes.

The State also has to look at ways of utilising the benefits of the other sectors to the advantage of the Province, as it cannot address the issue of illiteracy in isolation. Furthermore, the lack of physical infrastructure also needs to be addressed by the State in order to improve ABET facilities within the remote

rural areas of the Province. Although OBE may be effectively utilised in order to address illiteracy within the Province, if it does not reach the communities concerned, it defeats the purpose of building the manpower and economy of the country.

All these issues are considered in chapter five, which examines the possibility of a strategic direction for implementing OBE, and other solutions, in order to enhance adult literacy programmes offered in the Border/Kei region.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTIGATION

As set out in chapter one, this study has aimed at examining the adult literacy programmes within the Border/Kei region of the Eastern Cape. Within the first chapter (cf 1.1), a detailed outline with regard to the problem of the socio-economic, demographic and geographical situation of this region is provided. The poverty, high unemployment levels, disproportionate male/female ratio, poor economic prospects, low levels of remuneration, regular droughts and poor social and economic services, linked to this largely rural area, have been highlighted in order to emphasise the intensity of the region's situation.

Linked to the above and outlined in paragraph 1.1.1, is the level of adult literacy, or rather illiteracy, within the Border/Kei region. Statistics indicate that the adult literacy rates within the Eastern Cape are well below the official national average and that approximately 2 million adults within the Province still require some form of basic education and training. These statistics also indicate that the problem is exacerbated within the Border/Kei region due to its largely rural nature, and the problems associated with this.

As South Africa moves rapidly forward, there is considerable pressure on individuals to participate actively as citizens. However, in order to do so, adequate functional literacy skills are required. As outlined in the above paragraphs, these skills are lacking within the Border/Kei region. In order to improve the rate of adult literacy within the Border/Kei region, various sectors of society have embarked on adult literacy programmes. However, these programmes have not effectively addressed the problem of high illiteracy rates within the adult population (cf 1.1.2).

In addition to the above, adult literacy programmes have also had to implement an outcomes-based approach (as outlined in paragraph 1.1.3). The reason for the implementation of OBE is the failure of the previous, content-based education system to effectively respond to technological developments in order to

ensure quality standards of living for South Africa and its inhabitants (cf 3.2.1). This has impacted on the ABET sector, in that transformation in the greater South African education system, has included this sector. The outcomes-based model also represents hope to many functionally illiterate adults as it provides pathways for adult learners to advance through the education system (as outlined in paragraph 3.3.1.1).

As there is a need for improved adult literacy levels within the Border/Kei region, the aim of this study is to gauge the way in which adult literacy programmes can be enhanced in order to effectively approach this problem. This has been done by breaking down the problem into various aims which are addressed within the various chapters.

One of the aims of the study was to establish some of the international trends in adult literacy training, and to focus on the rationale for, and various approaches by education systems in this regard (cf 1.3). Within this context, the aim was also to determine the types of problems encountered by these education systems and the solutions they apply to solve contemporary problems. The aim was also to establish the evaluation techniques applied in order to determine the effectiveness of these programmes. In chapter two, a study of international practices, with regard to the UK and Australia specifically, was undertaken in order to gain a broader view. The main method of research in this regard (cf 1.5), was a literature review, as well as case studies.

The findings in chapter two, indicate that the aims (as mentioned in the previous paragraph) have been reached. It is indicated that some of the international trends are toward CBE/T as a practical and relevant approach to the current economic and concomitant educational and training needs of countries. Both in the UK and Australia, CBE/T stresses the importance of training within the workplace. At the heart of the CBE/T system lies assessment and the way in which success or failure is determined. In this regard it has been established that assessment is a complicated issue and that there is ongoing research to improve assessment methods (cf 2.5).

A needs analysis is identified as essential to relevant adult literacy programmes. Furthermore, commitment at government level is also vital in ensuring the continuity of adult literacy training. However, as is illustrated in the Australian and UK case studies, government commitment does not necessarily guarantee ongoing funding for adult literacy training. It is essential that partnerships are formed with all stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of adult literacy programmes. Appropriate support systems need to be established in order to ensure a co-ordinated approach in terms of the monitoring and evaluation of any adult literacy programmes (cf 2.6.6 & 2.7.2).

A further aim was to investigate the current developments in the South African education system regarding adult literacy training, and to determine the effectiveness of an outcomes-based approach in order to enhance the effectiveness of South African literacy programmes (cf 1.3). This was undertaken in chapter three, using literature review as the main research method (cf 1.5).

The aim was reached as is indicated by the findings. As outlined in chapter three (cf 3.6), ABET has always been marginalised and kept outside the borders of the formal education sector. Despite a large field of providers, various sectors experienced problems in terms of their approach to ABET and the resources available. With the introduction of the NQF, provision has been made for the inclusion of ABET into the formal education sector (cf 3.3.1.1). The approach adopted with regard to the implementation of adult literacy training, should be within the parameters of the Department of Education's Policy for ABET and the national multi-year implementation plan, as these are the policies which currently dictate the approach to ABET within the broader South African context (cf 3.6.3.7 & 3.6.3.8). This approach emphasises outcomes-based education in terms of the learning programmes, so as to facilitate flexibility and the potential to provide the wide foundation or core concepts that learners need for lifelong learning (cf 3.6.3.8.d).

Another aim was to determine the effectiveness of adult literacy programmes in the Border/Kei region. In this regard, the aim was to identify the circumstances and problems encountered in the area, and to determine possible solutions that could be implemented to solve contemporary problems (cf 1.3). This was examined in chapter four, using a literature review, as well as interviews with various persons representing

the ABET sectors most prominent in the region, together with the attendance of meetings and workshops, as the main methods of research (cf 1.5).

The findings in chapter four indicate that the aims have been reached. An ABET sub-directorate has been established in Bisho, as set out in the policy guidelines and multi-year implementation plan (cf 4.2.1). Under the auspices of the sub-directorate, ABET programmes are offered throughout the Border/Kei region. These programmes are mostly limited to regional and district departments which fall under the umbrella of the ABET sub-directorate. Other ABET sectors are still operating independently, although they can appeal to the ABET sub-directorate for assistance. Funding is also very limited as most of the funds are channeled via the State-provided programmes and seldom reach the other sectors. These sectors may close down, exacerbating the problem of illiteracy within the region. There is a need for partnerships amongst the various ABET sectors, which should be developed by guidance of a policy relevant to the situation within the Border/Kei region (cf 4.2.1.1 & 4.2.4.8).

The ABET sectors experience problems in terms of offering community-based projects over the vast expanse of the largely rural area. Due to the lack of physical infrastructure, many of the areas are inaccessible. This problem needs to be urgently addressed as infrastructural service provision is the precondition for improved economic growth (cf 4.2.1.12).

Specifically, with regard to adult literacy training and OBE, there is a need for transformation within all the ABET sectors. The need to offer relevant adult literacy training is hampered by limited resources; including funding. The lack of an organised system of monitoring and evaluation, also impacts negatively on ABET provision within the region. These problems can be addressed by forming partnerships amongst the concerned ABET sectors. These partnerships should be guided by a policy as previously mentioned (cf 4.2.1.13, 4.2.2.15; 4.2.3.9 & 4.2.4.11)

The last aim was to determine a possible strategic direction for implementing OBE and other solutions, to enhance programmes offered in the Border/Kei region. This aim was dealt with in chapter five (cf 5.2 &

5.3) in terms of the synthesis of significant findings and strategic guidelines for implementing adult literacy training in the Border/Kei region. The methods of gathering information for the possible strategic direction, stem from the data collected in chapters two to four, by means of literature study, observation and interviews.

The findings in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 indicate that there is a need to encompass an outcomes-based approach to adult literacy training, in the Border/Kei region. The ABET curriculum framework should be sensitive to the needs of a society in transformation and should also uphold curriculum development at a national and provincial level. Furthermore, it should promote the integration of education and training within the field of adult literacy. In-depth training is required in terms of assessment, development of practitioners and RPL, materials, as well as monitoring and evaluation (cf 5.2.1.1-5.2.1.5; 5.3.3.1-5.3.3.7).

A number of crucial factors need to be implemented to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of adult literacy training. These include government commitment, an in-depth policy on ABET relevant to the Border/Kei region, the availability of sufficient funds and the development of physical infrastructure to ensure the delivery of adult literacy training to the larger community (cf 5.2.2.1-5.2.2.4; 5.3.1; 5.3.2-5.3.2.3).

Other crucial factors which also need to be addressed, include the lack of research, the need to improve conditions of employment and the need to form partnerships in order to distribute valuable resources across the sectors involved in ABET (cf 5.2.2.5-5.2.2.7).

A proposed structure for the implementation of adult literacy training in the Border/Kei region is presented in paragraph 5.4. Guidelines are suggested in terms of the steps that should be taken, to ensure the effective facilitation of adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region.

Finally, themes for further research are suggested (cf 5.5) and conclusions in relation to the research problem are drawn (cf 5.6). It is acknowledged that much more could have been included to make this

study more inclusive and complete. Concise in size and length, this study could not encompass every aspect of the problematic situation with regard to adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region. Rather it tries to shed light on as many pertinent issues without being limited.

## **5.2 SYNTHESIS OF SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS**

The main concern of this study is adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region of the Eastern Cape. Within these parameters the findings (as discussed below) are of significance.

### **5.2.1 Adult literacy training and outcomes-based education**

As the concern of adult literacy training is within the context of the new educational dispensation of OBE (cf 1.1.3), the elements (as discussed below) regarding OBE and its relation to adult literacy programmes are of major importance.

#### **5.2.1.1 Motivation for outcomes-based education**

The study indicates that countries, including South Africa, have embarked on OBE, as a means of replacing education systems which were seen as outdated and irrelevant. The traditional system no longer served the needs of technological advancement, in that it failed to prepare the workforce in terms of the skills and knowledge needed to effectively perform within the era of technology. It also failed to provide a means of relating and aligning academic and vocational education and training (cf 2.3; 2.4; 3.2.1 & 3.2.2).

In South Africa in particular, the NQF is the instrument whereby an outcomes-based, integrated approach to education and training, becomes a reality (cf 3.3). It is within this framework, specifically within the GETC band, that ABET has been placed (cf 3.3.1.1). This framework facilitated the Department of Education's policy for ABET (cf 3.6.3.7) and the national multi-year implementation plan for adult education and training (cf 3.6.3.8). It is clear that through the NQF and OBE, the integration of ABET into

the broader education system is facilitated, emphasising the need to encompass an outcomes-based approach within adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region.

#### 5.2.1.2 Curriculum framework

Within ABET, an outcomes-based curriculum framework, sensitive to the needs of a society in transformation, should be implemented. This framework should uphold curriculum development at a national as well as provincial level, and promote the integration of education and training with the field of adult literacy. A learner-centred approach, allowing learners to exit the framework at any stage, is central to the outcomes-based curriculum. A co-ordinated approach within the various learning fields (cf 3.3.1.4.a), will ensure that adult literacy is no longer marginalised, but is viewed as a key competency (cf 2.6.2.4; 2.6.3; 3.6.3.8.d & 4.2.1.3).

#### 5.2.1.3 Assessment

Assessment is central to OBE and to adult literacy training. Within this, criterion-referenced assessment is recommended. This form of assessment has specific advantages which are relevant to the purposes of OBE. Although it is not without criticism, it should be noted that there is no single method of assessment which is ideally suited to all situations (cf 2.3.2; 2.4.3; 2.4.4; 2.6.3.2; 3.4 & 3.6.3.8.e). Guidelines with regard to assessment for adult literacy programmes are dealt with in more detail in paragraph 5.3.3.5.

#### 5.2.1.4 Practitioners

Practitioners are central to the success of OBE and adult literacy programmes. The training of practitioners should be considered crucial to the effectiveness of ABET. As practitioners fulfil a number of key tasks, they should be adequately trained in all aspects regarding OBE and ABET. These aspects are outlined in more detail in paragraph 5.3.3.4 (cf 2.6; 2.8; & 3.6.3.8.i).

### 5.2.1.5 The recognition of prior learning (RPL)

Linked to the need for adequate training of practitioners (cf 5.2.1.4), is the need to develop systems within the NQF to accredit experience, training and RPL. Many practitioners, particularly within the workplace-based and NGO sector, have not received any form of recognition for qualifications and prior learning, received outside the NQF (cf 3.3.1.4.g; 3.6.3.8.f; 4.2.1.7; 4.2.2.6 & 4.2.3.6).

## 5.2.2 Additional crucial factors with regard to adult literacy training

In addition to the above-mentioned key issues with regard to OBE and adult literacy training, a number of additional factors are crucial to the successful implementation of these programmes. These are set out in the following paragraphs.

### 5.2.2.1 Government commitment

Government support is essential towards the success of adult literacy training, as it focuses more attention on the importance of literacy within society. Instead of being a peripheral concern as in the past, commitment to improved literacy levels by government, places literacy programmes as an important corollary of labour market programmes, of economic restructuring, of the adaptability, mobility and more highly skilled typed workforce for increased economic productivity. It is also a means of securing funding for programmes (cf 2.6; 2.6.2; 2.7; 2.7.2; 3.6; 3.6.2; 3.6.3.7 & 4.2.1).

However, government commitment does not necessarily always guarantee continued funding, nor does it mean that adult literacy training is without problems (cf 2.6.2.5; 2.6.2.8; 2.7.2; 3.6.3.8.1; 4.2.1.8; 4.2.1.12; 4.2.2.9; 4.2.2.14; 4.2.3.8; 4.2.4.10 & 4.3).

#### 5.2.2.2 Policy

In order to ensure the continuation of effective delivery of adult literacy training, there is a need for an in-depth policy on ABET, particularly relevant to the Border/Kei region. This policy should act as a guideline for the implementation of ABET within all sectors of the community and should also give specific guidelines in terms of partnerships between the various sectors (cf 2.6; 2.6.2; 2.7.1; 3.6.3.8; 4.2.1; 4.2.2.8 & 4.3).

#### 5.2.2.3 Funding

Funding plays a fundamental role in the delivery of effective adult literacy training. Without funding, adult literacy programmes cannot survive. Within this context, partnerships in terms of the government and various sectors of the community, should be considered. As mentioned in paragraph 5.2.2.2, a policy on partnerships in this regard is crucial to sufficient and continual funding (cf 2.6.2; 2.6.2.8; 3.6.3.8.1; 4.2.1.8; 4.2.2.9; 4.2.4.7 & 4.3).

#### 5.2.2.4 Physical infrastructure and access

An established physical infrastructure, and access to adult literacy training, is crucial to the delivery of this service to the community at large. Without access to these services and the communities, programmes cannot be initiated and development is unlikely to take place. Within the Border/Kei region specifically, it is a prerequisite to the successful delivery of adult literacy programmes, that the physical infrastructure be put in place and that transport be available to access these outlying areas (cf 2.7.1.1; 4.2.1.6; 4.2.1.12 & 4.3).

#### 5.2.2.5 Research

Research forms a central function in adult literacy training. Amongst others, it assists in determining the relevance of the programmes and providing a description of the target population and service environment. It is an important step in developing a partnership policy, relevant to the Border/Kei region. It should also be the basis of adult literacy training, as all functions related to this cannot be successful, unless a degree of research is done to determine the relevance of materials, assessment methods, and monitoring and evaluation, amongst other activities as discussed within section 5.3 (cf 2.6.1; 2.6.2; 2.6.2.3; 2.7.1.1; 2.7.1.5; 4.2.1.10 & 4.2.2.12).

#### 5.2.2.6 Conditions of employment

Conditions of employment need to be strengthened in order to attract and maintain a base of quality practitioners involved in adult literacy training. Professional development and career issues need to be addressed in order to encourage practitioners within this field. As mentioned in paragraph 5.2.1.4, within the NQF, systems for the accreditation of training and RPL with regard to practitioners, particularly within the workplace-based and NGO fields, need to be urgently addressed. At a very basic level, within the Border/Kei region specifically, the maintenance of a constant salary is crucial to employment conditions (cf 2.6.2.5; 2.6.2.6; 2.6.6; 2.7.1.3; 4.2.1.13; 4.2.3.8 & 4.3).

#### 5.2.2.7 Partnerships

Partnerships are beneficial to adult literacy training. They provide a means of distributing valuable resources across the sectors involved in ABET. As previously mentioned (cf 5.2.2.2), a policy on partnerships, with more specific guidelines under the auspices of the State, is crucial to the survival of ABET. Partnerships afford the sharing of funds, human resources and equipment, as well as prevents replication of activities within areas. It also promotes networking and the establishment of learner

pathways (cf 5.3.2.3) Furthermore, it ensures the continued relevance of course content and activities within adult literacy training (cf 2.6.2; 2.6.2.2; 2.6.4; 2.7.1.2; 2.7.1.3 & 3.6.3.8.1).

### **5.3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND OTHER SOLUTIONS TO ADULT LITERACY TRAINING WITHIN THE BORDER/KEI REGION**

Within paragraph 5.2, a general synthesis of significant findings was provided, as the foundations required in order to successfully implement adult literacy training. Paragraph 5.3 offers a possible strategic direction to the implementation of adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region, taking into consideration, the factors discussed in the previous paragraph.

#### **5.3.1 Physical infrastructure and access**

As mentioned in paragraph 5.2.2.4, in order to access the remote communities within the Border/Kei region, the physical infrastructure needs to be put in place, to ensure the provision of adult literacy training to all. Unless this problem is urgently addressed, the improvement of literacy levels within the region cannot be effectively facilitated. This can be considered a fundamental component to adult literacy training, within the Border/Kei region.

#### **5.3.2 State-facilitated direction**

The commitment to adult literacy training should expand beyond State-provided facilities, to include all sectors involved in offering adult literacy training. The initiatives in Australia and the UK reveal, that only once the government made a commitment to ABET, could the facilitation of partnerships between the various sectors in adult literacy materialise. The initiatives also facilitated the availability of funding to adult literacy funds to expand ABET programmes(cf 2.6.2 & 2.7)).

Although provision is made for a multi-year implementation plan, there is a need to look at the situation in the Border/Kei region specifically, as indicated by factors hampering the provision of ABET in this region (cf 4.2.1.12, 4.2.2.14, 4.2.3.8 & 4.2.4.10). A co-ordinated approach needs to be developed to address adult literacy training within the region.

This co-ordinated approach should facilitate the development of partnerships to enhance the provision of ABET. The State, through its ABET sub-directorate, should facilitate the development and implementation of a **policy on partnerships** between State-provided ABET and the various sectors, including NGOs, institutions of higher education and workplace-based sectors. Areas to be addressed within the policy are discussed within the following paragraphs.

#### 5.3.2.1 Co-ordinated strategy

A co-ordinated approach to the implementation of adult literacy training will facilitate the continuity and effectiveness of the programmes within the area (cf 4.2.1.9; 4.2.2.11 & 4.2.4.8). As concluded with regard to Australian literacy programmes, a co-ordinated strategy ensures a statewide framework enabling ABET to be seen as part of the mainstream of adult educational life (cf 2.6.6).

Research needs to be done in order to ascertain the best way of implementing this strategy. It would be important to look at the resources available in each sector and to consider the strengths and weaknesses, so as to maximize the impact of ABET provision. Once the resources, strengths and weaknesses have been determined, the best manner of implementing a co-ordinated approach to the sharing and pooling of resources, has to be considered.

#### 5.3.2.2 Funding

Funding is central to the continuity of ABET provision within the region. The Australian and UK findings indicate that commitment by the State does not guarantee the provision of adequate funding. (cf 2.6.2 &

2.7.2). It is imperative that this issue is addressed. Within the Border/Kei region currently, the experiences of most of the sectors, is that a lack of funding threatens their survival (cf 4.2.2.9 & 4.2.4.6). The policy has to include the provision and division of funds within the various sectors.

### 5.3.2.3 Pathways and networks

Partnerships promote the establishment of pathways and networks which facilitate the provision of adult literacy (cf 5.2.2.7). This is particularly important in terms of learner pathways, whereby learners are able to develop themselves on a continuous basis (the concept of lifelong learning - cf 3.6.3.5). It is also a means of establishing professional development pathways and networking for those who wish to further their studies in adult literacy work. Ways of promoting pathways and networks, as done in the Yemeni campaign in the UK, for example, need to be developed in terms of a policy (cf 2.6.2.2; 2.6.2.5; 2.7.1.2; 2.7.1.6 & 3.3.1).

### 5.3.3 Adult literacy programmes

Once the policy issues outlined in section 5.3.2 have been addressed, and partnerships have been established, the areas discussed below with regard to OBE and adult literacy training, should be examined.

#### 5.3.3.1 Needs analysis

In order to identify the most effective manner of offering adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region, a needs analysis has to be undertaken. As outlined in paragraph 2.6.6, this would ensure the relevance of literacy programmes. It will also assist in identifying the areas in which sectors providing ABET need to be strengthened.

The relevance of the literacy programmes can be ensured by examining the areas mentioned below.

### 5.3.3.2 Goals

As ABET is crucial to the social and economic development of society at large, it is imperative that the goals of adult literacy training have the concerns of the learners as well as the larger community in mind. In this regard research plays a very important function. As mentioned (cf 5.2.2.5), it is a means of determining the relevant needs of a community as well as the target group. Before an adult literacy programme can be introduced, it must be established that its goals are in line with those of the target group within the Border/Kei area (cf 2.6.1; 2.6.4; 2.7.1.1; 4.2.1.1; 4.2.2.2; 4.2.2.3; 4.2.3.2 & 4.2.4.1).

### 5.3.3.3 Content

In line with the goals (cf 5.3.3.2), the content of adult literacy programmes should be relevant to the learners, as well as to the sector it purports to serve. The course content and activities should address individual as well as environmental needs, and should be sensitive to the fact that there may be differences between the two. Programmes should also be developed within the national curriculum framework, as mentioned in paragraph 5.2.1.2 (cf 2.6.1; 2.6.2.3; 2.6.4; 2.7.1.1; 2.7.1.3; 2.7.1.7; 4.2.1.1; 4.2.2.1; 4.2.3.1 & 4.2.4.1).

### 5.3.3.4 Practitioners

As mentioned in paragraph 5.2.1.4, practitioners are central to the success of OBE and adult literacy programmes. They fulfil a number of roles, and therefore it is vital that all ABET practitioners should be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, to successfully implement programmes (cf 2.6.2.8 & 3.6.3.8.i). As practitioners are primarily responsible for assessment, it is important that they are thoroughly trained with regard to the facilitation of assessment, as well as assessment techniques, as discussed in paragraph 5.3.3.5 (cf 2.5 & 3.4.4). The ABET sub-directorate has considerable strength in this area and could facilitate the process (cf 4.2.1.2).

In order to successfully facilitate outcomes-based adult literacy programmes, practitioners should be trained in the areas of :

- creative resources for programmes;
- recognition of RPL;
- curriculum development;
- designing training from approved curriculum;
- evaluating programmes; and the
- development of teaching resources for different delivery modes (cf 2.5; 3.6.3.8.i; 4.2.1.2 & 4.2.3.2).

#### 5.3.3.5 Assessment

As mentioned (cf 5.2.1.3), assessment is central to OBE and therefore applicable to adult literacy training . Assessment has not been adequately addressed by the ABET sectors within the Border/Kei region. The findings outlined in chapter four indicate that there is a need for further training in assessment (cf 4.3). The experiences of adult literacy sectors within the UK and Australia, also indicate that assessment can be a problematic issue and needs constant attention (cf 2.3.2 & 2.4.4). Within assessment, the following should be considered:

- knowledge should form an integral part of the assessment approach;
- assumptions regarding competency should be avoided;

- there are practical difficulties with regard to the assessment of competency in terms of describing human actions, as competency embodies a technically oriented way of thinking;
- careful consideration should be given to the frequency of assessment as well as the interpretation thereof;
- the criterion-referenced approach is best suited to OBE;
- a general acceptable quality in assessment is vital, and in order to achieve this the standards should be understood by all who use them;
- quality assurance should be built into the assessment process;
- use should be made of internal, as well as external verifiers;
- the assessment should be valid, reliable, fair, flexible, authentic, appropriate and efficient (cf 2.5 & 3.4.5).

As previously mentioned (cf 5.2.1.5), RPL forms an integral part of assessment. Accredited placement tests, such as the portfolio method, should be used when placing learners (cf 3.3.1.3.g & 3.6.3.8.f).

#### 5.3.3.6 Materials

Within adult literacy training, use should be made of adult learning materials. These materials should be relevant in terms of the context in which they are used, be it workplace-based or community-based.

Furthermore, they should be culturally-sensitive, authentic and it is imperative that they contextualise the learning outcomes.

Within the Border/Kei region, all the ABET sectors have the capacity to develop relevant materials (cf 4.2.1.4; 4.2.2.5; 4.2.3.3 & 4.2.4.2). The need is to develop systems for auditing these materials so as to ensure that they remain relevant and that they meet the SAQA requirements (cf 2.6.4; 2.7.1.5; 3.6.3.8.g & 4.2.1.4).

#### 5.3.3.7 Monitoring and evaluation

A system of monitoring and evaluation plays a vital role in ensuring quality and educational transformation. This should be an ongoing process of both an internal and external nature. It is a continuous feedback task that should be implemented in all adult literacy programmes (cf 2.6.2.9; 3.6.3.8.1; 4.2.1.6; 4.2.3.7 & 4.2.4.5).

The monitoring and evaluation process within all ABET sectors of the Border/Kei region are inadequately developed (cf 4.2.1.6; 4.2.2.8; 4.2.3.6 & 4.2.4.5). As it is a central function in ensuring constant, relevant ABET provision, a co-ordinated approach is needed to address this area.

#### 5.3.4 Conclusion with regard to strategic direction for the implementation of OBE and other solutions to adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region

Within paragraph 5.3, emphasis is placed on the following areas as strategic to the successful implementation of adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region:

- the establishment of the necessary physical infrastructure;
- State facilitated direction in developing a policy on partnerships relevant to the Border/Kei region, focusing on:
  - a co-ordinated strategy;
  - funding;
  - pathways and networks.

- the examination of adult literacy training in relation to OBE, with regard to:
  - needs analysis;
  - goals;
  - content;
  - practitioners;
  - assessment;
  - materials;
  - monitoring and evaluation.

The process of monitoring and evaluation is central to the implementation of the proposed strategic direction, and is an on-going process.

#### **5.4 A PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADULT LITERACY TRAINING IN THE BORDER/KEI REGION**

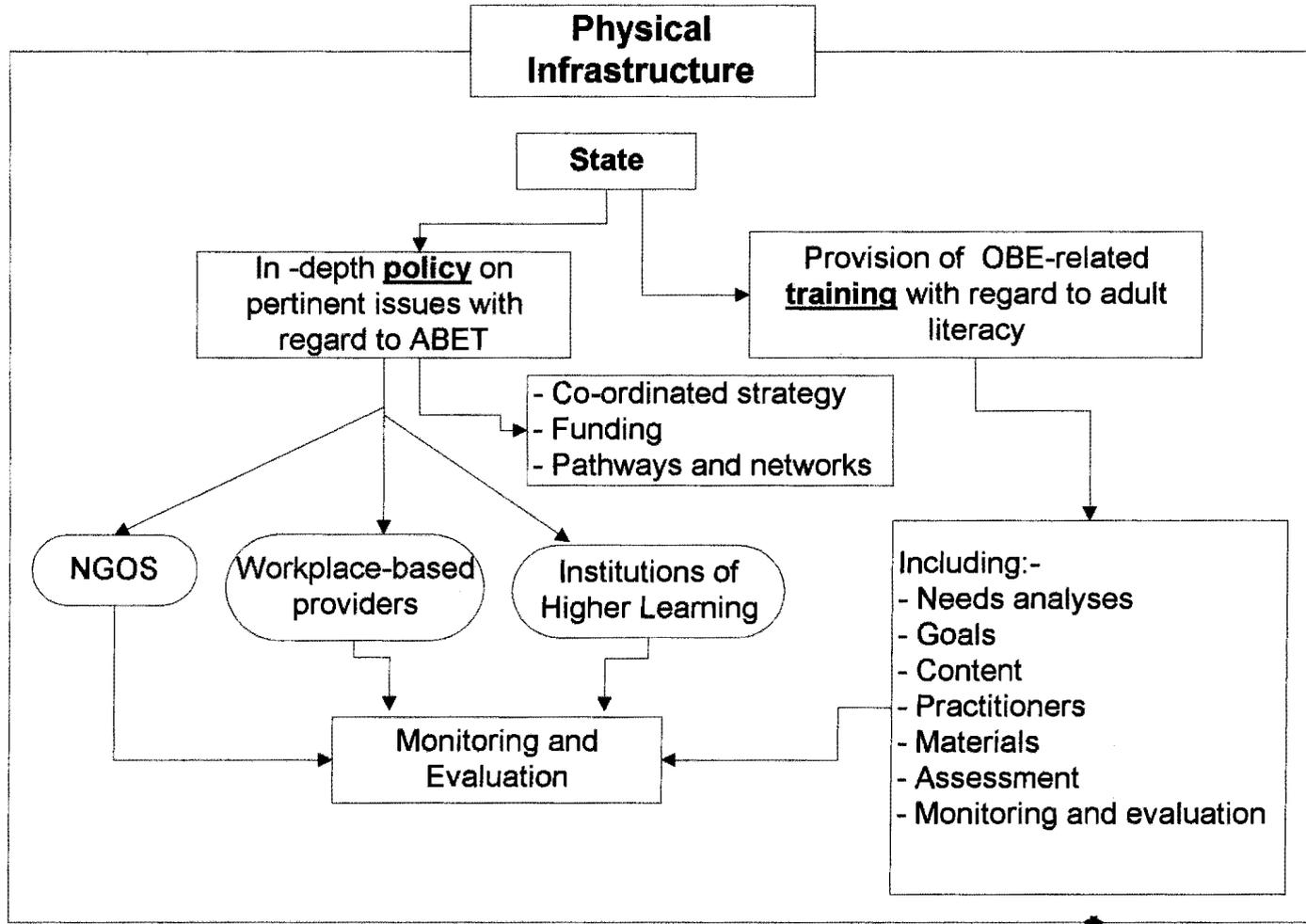
Based on the findings and guidelines outlined in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3, a structure (cf Fig. 5.1) of implementation with regard to adult literacy training, is proposed. The structure is a proposed guideline as to the steps that should be taken in terms of ensuring the effective facilitation of adult literacy training within the Border/Kei region.

As emphasised within the study (cf 1.1 & 5.1), the Border/Kei area is a largely rural area and it is imperative that the **physical infrastructure** needed to access these areas be put in place. Within the model (cf Fig. 5.1) this factor is set out as a fundamental component which needs to be addressed before adult literacy training can be successfully implemented.

Furthermore, as stated in paragraph 3.6.3.7, the State bears primary responsibility for the provision of ABET within South Africa. This implies that there is a need for more in-depth guidelines, in the form of a **policy with regard to this provision, within the Border/Kei region**. It is acknowledged that a multi-year

**STRUCTURE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADULT LITERACY TRAINING IN THE BORDER/KEI REGION**

**FIGURE 5.1**



implementation plan (cf 3.6.3.8) is in place, however, more in-depth direction is needed in terms of the co-operation between providers within the region and the State. Issues such as a co-ordinated strategy, funding, as well as pathways and networks, need to be addressed in this regard. Input is needed from all stakeholders, including NGOs, the work-place based sector and institutions of higher learning (cf Fig. 5.1). This also forms a fundamental component of the model.

Once the above-mentioned components are addressed, State assistance is also required with the **implementation of OBE and other solutions** (cf 5.3) to adult literacy training within the area. This calls for co-operation between the State and various stakeholders as previously mentioned. Areas with regard to adult literacy training that need to be addressed include, a needs analysis, content, goals, training of practitioners, the development of materials and assessment (cf Fig. 5.1).

Ongoing activities throughout this process, are the crucial elements of **monitoring** and **evaluation** (cf Fig 5.1). These are not once-off exercises but are pertinent throughout, as a means of ensuring the provision of continual, relevant adult literacy programmes within the region.

## 5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As previously stated (cf 1.8), the South African education system is still within a process of transformation with regard to OBE. Although it is currently being practised, this is only at an initial level, as structures are still being put in place and unit standards are currently being determined with regard to the various learning fields. With regard to adult literacy training and OBE, limited resources are available within this area. There is broad scope for research within this field.

The following guidelines are recommended for further research:

- the impact of a lack of physical infrastructure on ABET needs to be researched;

- ways of developing an in-depth national policy on implementing a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of adult literacy training should be addressed;
  
- research in terms of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of OBE (and all its facets) within adult literacy training is crucial to the relevance and continuation of these programmes; and
  
- ways of addressing funding within ABET needs to be urgently addressed.

## **5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The high level of illiteracy is currently being addressed within the Border/Kei region. Many solutions, including OBE, are being implemented as a means of improving adult literacy training within the region. Just as the previous education system served a particular purpose, OBE has been introduced as a means of addressing a specific problem within the broader education system and society at large. It should be kept in mind that depending on the transformation of the broader society, there may be a need to re-address OBE in the future.

This study has attempted to examine the way in which adult literacy training can be enhanced within the Border/Kei region, as a means of contributing positively to the social and economic upliftment of communities. It is acknowledged that adult literacy training should be implemented as part of ongoing projects within communities so as always to be perceived as relevant. Furthermore, it is also acknowledged that although the State's responsibility is crucial to prevent the marginalisation of ABET, this alone does not always ensure the continuity of adult literacy training. Pertinent factors as discussed throughout this chapter, need to be addressed in order to facilitate the provision of such programmes.

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13. Public Utility Representative. 2000. Manager of the Southern Region. Personal interview. 11 April, East London.

14. Sinika, L. 2000 Acting Head of Department -Lilulengelo Lethu Adult Literacy Centre. Personal interview. 18 April, East London.
15. Somhlahlo, Z. 2000. Regional Co-ordinator – Zingisa Educational Project. Personal interview. 19 April, King William's Town.
16. Tile, E. 2000 Project Co-ordinator – Progressive Adult Basic Education Trust (PABET). Telephonic interview. 05 May, Umtata.
17. Tshotsho, B. 2000. Lecturer in the Department of Communication: Eastern Cape Technikon. Personal interview. 25 April, Butterworth.
18. Zibi, Z. 2000. Provincial Director: Project Literacy. Personal interview. 25 February, East London.