

**EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN ADULT BASIC
EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITH REGARD TO THE DEMANDS
OF THE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING WORLD OF
WORK**

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EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN ADULT BASIC
EDUCATION AND TRAINING WITH REGARD TO THE DEMANDS
OF THE ABET WORLD OF WORK

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DECLARATION

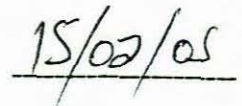
I declare that

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is my own work, that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not previously in its entirety or part been submitted at any other higher education institution for a degree.



BARBARA MANONA



DATE

ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is the evaluation of the National Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) for the purpose of suggesting improvements that could enable ABET diplomates to meet the demands of their challenging ABET world of work. The research study is based on the reflections of employed ABET diplomates and their employers on the relevance and usefulness of the ABET qualification in the workplace.

The research is set against the general literature on the linkages between higher education and workplaces in general and the need for the development of work integrated curricula and high workplace competence levels in particular. The research also draws on literature that relate to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in the current South African education system and the role that could be played by learnerships and service-learning in the development of ABET practitioners. Reference is also made to the literature on employability of graduates, the contextual nature of the ABET world of work, work-based learning, and pedagogy or andragogy that is needed to support workplace practices.

Qualitative evaluation approaches and narrative data production methods in the context of teaching and learning were used. The lecturers, ABET diplomates and

their employers were interviewed in order to find out how the National Diploma in ABET prepared the diplomates to be effective and efficient in their ABET world of work. Curriculum documents for the National Diploma in ABET were also consulted.

The research findings indicated that employed ABET diplomates find it difficult to meet all the demands of the workplace in general and to demonstrate an understanding of unit standards and outcomes when preparing lessons and planning learner activities in particular.

The study therefore calls for higher education institution to find alternative ways of offering the National Diploma in ABET by establishing partnerships with workplaces and work closely with potential employers of ABET diplomates. Such collaborative efforts could result in the development of work-integrated curricula which could enable ABET diplomates to spend more time in the workplace than in the classroom. The study recommends that higher education institutions should be involved in ABET Practitioner learnerships that provide work-based learning and in service-learning which provides community service experience in order to provide learners with an opportunity to connect theory with practice and ideology with actuality.

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED

TO

MY LATE GRANDMOTHER

MABEL NCEDE MANONA (NEE. MALIZA)

AND

MY LATE FATHER

GORDON MHLOTSHENI "MPAMAKHE" MANONA

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Barbara Nomangesi Manona

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

National Diploma in ABET

A course of study or training prescribed for learners studying a National Diploma in Adult Basic Education and training

Learnerships

A mode of delivering s learning programme which combines work based experience with structured learning. The learnerships are seen as representing transaction spaces in which curricular objectives are set, discussed and examined against work competencies.

NQF

National Qualification Framework is a set of principles and guidelines by which records of learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning.

Service Learning

A course – based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on service activity as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of

course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Work Integrated Curricula

A course of study prescribed in institutions and responding to workplace needs and expectations.

Evaluation of the National Diploma in ABET

Evaluation that attempts to find out if the programme is implemented as designed and if the programme serves the target population. The evaluation focuses on the need, process, outcome and efficiency.

ABET world of work

Employment contexts of ABET Facilitators (industry, private companies, NGOs, community centres etc).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT

When the curriculum for the National Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) was designed by one of the higher education institutions in 1995, there was little or no collaboration between higher education and workplaces. When the students obtained their diplomas, it became difficult for most of them to get permanent jobs. Some of them have indicated that the Diploma in ABET did not entirely prepare them to meet the needs of the workplace. The same problem was highlighted in the Cape Argus job shop (September 27, 2000) where it was stated that 'the statistics demonstrates clearly how diplomates in some disciplines fail to find meaningful employment while the market place is crying out for skills in other areas'. It is against this background that the National Diploma in ABET was evaluated.

Current reform initiatives in the South African education system have resulted in the introduction of a new national curriculum in 1997 (Department of Education, 1997). The new curriculum places emphasis on lifelong learning which is central to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), a new structure that aims to improve the quality of education in South Africa (Department of Education 1997:5). Working adults, who have been constructed as 'other' (Stuart and Thomson 1995:3) by the education system of the old South Africa, and out-of-school youths with very little formal education, can now benefit from the new

education system. Since the learners are working adults, education has now become a joint venture between workplaces and education institutions and the development of more meaningful work-integrated curricula is given more attention. Although most training programmes for educators have traditionally had a practical component that involved workplace experience, "the curriculum was not thought of as an integrated whole" (ETDP SETA 2002: 5).

The introduction of adult basic education after 1994 has presented several challenges to higher education institutions that are training adult educators. The challenges emanate from the fact that ABET students, who are being trained, have to facilitate learning for working adults who are in different environments such as industry, farms, mines, domestic services etc. Each workplace has unique expectations and demands and adult learners have different needs and aspirations. There is also an increasing pressure on ABET diplomates in the workplace to operate across fields inside and outside the workplace and participate in innovative problem solving workplace practices. At the moment it is uncertain if ABET diplomates from higher education institutions are capable to perform all the duties of the workplace effectively and efficiently.

Since the new South African curriculum places emphasis on the relevance of education to the lives of South Africans, adult educators have to make sure that education of adult learners is relevant to their lives. It has been realized that relevant education has to meet the needs of the learners as well as those of the workplace.

This research could add value to ongoing research in higher education institutions in the Western Cape, which aims to prepare graduates, through under-graduate teaching and learning programmes and methodologies, to be effective in the world-of-work and society. The study could also lead to the development of an integrated, undergraduate ABET curriculum that attempts to be responsive to the needs of the world-of-work and society. The findings of this study may benefit the ABET diplomates in the sense that they could be effective and efficient in the workplace if work-integrated curriculum could be developed. Higher education institutions could also benefit as they may be engaged in curriculum renewal and offer the ABET programme that is responsive to the needs of the stakeholders in the ABET field. The workplace could also play an active role in ensuring that the relationship between structured learning and structured work experience is built as diplomates have “to be work-ready before a certificate is issued” (ETDP SETA 2001: 27). This means that the employers could ensure that while the students are working they are also learning about the job and that the learning happening on the job is integrated with the structured learning” (ETDP SETA 2002:25).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

The focus of this research is the evaluation of the National Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training for the purpose of suggesting improvements which would enable it to prepare ABET diplomates to meet the demands of their challenging ABET world of work, using qualitative approaches.

There are few studies that focus on the integration of in service training or work based training on skills and the *institutional training in theory*. Such integration is necessary because ABET diplomates could be able to demonstrate high competence levels and be more efficient in their workplaces. The study is an attempt to identify the gaps in the ABET Diploma curriculum offered in the researched institution.

1.3 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the National Diploma in ABET and offer guidelines that could improve its effectiveness in the ABET world of work.

In order to achieve this objective I identified the following research questions as a guide to my research activities:

1. What does the ABET curriculum prepare ABET diplomates to do?
2. What challenges are faced by ABET diplomates in the workplace?
3. What do employers and ABET diplomates suggest with regard to the improvement of the curriculum for the National Diploma in ABET

The research questions were based on the following assumptions:

- The curriculum documents were used for the ABET programme implemented and that there was a match between the curriculum and practice.

- It was also assumed that job descriptions at workplace are accurate in terms of skills needed for particular jobs.

1.4 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Two community centers in Khayelitsha, one Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and one industry were selected for the purpose of the study. The research sites chosen for this study were different workplaces that represent the contextual nature of the ABET world of work. They have been selected in order to compare experiences of ABET diplomates who work at the different research sites as well as the comments of both ABET diplomates and employers with regard to the relationship between workplaces and teaching and learning practices in tertiary institutions. One higher education institution was selected. This institution was the first tertiary institution that offered a three year full-time National Diploma in ABET in 1995. The study only focused on the evaluation of the current full-time National Diploma in ABET by employers, employed ABET diplomates and lecturers with regard to meeting the demands of the workplace. The part-time ABET programme did not form part of the investigation

1.5 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The research study is set out in five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which shows how the National Diploma in ABET programme was designed by one of the higher education institutions. This chapter also highlights South

African educational policies that promote partnership formation and collaborative efforts that could lead to high performance levels of ABET diplomates in the workplace. The challenges of higher education institutions presented by the introduction of adult basic education and training after 1994 are also portrayed in this chapter.

Following the introduction is a review of literature that stresses the importance of establishing partnerships between higher education and the world of work globally and nationally. This chapter also emphasises the importance of work-based learning and employability of ABET diplomates. The contextual nature of the ABET world of work, the pedagogy or andragogy that is needed to support workplace practices and debates about the NQF, learnerships, service-learning, reflection and programme evaluation are also examined.

The third chapter presents the methodology and the phases of the research and describes the procedures that were followed in this study. The debate on evaluation research is examined and the way this debate has influenced the researcher's position is described. This chapter also analyses and reflects upon the research design, research instruments, and approaches and techniques that were used to collect, produce, analyse, interpret and verify data. The participants and limitations of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the findings that were obtained after the collected data was captured, analysed and interpreted. These findings were derived from the responses of the working ABET diplomates and their employers. The research

findings that relate to the conceptualisation, design and implementation of the National Diploma in ABET also form the subject of this chapter. These findings were derived from the responses of the lecturers who were involved in the ABET diploma and from the perusal of the diploma's curriculum documents.

After the research findings were derived, the responses of all the participants and the data gathered through the use of curriculum documents were compared and summarised in order to find similarities and differences. The final chapter focuses on the summary of such research findings. The recommendations that relate to the implementation of the ABET diploma in future, are put forward and the *conclusion that stress the important role of ABET educators in the South African education system in general and human resources development in particular, is set out.*

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION.

In an attempt to eradicate high illiteracy levels of adults, South African education reforms have placed emphasis on lifelong learning which is central to the National Qualifications Framework, a new structure that aims to improve the quality of education in South Africa (Department of Education 1997: 5). The goals of the NQF are to promote access, equity and progression in education (Department of Education 1997: 5). The introduction of lifelong learning has not only created opportunities for working adults and out-of-school youth to further their studies and gain skills that are needed in the workplace, but has also created the need for well trained adult educators. This need resulted in the development of the three year National Diploma in ABET in 1995 by a tertiary institution in the Western Cape.

The current research is based on the evaluation of this diploma in terms of preparing ABET diplomates to meet the demands and challenges of the ABET world of work. The research is set against the general literature on the linkages between higher education and workplaces in general and the need for the development of work integrated curricula and high workplace competence levels in particular. The research also draws on literature that relate to the National

Qualifications Framework (NQF) in the current South African education system and the role that could be played by learnerships and service-learning in the development of ABET practitioners. Reference is also made to the literature on employability of diplomates, the contextual nature of the ABET world of work, work-based learning, and pedagogy or andragogy that is needed to support workplace practices. Attention is also focused on literature that deals with reflection, evaluation and curriculum renewal since this research attempts to evaluate National Diploma in ABET and advocates for its curriculum renewal.

2.2 LINKS BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE WORLD OF WORK

The following subsections explain why several studies stress the importance of establishing linkages between higher education institutions and workplaces.

2.2.1 The need for teaching towards workplace orientated goals

There is an enthusiasm around the world for curriculum renewal in order to ensure that teaching and learning programmes enable diplomates to be effective in the world of work and society. Much has also been written about the importance of changing the current approach to higher education from subject teaching towards subject-orientated goals to more marketable programme teaching towards workplace-orientated goals (Teichler 2000; Foster and Stephenson 1998; Garrick and Kirkpatrick 1998; Teichler 1998). The training based on the separation of the training encounter from the natural world of work is viewed as unsuited for helping people learn new roles and skills necessary for

the workplace (Hirschham, Gilmore and Newell 1989). Sharing the same view, Walshock (1995) states that knowledge that is necessary in the world of work is the integration of ideas and experience.

In South Africa this changing approach to programme teaching towards workplace orientated goals has been highlighted in the National Commission on Higher Education Report of 1993, Education White Paper of 1997 and the National Plan for Higher Education in 2001. This shift has created a need for greater co-operation between the world of work and society and the higher education sector in order to develop representative work integrated curricula (WIC). Supporting this view, Lundall (2002) suggests that the channels of communication between workplaces and higher education institutions need to be more formalized, if they are to influence curriculum development.

2.2.2. Partnerships

Universities are seen by government as increasingly central to the future of society, not only as a focus of education, scholarship and research, but as a provider of trained person power for industry, and as a source of economic advantage for the country, Hodkinson & Hodkinson (1997). Concurrently, industry is rapidly changing and its need for capable professional employees with wide ranging core and skills is increasing. There is a recurring theme in many reports in the USA, UK and Australia which indicate that neither prospective employers nor the diplomates themselves believe that they are being adequately prepared for the workplace, (DETYA 2000). It is argued that success at work is

important and that there is a connection between productive work and productive learning, (DETYA 1998). Prospective employers are satisfied with the development of core competencies which are the focus of disciplines, but are not satisfied with a range of skills that most diplomates seem not to have. These skills include communication skills, team work and competence in solving real problems, (Boud 1998). This situation has created the need for partnership formation between tertiary institutions and workplaces. An attempt to meet the need for such partnerships in South African higher education has been made through the introduction of learnerships (ETDP SETA, 2001) and service-learning (Bringle and Hatcher, 1998).

2.2.2.1 Learnerships and Adult Practitioners

A learnership is defined as a mode of delivering a learning programme that combines work – based experience with structured learning. It is one of the means to achieving a qualification. A person who completes a learnership will be able to demonstrate the practical application of competencies (skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes) in an employment context (ETDP SETA, 2001).

In order to promote employability of diplomates in South Africa, the Minister of Labour launched the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) in February 2001 (Government Gazette 2001). "The development of our people's skills will lead to reduced unemployment. It will make our communities more stable and provide better opportunities for all". With this statement the minister of education committed himself to transforming workplaces into sites of learning, address poor

linkages between education and training provision on the one hand and labour market entry on the other , provide increased labour market mobility and flexibility.

According to the ETDP SETA (2001) many technikons have workplace experience built into their programmes, and workplace experience is often a requisite to graduate, but the main differences between current programmes and learnerships is that the workplace learning is not assessed and also that the curriculum is not thought of as an integrated whole. However if these areas are addressed many existing technikon programmes can easily be transformed into learnerships. 25 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were established to help implement the National Skills Development Strategy. SETAs are made up of equal numbers of employer and worker representatives. In addition to administering the levy grants, SETAs contribute to the raising of skills of the employed, or those seeking employers and communities, and that the training is to agreed and registered standards. Learnerships are new work-based route to acquire professional or vocational qualifications. They all include theory as well as work experience, and so diplomates from learnerships acquire real competence. Learnerships lead to nationally recognized qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). About 155 learnerships have already been registered with the Department of Labour and many more are under development. Education and training was often irrelevant to the individuals learning needs; to the needs of the community; and/or to National development needs (ETDP SETA, 2001).

South African education and training was in many cases not internationally comparable, limiting the competitiveness of the economy and the international mobility of individuals and companies. Relevance requires education and training to meet the needs of the South African individuals, South African workplaces and communities, and the country as a whole. Recognition of prior learning should be built into the system, enabling those who have already achieved the competence needed to earn a qualification to do so without having to attend unnecessary training. South Africa is not yet equipped with the skills it needs for economic and employment growth and social development due largely to the legacy of apartheid. The new democratic government is now faced with the difficult task of alleviating poverty by creating new jobs and trying to improve the productivity of existing firms who are struggling to compete in the global economy. So a learnership is a formalization of what is already practiced by many institutions of learning. While learnerships have specific rules and regulations governing them, which entail differences from existing programmes, for most providers and employers it should not be difficult to adapt existing programmes into learnerships. The SETA aims to work with providers and employers to adapt existing learning programmes into learnerships and skills programmes (ETDP SETA 2001).

2.2.2.2 Service Learning and ABET Practitioner development

Service learning is a particular form of experiential education that incorporates community service.

According to the International Partnership for Service-learning, “service-learning responds to students’ desire to be in the world, learning from experience as well as classes, and to put their education to use for the good of others.” Service learning aims to meeting a human need in the community where that need has to do the well being of individuals and/ or of the environment in which they live. This provides opportunities for students to reflect on their experience and its connection to specific academic/civic objectives are incorporated into the activity.

Central to service-learning is the establishment of partnerships between higher education institutions, service providers and community partners. Another key element of service learning is its explicit connection to academic coursework.

Bringle and Hatcher (1995: 12) define service- learning as:

a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on service activity as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

The integration of service-learning in the ABET programme could enable prospective adult educators to spend more time in developing their own practical skills which in turn could lead to community development. Thus service-learning could develop a variety of skills, values and attitudes in students, thereby preparing them to be efficient and effective in the world of work and to participate as active, responsible citizens in building their country.

2.2.3. Work-based learning.

Holland & Leggett (2000) state that life-long learning is no longer about alternative pathways or adult education but it is about reflective practice, continuing education and skill upgrading as part of managing a career which means that enabling productive learning at work is important. The emergence of work-based learning raises a host of issues that go well beyond the pragmatics of doing work-based learning (Symes & McIntyre 2000). It is seen as a sign of fundamental challenges to vocational education. Thus, work-based learning in its radical form may be seen as a cause for rethinking our educational institutions, and educational practice in general. Several authors have shown interest in work-based learning. In the UK, Foster and Stephenson (1998) focus on the emergence of learner-managed three-way partnerships between the learner the university and the employer based on real-time work-based projects as a way of reconciling economic benefit with personal development as purposes for work-based learning. They also identify key variables which appear to determine the nature of different styles of work-based learning including the willingness of universities to move from their traditional control of the curriculum to allow a greater variety of learning experiences. Hill (2000), Brown (2000), Cys (2000) as well as Munby, Chin and Hutchinson (2000) have also stressed the importance of work-based learning in an international conference on working knowledge in Australia in December 2000. Learning is negotiated through work relationships and networks (Poell, van der Krogt & Wildermeersch 1999) and it is necessary to have theoretical perspectives that recognize this. It is essential to draw on

theoretical resources from human resource development, workplace learning and adult and experiential learning (Watkins & Marsick 1993, Argyris 1996, McIntyre 1996, Boud 1998, Denton 1998, Garrick 1999).

There is a relative poverty of theorization of workplace learning. Though the term 'learning organisation' has been common in corporate discourse, its characteristics are not well understood. Related terms such as 'empowerment' drawn from radical pedagogy, are also used with uncritical ease of changes in contemporary work (Gee, 1996). There are many issues arising from what is learned in the contemporary workplace such as the manner in which human capital is generated or deployed, and how occupational knowledge relates to vocational qualifications. There are also questions regarding the organizational impacts of learning in the workplace, including the economic contribution that learning makes to productivity. In order for these to be understood, it is necessary to take a social theoretical perspective in which work is understood as a community of practice with many situated learning elements. It is suggested that learning should be understood as organized and enacted through work relationships, rather than as a psychological process. This kind of understanding is linked to current thinking about the new learner worker or knowledge worker, the self-regulating employee who is encouraged to assume responsibility for their work and learning (ETDP SETA, 2000).

2.3. THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is defined as a set of principles and guidelines by which records of learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning (SAQA 1995).

2.3. 1 Aims and objectives of the NQF

According to the SAQA (1995), the aims and the objectives of the NQF are as follows:

- To create an integrated national framework for learning achievements
- Facilitate access to, and 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.
- Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

2.3.2. Debates on the NQF

The following section presents ideas that authors have on the implementation of the NQF.

2.3.2.1. Difficulty in implementing the NQF

According to Young (2003) the implementation of the NQF has been difficult in South Africa because there is no single Department of Education and Skills (or Training) as is the case in some other countries, such as the United Kingdom. The Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for education and the Department of Labour (DOL) for training. The difficulty in implementing the NQF has led to the production of the Study Team's Report and the formation of the Joint Task Team. Both the Study Team and the Joint Task Team have pointed out that the implementation of the NQF has been associated with tensions and difficulties caused by its early conceptualization.

2.3.2.2 The DOE/DOL Consultative Document

Young (2003) states that the DOE/DOL Consultative Document produced by the Joint Task Team, did not only respond to the Study Team's Report but also presented a new perspective on the problems of implementing the NQF and a new set of proposals for the NQF architecture. The main analytical chapter of the DOE/DOL Consultative Document – *The Interface between Learning and*

Working – recognizes the two Departments' joint responsibilities for the NQF and the necessity of establishing a compromise position that both Departments could endorse. The chapter addresses the different priorities and interests of the two departments and how they might complement each other in relation to taking the NQF forward. The document therefore forms the basis for a common approach on the part of two departments and recognizes the responsibilities of the two departments as being for "education and training on the one hand and skills development on the other" (Young 2003).

The document also uses the national Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy as a basis for showing how the responsibilities of the two departments can be seen not as in opposition but as complementing each other. The emphasis on the links between education and skills development in the HRD strategy is expressed in the theme of interdependence which is presented as an interpretation of the original NQF goal of integration or an integrated approach.

The DOE/DOL Consultative Document breaks with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) approach by recognizing that the NQF must be based on recognition of the differences between types of learning which are institution-based and work-based. The document reports that, as a result of not recognizing these differences SAQA guidelines attempted to describe all types of learning in terms of a single definition. Furthermore, instead of trying to develop an NQF that linked the different types of learning, the SAQA approach blurred the differences with its concept of 'organizational fields' and failed to take

account of the differences in its definition of a qualification. Consequently, the key groups involved (i.e. the DOE and the SETAs) have developed qualifications in very different ways.

The Task Team Document uses similar but overlapping concepts used to describe two different types of learning which are disciplinary, general or institution-based on the one hand and vocational, career-focused, occupational or work-based on the other. It also notes that although definitions of learning and learning pathways are often described in dichotomous terms, three rather than two types tend to emerge – general, general/vocational, and occupational. The following table shows the simplified structure for the NQF as proposed by the Task Team Document.

Table 2.1

NQF band	General Pathway	Articulation Column	General vocational / Career-focused pathway	Articulation Column	Trade, occupational and professional pathway
<i>Higher Education and Training</i>	Discipline-based qualifications	Articulation credits	Career-focused qualifications	Articulation credits	Occupational recognition or context-based qualifications unique to the workplace
<i>Further Education and Training</i>	Discipline-based qualifications	Articulation credits	General vocational qualifications	Articulation credits	
<i>General Education</i>	General education qualifications (with ABET defined separately)				

According to the Task Team Document the first two types of learning are usually wholly institution-based qualifications but sometimes involve work experience whereas the third can be wholly work –based but in practice often involves institutional learning. The Document recognizes that these types of learning are not separate and that there should be options for vertical, horizontal and diagonal progression within and between them. The Document emphasizes the importance of articulation between the types or pathways and combines the pathways with existing qualification bands to generate what Young (2003: 10) calls the “new 3X3 framework structure”.

The Document argues that this simpler structure that is proposed for the NQF is derived from its recognition of the different types of learning and therefore of the *purpose of qualifications*.

2.3.2.3 Critique of the DOE/DOL Consultative Document

Young (2003) argues that in practice the proposals laid out in the DOE/DOL Consultative Document are derived from two principles which are in tension with each other, viz: the “principle of equivalence” and the “principle of difference”. He feels that the new framework creates problems in trying to combine these two different principles. From the original NQF concept the new framework takes the “principle of equivalence” which assumes, as in the 3X3 framework, that it is possible to treat all qualifications and all learning equally within the framework, despite recognizing their differences. From the prior analysis of types of learning on the other hand, the proposed new framework takes the ‘principle of

difference' which contradicts the 'principle of equivalence' and implies that different types of learning cannot be compared within a single framework or set of criteria except in the most general terms as is the case with the Australian Qualification Framework (Keating 2003), Young (2003) also points out that the Document fails to think through the implications of the tensions between these principles and as a result, despite the new analysis, the proposals for a new framework are unlikely to overcome the implementation problems that led to the setting up of the Study Team. Young (2003: 3) maintains that the reasons for this kind of situation may be in part, that the Joint Task Team, like the Study Team before, was constrained by its terms of reference which required focus only on the implementation issues rather than questions about the appropriateness of the NQF for achieving the broad education and training goals associated with it.

The discussion on the difficulty of implementing the NQF creates the need for higher education institutions to be aware of the difficulties and find more creative ways of implementing the learnerships.

2.4 PEDAGOGY/ANDRAGOGY THAT IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT WORKPLACE PRACTICES.

The suggestion that workplaces should concern themselves with learning as a fundamental priority and that workplace supervisors should act as facilitators of the learning of staff is prevalent in the literature that focus on workplace learning (Kornbluh and Greene 1989: 258; Senge 1990: 356; Watkins 1991:252; Crawford 1991: 126). If the traditional role of supervisors has to change, their facilitation will have to consider good facilitation strategies for adult learners.

Boud (1989) has described the following four traditions in the adult learning literature:

- Facilitation in the tradition of training and efficiency in learning.
- Facilitation in the tradition of self-directed learning and Andragogy.
- Facilitation in the tradition of learner-centered education and the humanistic educators.
- Facilitation in the tradition of critical pedagogy and social action.

2.4.1 Facilitation in the tradition of training and efficiency in learning

This is the tradition of formal learning and systematic education in which aims and objectives are clearly specified and programmes designed taking into account the learners' prior knowledge and skills. Then programs are tested and the designed adjusted in the light of the feedback obtained. The emphasis placed on practice and feedback and the lack of interest in the learner as a whole person reflects the influence of behaviourism. Facilitation is not really a central concept as trainers are required to be skilled in training techniques, needs analysis, programme design and provision of feedback on performance (Boud 1989: 41). This tradition is least interested in the interpersonal relationships, including power relationships between the learners and their facilitators or trainers and tends to stereotyped learners and address only through their needs which are usually pre-identified and conceived as 'skill- gaps'. This tradition is

viewed as highly influential in the practice of human resource development in the workplace.

2.4.2 Facilitation in the tradition of self-directed learning and andragogy

Knowles (1990) attempts to andragogise the workplace training and development practices derived from the training tradition. This focuses on the unique goals and interests of learners as adults, and accords these a central place in the educational process. Facilitation in this tradition is viewed as more concerned with interaction with the individual learner and with addressing his or her individual learning needs. The expertise of the facilitator is less important than it is for the training tradition. Emphasis is placed on negotiation and support, not on intervention in the process of learning (Knowles 1990: 100). The responsibility for learning is shifted to the learner. When Knowles considers environments that may be said to be conducive to learning, he draws on a notion of democracy. The learning contracts that are used parallel the use of contracts in performance management in the workplace.

2.4.3 Facilitation in the tradition of learner-centred education and the humanistic educators

This tradition recognises the situation of the individual within a group setting, and it addresses a broader range of personal and social needs. Facilitation addresses the whole person of the learner, including their intellectual, affective, physical and even spiritual dimensions. The humanist facilitator promotes values of love, impartiality and respect for persons (Heron 1990: 44). Boud and Miller

(1996: 22) identify some principles behind good learning strategies for use with adults. The workplace learning literature often draws on this tradition in its discussion of the need for the transformation of personal perspectives, and of the empowerment of individuals in the workplace.

2.4.4 Facilitation in the tradition of critical pedagogy and social action

This tradition emphasises the social, cultural and political context of learning and is focused on facilitation to help learners transcend the constraints they face in the world (Hart 1990: 58-67; Usher 1995: 22). One of the main tools for facilitation is an open and critical dialogue between and with learners (Brookfield, 1986:24). This tradition has strong links with action research approaches and is influential in management development in the world of work.

According to Boud (1989) the traditions described above build upon each other and each adds new dimensions to the work of facilitation. In an effective teaching-learning transaction all participants learn, no one member is regarded as having a monopoly on insight, and dissension and criticism are regarded as inevitable and desirable elements of the process. (Brookfield, 1986: 24). In addition they conceive facilitation differently and each take different assumptions about the role of a facilitator, the nature of the learner, the ethical context and the degree of interpersonal interaction involved and the practical import of the critique for facilitation is minimal. The main concern seems to be theoretical than practical.

2.5 THE (CONTEXTUAL) NATURE OF THE ABET WORLD OF WORK.

According to Winberg (1997: 68) there is a great diversity in learning contexts of adult learners and this diversity is partly because of the history of ABET in South Africa. Since ABET has not had the support of the state, it relied on lots of different groupings to take it forward. Such groupings include small organisations, churches, farms, industry, mining, and education departments.

Learners come with different expectations and hopes, and different abilities and levels of education. Teachers have different amounts of training, experience and understanding. Teachers use different methods. Sometimes learners control the learning process, and sometimes organisations, employers or teachers control it. Some groups are successful, other are not. During the 1990's many of these groupings tried to work together in the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC). The NLC groups have tried to develop methods and materials that make the learners more powerful. They have tried to share their knowledge and experience so that they can provide a better service. But ABET continues to take place in lots of different contexts. Winberg (1997) cites different places where ABET takes place. These places include small organisations, churches, farms, industry, mining, and education departments. Different contexts pose challenges to the development of the ABET curriculum in respect of both the ABET learners and ABET educators.

2.6. REFLECTION.

Birkett and Wilcox (1998) suggest that in order to become an outstanding ABET practitioner one must become a reflective teacher. They suggest that reflection can be done with each lesson that is taught. To learn through reflection, one needs to observe teaching in practice and the easiest way of getting this practice, in the training context, is by means of micro-teaching. Richards (1990) points out that reflection might lead to improvement in terms of institutional practice and competence levels of ABET graduates. Reflection is seen as involving conscious recall and examination of past experience. It is also regarded as a basis for evaluation and decision making and as a source for planning and action.

2.7. PROGRAMME EVALUATION.

There have been increasing calls from several studies for programme evaluation in preparing the workforce for the demands of the changing workplace (Galagan 1994; Carnevale, Gainer and Villet 1990; Swanson 1987). Sharing the same view Brinkerhoff (1989: 1) claims that the evaluation could be "the key to the success of training in the future". In order to produce efficient and employable graduates higher education institutions have to evaluate their ABET programmes. Mouton's (2001) logical model suggests that an educational programme that is intended to have a relationship to its industry base or workplace needs is evaluated according to conceptualization, programme design, Implementation and Impact of the programme. According to Asher (1976) most of the evaluation models now used grew out of the formative and summative, process and product,

evaluation models. He claims that the CIPP model name comes from the initial letters of the following four types of evaluation functions which constitute the evaluation method: "Context, input, process and product" (Asher 1976: 206). This study will be based on Mouton's (2001) logical model of evaluation.

2.8 EMPLOYABILITY OF DIPLOMATES.

There is a growing body of literature on employability of graduates. Harvey (2003), together with the Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team (ESECT) and the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN), examine the relationship between employability and higher education in England. The following conclusions can be drawn from Harvey's work:

- *Employability is about developing a range of attributes and abilities, not just job-getting skills.*
- *Employability is not something distinct from learning and pedagogy but grows out of good learning.*
- *What employers are looking for are flexible graduates who can add value when necessary but can also help transform the organisation in the face of change.*
- *Higher education is rapidly developing approaches for enhancing the employability of their students*
- *Increasingly higher education institutions are developing an integrated, strategic approach to employability issues.*

The literature on international work on employability could inform thinking about what is done in higher education institutions especially with regard to the ABET programme.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

As stated in the first chapter the primary purpose of the research was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the National Diploma in ABET with the objective of offering guidelines that could improve its effectiveness in the ABET world of work. In order to achieve the objective mentioned above data collection and production methods were used. This chapter analyses and reflects upon these methods and in addition, examines data analysis and interpretation as well as the limitations of the study.

Since my evaluation of the National Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training was shaped by debates on evaluation research in this study, it seems appropriate to start this chapter by reflecting on this debate.

3.2 DEBATE ON EVALUATION RESEARCH

The main focus of the evaluation studies is the intervention or programme that is being evaluated. Rutman (1984:10) believes that programme evaluation entails the "use of scientific methods to measure the implementation and outcomes of programmes for decision-making purposes". He also explains that the term "programme" is any intervention or set of activities that attempt to meet some recognized social need or to solve an identified problem. Rossie and Freeman

(1993:5) also define evaluation research as reflecting social scientists' increasing "desire to make an actual difference in the world". Their definition of evaluation research as "the systematic application of social research procedures of assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation and utility of social intervention programmes" portrays their desire to change things. Debates on evaluation research clearly show that programme evaluation research has become an area of specialization within the broader terrain of applied social research.

Evaluation research has been utilized in a variety of approaches, philosophies and traditions which are summarized in the following section.

3.3. EVALUATION RESEARCH APPROACHES AND TRADITIONS

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001) the following are the three main research traditions in evaluation research:

- The experimental tradition which finds its philosophical roots in positivism
- The naturalistic or qualitative tradition which has its roots in the interpretivist paradigm.
- The participatory or empowerment tradition which has clear affinities with the critical metatheory.

3.3.1 The experimental tradition

The experimental tradition dominated evaluation research in the 1960's and 1970s. A variety of experimental designs in studying social life was used by the researchers. These experiments were about taking action and observing the

consequences of that action. A group of subjects is usually selected and something is done to them. The effect of what has been done to them is then observed. The objective of the experiment and evaluation might be to determine how long it actually takes for the therapy to be effective.

The three important components that are used in the experimental tradition are independent and dependent variables, pre-testing and post-testing, and experimental and control groups (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

3.3.2 The naturalistic or qualitative tradition

Many theorists, as an alternative to the dominant experimental tradition, have used the qualitative paradigm. Each of the theorists gave this paradigm a different name. Patton (1990) labeled this tradition as qualitative evaluation. Williams (1986) called it a naturalistic evaluation, and Guba and Lincoln (1981) called it a fourth generation evaluation. Qualitative or naturalistic evaluation approaches are believed to share all the fundamental epistemological and methodological principles of qualitative research (Babbie and Mouton 2001:357).

Babbie and Mouton (2001:309) list the following ways that distinguish qualitative evaluation studies from quantitative evaluation studies.

- Research is conducted in the natural setting of social actors.
- Qualitative evaluation research emphasizes process rather than outcome.
- The actor's perspective (the "insider" view) is emphasized.

- The primary aim is in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events.
- Understanding social action in terms of its specific context is more than attempting to generalize to some theoretical population.
- The research process is often inductive in its approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories.

3.3.3 The participatory or empowerment tradition

The participatory/ empowerment evaluation approaches share the basic principles and assumptions of the participatory action research paradigm. The key differences between participatory action research and other research traditions (quantitative and qualitative) lie in the location of power in the research process. People who are being studied play a role in setting the agendas, participate in data gathering and analysis and control the use of outcomes. In other words these people share ownership of the research enterprise (Maclure and Bassey, 1991; McTaggart , 1991).

This kind of research originated in many fields which include agriculture, social work, education, health, housing and community development, as a response to the realization that the knowledge production aspirations of the academics did not inform social practice and the fight for social justice (Fals-Borda 1988:97). This led to the development of so-called liberationist research methodologies that had political goals and commitments of liberating and empowering those who were being studied. People were encouraged to conduct research on the practices that affect their lives in their own contexts.

The participatory evaluation tradition also came as a response to the criticism that evaluation results were not being used optimally and that a key problem was the lack of involvement and participation of all stakeholders in the evaluation design as well as in the implementation of the evaluation study. Referring to Brunner and Guzman (1989:9), Babbie and Mouton (2001) write: "These evaluations reflected the worldview and priorities of the sponsoring agencies and denied any meaningful input from the main actors in the development projects". Responding to the "imperialist" and "colonial" forms of evaluation studies undertaken in Third World countries, *various scholars developed an alternative evaluation approach that made local project directors, facilitators and beneficiaries to assess either the viability of proposed projects or the results of ongoing ones.*

In this participatory evaluation tradition the intended beneficiaries of the intervention, together with the evaluators, decide when an evaluation should take place, what should be evaluated, how the evaluation should be carried out, and what should be done with the results. The evaluation is an educational process through which social groups produce action-oriented knowledge about their reality *and reach consensus about action to be taken. The evaluation is also a learning process that allows the facilitators and professional evaluators to coach other members of the evaluation team until they become knowledgeable, efficient and autonomous as the project matures. In other words participatory and empowerment evaluation involves all the participants who are involved in the programme in a collaborative manner as co-evaluators. The idea is that through this involvement more empowered and emancipated communities could be produced.*

3.4. THE RESEARCHER'S POSITION

In this study, qualitative evaluation approaches were used to evaluate the ABET Programme which is designed for adult educators who are expected to facilitate learning in different workplaces. The choice of qualitative evaluation approach was more appropriate for the study, since the research was conducted in the natural setting of National Diploma in ABET employed diplomates with the aim of evaluating the National Diploma in ABET with regard to the demands of the ABET world of work. This evaluation approach also made it possible for me to evaluate the teaching process of the National Diploma in ABET diplomates as well as the planning and implementation process of their training programme. In other words the emphasis was more on the evaluation of the process rather than the outcome. What also made qualitative evaluation approaches appropriate to the study was that the purpose of evaluating the National Diploma in ABET was formative and developmental in nature (improvement-orientated) rather than summative (judgement-oriented).

3.5. THE RESEARCH GROUP

According to Cohen and Manion (1989), a sample is the population upon which the study focuses attention. The research group or sample used in this study consisted of two lecturers in the National Diploma in ABET, four employers of ABET diplomates and seven employed diplomates of the National Diploma in ABET. This sample size was appropriate for the purpose of the study which was to evaluate the National Diploma in ABET with regard to the demands of the ABET world of work in the diplomates' different workplaces. In other words, a purposive sample

was used. The used small sample size served the purpose of the study as the aim of this research was not to generalize the findings.

The participants were selected on conditions that they obtained their ABET diploma from the researched institution and they were employed in one of the researched workplaces at the time of the interviews. Other participants had to be either employers of ABET diplomates or lecturers who were involved in teaching on the ABET diploma in the researched higher education institution. The lecturers had to be involved in the conceptualization and design of the ABET programme.

3.6. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

As stated earlier in the study, the qualitative evaluation approach was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Diploma in ABET with regard to meeting the work needs of ABET diplomates and the demands of the workplace. After finding out that there are similarities in Rossie and Freeman's (1993) evaluation framework and Mouton's (2001) logical model I decided to use Mouton's (2001) evaluation frame work which is described as follows:

Analysis related to:

- * The conceptualization and design of interventions.
- * Programme implementation.
- * Programme effectiveness and efficiency.

Posavac and Carey (1992:11) explain the term "logic model" by stating that there is a logical sequence in the evaluation questions: "Without measuring need,

programs cannot be planned rationally; without effective implementation successful outcomes cannot result from the program; and without valued outcomes, there is no reason to worry about cost effectiveness”.

The steps in the logic model of evaluation and their alignment with the activities of the present study are described in following section.

3.6.1. The conceptualization and design of interventions

Attention here is focused on the aims of the programme. An attempt is made to find out whether the programme is designed in such a way that it addresses identified social needs adequately (Rossi and Freeman 1993:35). A social problem is defined and specified in such a way that the conceptualization and design of appropriate interventions is maximized.

In this study the focal point of evaluation was on how the National Diploma in ABET was conceptualized to meet the demands of the employed ABET diplomates in their world work. The lecturers in their teacher training institution were interviewed (Appendix 3).

The programme of the National Diploma in ABET was also evaluated in terms of its design. Attention was focused on how the programme was planned to be taught and on how the assessment of on-site learning was planned. The aim of evaluation was to find out the extent to which the on-site practice teaching was integrated in the teaching and learning processes of the diploma. It was hoped that the results of the investigation would throw light on how the ABET programme was structured.

In addition to the interviews with the lecturers, the curriculum documents were also consulted (Appendix 4) in order to establish how the exit level outcomes relate to the work needs and whether assessments of the prospective ABET educators required work related environmental issues to be taken into account or not. The design of the programme was also evaluated in terms of

3.6.2. Programme implementation

Babbie and Mouton (2001:341) point out that a programme is implemented in a certain context or setting once its design and development has been completed. Questions that are usually raised are as follows:

- * Is the programme being implemented as designed?
- * Are services delivered as originally intended?

In this study the most important reason was to get evidence that, what was deemed desirable and crucial for employed National diploma in ABET diplomates to cope with the demands of their world of work. Interviews were conducted with both the lecturers (Appendix 3) and diplomates of the National Diploma in ABET (Appendix 1) who are currently teaching at different workplaces in order to find out how the National Diploma in ABET was implemented to meet their work needs. The interview questions also attempted to find out the extent to which the lecturers were interested in including work-related issues when assessing teaching practice. An attempt was also made to establish whether the programme of the National Diploma in ABET was implemented according to plan.

3.6.3 – Assessment of programme effectiveness and efficiency

Focus usually shifts to the outcomes of the programme once it has been established that a programme has been implemented according to plan. Babbie and Mouton (221:341) point out that the outcomes could entail behavioural changes (more knowledgeable students), attitudinal changes and better services. These authors further claim that programme outcome studies aim to establish the relative success of an intervention by investigating whether the intended outcomes of the programme materialized or not.

In this study an attempt was made to evaluate the impact of the National Diploma in ABET. The diplomates of the National Diploma in ABET who are employed as ABET educators were interviewed to find out whether the National Diploma in ABET prepared them to be able to deal with the demands of their ABET world of work effectively and efficiently (Appendix1). The employers of the ABET diplomates were also interviewed in order to find out if the diplomates were effective and efficient in teaching adults in their workplaces (Appendix 2).

3.7. DATA COLLECTION AND PRODUCTION METHODS

Before the interviews took place, I sought permission from the Research Unit of the Western Cape Education Department, ABET centre managers and ABET NGO managers to execute the investigation which was granted on the following conditions:

- * No disruption of normal classes
- * No use of any materials that is the property of WCED, NGO or Industry without a written request.

Interviews were conducted in May and June 2003 at the following sites:

- Two community centers in Khayelitsha
- One Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
- One industry , and
- One higher education institution

As stated in the first chapter, the four research sites selected for the purpose of the study were different workplaces that represent the contextual nature of the ABET world of work. These sites offer ABET literacy and numeracy classes for the working adults and provide job opportunities for the ABET diplomates. They were selected in order to get responses from different contexts with regard to the challenges and work needs. The responses from different sites would enable the researcher to compare experiences of ABET diplomates who work at the different sites as well as the comments of both ABET diplomates and their employers in relation to the match between teaching and learning practices in higher education and demands of the workplace. The sites were selected because of their long periods of establishment and they are amongst the well known centres with high pass rates in the province. The only higher education institution selected, was the first tertiary institution that offered a three year full-time National Diploma in ABET in 1995 and the ABET diplomates who were interviewed received their diplomas from this institution.

The researcher made use of data narrative production methods in the context of teaching and learning. To find out how the programme of the National Diploma in ABET was designed and implemented to prepare the employed diplomates for the workplace; the researcher interviewed two lecturers from one institution. Seven ABET diplomates who were employed as educators in four ABET workplaces mentioned above, were also interviewed. Four of these educators were from the ABET centres run by the WCED, two were from one NGO and one was from an industry that offers classes for ABET learners. The focus of the interviews with the diplomates was on the manner in which the diploma was implemented and the extent to which the diploma assisted them to cope with the demands of the workplace. One employer was interviewed in each workplace. The total number of interviews was thirteen and the interviews were both narrative and semi-structured. An explanation for the reason why I used narrative and semi structured interviews is discussed in following section.

3.7.1 Narrative interviews

There have been arguments in support of narrative inquiry (Gough 1998, Klausner 1998). The reconstructed stories are not only regarded as a fundamental educational tool but are also seen as having the potential to encourage self-reflection. Basch (1987:11) states that the narrative interview has several advantages in comparison to other qualitative techniques of collecting data because it offers researchers an opportunity to:

- Deal with complicated subject matter; gather a deal of in depth information.
- Obtain reactions from respondents in a relatively short time.

- Clarify responses; and improvise to pursue unexpected but potentially valuable lines of questioning.

In this study, employed diplomates of the National Diploma in ABET, their employers and lecturers, were asked to narrate how teaching and learning took place, how the National diploma in ABET helped them to cope with the challenges of their world of work, and how the diplomates performed in the workplace. The aim of using narrative interviews was to gain a deeper understanding from the responses on the efficiency of the ABET diploma in assisting and providing the students with skills that will help them cope with challenges of their world of work.

3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen and Manoin (1989) state that semi-structured interviews are less formal and enable the interviewer to modify the sequence of the questions, change wording, explain questions and add to the questions. They also make it easy for the interviewer to probe for more specific answers to clarify misunderstandings. Elliot (1991) recommends that a semi-structured interview should begin with the unstructured part in order to establish a climate in which the interviewee could feel *comfortable and respond* to the questions. In this study the structured interviews created a relaxed environment and generated responses that were useful for the purpose of the study.

3.7.3 Curriculum documents

The curriculum documents for the National Diploma in ABET programme were requested from the institution and consulted with the intention of establishing the way in which the programme was planned or designed and to find out if it was planned and implemented as it was intended for. I hoped that the information gathered from these documents would also reflect the exit level outcomes that would possibly include the ability of the educators to teach ABET efficiently and effectively.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

According to Bell (1993) collected data mean very little until they are captured, recoded, analyzed and interpreted. Since the naturalistic or qualitative evaluation approach was selected for the purpose of this study, the analysis of data was characteristic of qualitative research in that it was interpretative. A nonmathematical process of interpretation was carried out for the purpose of discovering relationships in raw data and the relationships were then organized into themes (thematic analysis). The reason for choosing qualitative data analysis methods was the nature of my research problem. My research attempted to evaluate the National Diploma in ABET and its impact on ABET diplomates in their ABET world of work which would not be easy to understand through quantitative research methods. The responses of the lecturers and the employed National Diploma in ABET diplomates to the interviews were recoded and summarized. Open coding that was used included conceptualizing, classification and

discovering of categories that enabled me to identify emerging patterns from the raw data.

3.9 DATA VERIFICATION

Bell (1993) suggests that whatever procedure for collecting data is selected, it should always be examined critically to assess to what extent it is likely to be reliable and valid. In this study validity and reliability were ensured through the use of a variety of data sources and data generating methods. The use of multiple research methods has been mentioned as one strategy of promoting qualitative research validity (Burke 1997:292-293). In order to improve validity of this research I compared data relating to the conceptualization and design of National Diploma in ABET which was gathered through the use of interviews with ABET lecturers, and information collected from the curriculum documents for the National Diploma in ABET programme.

With regard to the implementation of the National Diploma in ABET, the responses of the employers and employed ABET diplomates to the interviews were also compared with the lecturers' responses to the interviews. For the investigation on the effectiveness and efficiency of the diploma, the responses of employed ABET diplomates regarding their performance in the workplace were also compared with the responses of their employers. The purpose of comparing data was to find similarities and differences in responses and curriculum documents.

3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study were related to the following factors:

1. The NGOs who encouraged their employees to register for the National Diploma in ABET were no longer in existence. The demise of the NGOs made it impossible for the researcher to have a broad overview of the employers' responses as the interviewed employers were not part of the conceptualization and design process. The researcher would have loved to interview the employers who were part of the conceptualization and design process
2. Some appointments for the interviews with ABET practitioners were not possible to carry out because some of the diplomates were preparing their ABET learners for their mid-year examinations. The researcher had planned to interview at least ten diplomates but ended up interviewing seven diplomates.

The results from the data gathering procedures discussed in this chapter are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN ABET BY EMPLOYERS, LECTURERS AND EMPLOYED ABET DIPLOMATES

4.1 INTRODUCTION:

As mentioned in the previous chapter the purpose of the study was to evaluate the National Diploma in ABET with regard to its effectiveness in meeting the demands of the ABET world of work. This was done by means of interviews with employed ABET diplomates, their employers and lecturers. In addition the curriculum documents of the National Diploma in ABET were consulted.

This chapter presents the research findings that were derived from interviews and perusal of curriculum documents. The first section focuses attention on the responses of employed ABET diplomates. The second and third sections deal with the responses of the employers and lecturers respectively. The last section documents the research findings from the curriculum documents.

4.2. RESPONSES OF ABET DIPLOMATES ON THE NATIONAL DIPLOMA AND THEIR WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

4.2.1. Enrolment for the National Diploma in ABET

The first question aimed at finding out the year of enrolment for the National Diploma in ABET. The years of enrolment, according to the different interviewed participants, varied from 1995 to 1999. Two diplomates stated that they enrolled for the diploma in 1995 when the diploma was offered for the first time by the researched higher education institution. Three diplomates enrolled for the diploma in 1998 while two of them mentioned 1999 as their year of enrolment.

4.2.2. Reasons for choosing to enroll for the National Diploma in ABET

When the diplomates were asked to give reasons for choosing a career path in ABET, the two diplomates who enrolled for the diploma in 1995 indicated that they had to obtain a qualification in ABET as they were ABET practitioners who were already employed in the ABET field in 1994. They further mentioned that since there was a need to professionalize the ABET sector, it was suggested to them that they enroll for the National diploma in ABET in order to obtain a qualification and be regarded as well equipped to facilitate ABET learning. The qualification would also mean a salary increase. In this case the students were encouraged and recommended by their employers.

Some of the diplomates who enrolled for the diploma in 1998 and 1999 stated that they could not be admitted to the courses of their choices and the ABET qualification was

suggested to them as the only programme that could accommodate them. They were promised that after a year they would be able to change to the courses of their choice. They found out later that it was easier said than done as they found themselves in a situation where they were forced to continue with the diploma they were not interested in. Some of the diplomates mentioned that they enrolled for the diploma after they failed other courses believing that the National Diploma in ABET was an easy course.

4.2.3 Work experience at the time of enrolment.

The third question attempted to find out whether the diplomates had work experience or not at the time of enrolling for the diploma. The majority of the participants indicated that they had no experience in facilitating adult learning at the time of registration for the qualification. Before 1998, the admission criteria for the National Diploma in ABET required the candidates to have an experience in the ABET field, but at the beginning of 1998 the students who obtained senior certificates were admitted even if they did not have experience in the ABET field.

4.2.4 Duration of on-site learning or practice teaching

The participants were asked about the duration of their practice teaching when they were still enrolled for the diploma. Those who were employed at the time of enrolment explained that from the beginning of 1995 to the end of 1997, they practiced their teaching whilst they were working in their adult learning centres for three days a week and two hours per day. Those who enrolled for the diploma in 1998 and 1999 stated that on-site learning or practice teaching, started on their second and third year of study for only six weeks a year.

4.2.5 Assessment of on-site learning or the practice teaching

When the participants were asked about the way their on-site learning was assessed, the majority of them indicated that the lecturers who were involved in the teaching of the National Diploma in ABET visited adult learning centres and assessed the performance of the students. There were also mentors who were employed specifically for the assessment of on-site learning in the selected sites. Some of the participants stated that the ABET employers in different ABET centres where they worked, were also involved in the assessment of the students.

4.2.6 Relevant and useful subjects of the diploma

The participants were asked to mention the subjects of the diploma that were relevant and useful in the workplace. Almost all the participants mentioned Literacy, Numeracy, Adult education and Practice teaching as the most relevant and useful subjects in their world of work.

4.2.7 Effectiveness of the diploma in the workplace

When the diplomates were asked if the diploma prepared them well to perform all the duties of the workplace, the majority of them stated that the diploma prepared them for some of the duties but not for all. They also pointed out that if they had been given more time to go out to the learning sites to do teaching practice, they would have been in better positions to deal with some of the demands of their workplace.

4.2.8 - Difficult duties to perform in the workplace

The eighth question was an attempt to find out which workplace duties were difficult for the diplomates to perform. One of the duties that most of the employed diplomates find difficult to perform is the writing up of learners' progress reports that are very much important in their ABET field. Another challenge that was mentioned was the performance of administrative duties. Some of the participants also pointed out that teaching mixed-ability levels in one class was difficult for them. Teaching Numeracy or integrating Numeracy with Literacy when teaching adult learners requires a skill which the participants felt it was not fully developed during their training for the teaching diploma and that makes it difficult for them to cope in the workplace.

The majority of the participants also mentioned that it was difficult for them to understand how to interpret and make use of the Unit Standards and outcomes when preparing their teaching lessons. Carrying out the learners' continuous assessment was also one of the difficult duties mentioned by the diplomates. The participants also mentioned that it was difficult for them to prepare the projects of the learners for formative assessment.

The participants also stated that the National Diploma in ABET did not prepare them well enough to integrate literacy with numeracy when they facilitate adult learning. They explained that it was difficult for them to do integration until they received some training through the workshops that were conducted by their employers. The participants who enrolled for the ABET diploma whilst they were employed as facilitators in the ABET field, stated that they received training on integration from their employers even before they enrolled for the National diploma in ABET.

4.3. RESPONSES OF THE EMPLOYERS.

The following section focuses on the responses of the employers of ABET diplomates.

4.3.1 Involvement of employers in the conceptualization and design of the National Diploma in ABET.

The employers of ABET diplomates were asked about their involvement in the conceptualization and design of the curriculum for the National Diploma in ABET. Almost all the employers who were interviewed indicated that they were not involved in the conceptualization and design of the National Diploma in ABET due to the fact that they had no ABET practitioners as they did not offer ABET classes for their workers at the time of the conceptualization and design process. They further stated that their involvement in the planning of this programme would have made a big difference to them in order for them to understand what to expect from their employees.

4.3.2. Involvement of the employers in the implementation of the diploma

The following section presents the responses of the employers on their involvement in the implementation of the ABET diploma.

When the employers were asked if they were involved in the implementation of the ABET programme they again indicated that none of them were involved in the implementation phase of the National Diploma in ABET. The only time that they were involved was during practice teaching when they had to accommodate the students in

their adult learning centres. It was mentioned that the involvement of the employers in the implementation of the National Diploma in ABET was crucial.

4.3.3. Reflections of employers on the performance of ABET diplomates in the workplace

The employers of ABET diplomates were asked if the diploma prepared their employees to perform all the duties of the workplace. The responses from three ABET employers indicated that they were not entirely satisfied with the performance of the ABET diplomates in their workplaces. On the other hand, one employer voiced his satisfaction with the quality of work the ABET diplomates produced.

When the employers were asked to give examples of the duties that were difficult for ABET diplomats to perform well, the majority of them mentioned weaknesses in writing comprehensive reports, performing administrative functions and integrating Numeracy and Literacy.

4.4. RESPONSES OF THE LECTURERS.

The following section presents the responses of the lectures to the interviews (Appendix 3).

4.4.1. Conceptualization and design of the National Diploma in ABET

The responses below refer to four questions that aimed at finding out how the ABET programme was conceptualized and designed.

4.4.1.1 Reasons for offering the National Diploma in ABET

The first question was an attempt to investigate why the National Diploma in ABET was offered in Higher Education. The responses from both lecturers indicated that there was a need for well-trained educators who understood how to teach adults as Adult Basic Education was introduced for the first time after the South African democratic elections in 1994. They further stated that the diploma was responsive to the needs of the South African people whose low literacy levels had to be raised.

4.4.1.2 The target population for the National Diploma in ABET

The second question attempted to find out how the diploma was planned to attract students. The lecturers stated that when the diploma was conceptualized, the target population consisted of the practitioners who were already working in the ABET field. Most of the ABET practitioners were employed by the NGOs at that time.

4.4.1.3 How the diploma was conceptualized to meet work needs

When the lecturers were asked how the diploma was conceptualized to meet work needs they stated that the plan was to allow the practitioners who were already facilitating adult learning to do practice teaching or on-site learning in their workplaces and attend classes during the day, twice a week. The lecturers further explained that arrangements were made with employers to enable ABET practitioners to attend classes. Assessment of on-site learning was planned to be a joint intervention between the employers and the lecturers and the main focus was on the following four subjects:

Practice Teaching, Adult Education, Literacy and Numeracy Teaching since adult learners in the workplace were learning Literacy and Numeracy.

4.4.1.4 Participants in the conceptualization of the ABET programme

The fourth question aimed at finding out who was involved in the conceptualization of the ABET programme. The information gathered from the two interviewed ABET lecturers, indicated that they were both involved in the conceptualization of the ABET programme in 1995. It was also mentioned that these lecturers also participated in the implementation phase of the ABET programme. Since the facilitation of adult learning only took place in NGOs at that time, employers in industry and government were not invited to participate.

4.4.2. The implementation of the ABET Programme

The following section outlines the responses of the lecturers that relate to the current implementation of the ABET programme.

4.4.2.1 Current admission criteria

When the lecturers were asked who was admitted to the ABET programme at the time of the interviews, they stated that any student who had obtained the Senior Certificate was admitted to the programme, even if the student had no work experience. The lecturers explained that the change in the admission criteria started in January 1996 when the part-time programme was changed to a full-time programme. More and more

students were admitted to the full-time programme and more new subjects were introduced.

4.4.2.2 Current implementation of the ABET programme

Explaining how the ABET programme was currently implemented, the lecturers mentioned that the ABET programme was offered on a full-time basis and that more formal subjects were offered in lecture rooms including practice teaching. Time allocated for practice teaching was 70 minutes per week and the time spent on on-site teaching and learning was only eight hours per week for six weeks per year. Due to difficulties related to the placement of many full-time students the time for practice teaching was further reduced to three weeks per year. The employers became less involved in the assessment of on-site learning as the students were no longer the employees.

4.5 DATA COLLECTED FROM ABET CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

ABET curriculum documents were consulted in order to find out how the programme was conceptualized and designed. The exit level outcomes of the programme as well as their relationship to work needs were examined.

4.5.1. Exit level outcomes of the ABET Programme

The exit level outcomes for the NQF6 (National Diploma in ABET) are outlined as follows:

- Ability to plan and organize a well structured programme or series of learning events, which includes producing a rationale for the programme, identifying the human, material and information resources to be required, and calculating and monitoring costs.
- Facilitate a programme of learning using a range of teaching methods and techniques, implementing the principles of OBE and encouraging learner participation and confidence.
- Identify learners who have special learning, counseling or health needs, refer these learners to relevant services and take appropriate action within the learning situation including responding to problems of absenteeism and drop-out.
- Adapting existing materials and develop their own learning aids using various available sources.
- Produce, implement and evaluate assessment instruments and conduct appropriate follow-up after an assessment event.
- Undertake basic research and liaison relevant to the learning situation
- Identify the literacy, language and numeracy requirements in a specific learning context, affirm the literacy, language and mathematics skills of learners or make decisions to refer learners to relevant programmes.

- Promote the lifelong learning of themselves and others by applying knowledge of the NQF and ETD policy to own context

4.5.2 Relationship of the exit levels to work needs

The exit levels mentioned above relate well to the needs of the workplace as they require the diplomates to facilitate adult learning in an effective and efficient way.

4.5.3 Plan for teaching the ABET Programme

The perusal of the curriculum documents indicated that the plan for implementing the diploma was to use workplaces for on-site learning or practice teaching (that is, the practical component of the diploma) and lecture rooms for the theoretical component of the diploma.

4.5.4 Plan for assessing on-site learning

From the curriculum documents, it became clear that assessment of on-site learning was planned to be a joint intervention between employers and lecturers as the students spent most of their time with their employers.

The research findings discussed above highlight some problems with the conceptualization, design and implementation of the ABET National Diploma which are summarized in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in chapter three, the data were produced through the use of interviews with ABET diplomates, employers of ABET diplomates, lecturers in the ABET programme and the perusal of the ABET curriculum documents. The aim of this chapter is to summarize the research findings as presented in chapter 4 and put forward some conclusions and recommendations. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is the summary of the findings and conclusions while the second section deals with recommendations.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following section focuses attention on the similarities in responses to the interviews with students, employers and lecturers. Data collected by means of curriculum documents was also compared and similarities with interviews identified. The similarities that were identified are divided into the following three sections:

- Conceptualization and design of the ABET programme
- Implementation of the ABET programme, and
- Impact or effectiveness of the ABET programme in the workplace

5.2.1 Similarities between curriculum documents of the National Diploma in ABET and the responses of the students, lecturers and employers with regard to the conceptualization and design of the ABET programme

The examination of data gathered from different sources mentioned above indicated that the National Diploma in ABET was conceptualized and designed to meet the needs of ABET practitioners and working adult learners who had low levels of literacy. The responses from the lecturers, employers and the students who registered in 1995 also revealed that the diploma was designed to meet the needs of the workplace by enabling ABET practitioners in the workplace to further their studies and become professionals in the ABET field. The perusal of the curriculum documents for the diploma also indicated that the introduction of the diploma aimed at raising low literacy levels in the workplace by producing competent ABET facilitators. The diploma was planned in such a way that the students would do on-site learning or practice teaching in their workplaces, thus giving more time to the development of facilitation skills.

The interviewed lecturers stated that they were involved in the conceptualization and design of the ABET programme and that the employers who encouraged the students to register for the diploma were also involved. The employers who

indicated that they were not involved in the conceptualization and design of the ABET programme were not offering ABET classes for their adult workers and therefore had no ABET practitioners when the ABET programme was conceptualized and designed.

It can be concluded that the conceptualization and design of the National Diploma in ABET was good as it was responsive to a particular national need. Its objective was to cater for the needs of working ABET practitioners and enable them to be effective and efficient in their ABET world of work and its plan was to provide opportunities for the students to spend more time in the workplace.

This conclusion supports Rossi and Freeman's (1993) suggestion that a programme should be designed in such a way that it "addresses an identified social need adequately" (Rossi and Freeman, 1993: 35). It is also in line with increasing global and national calls for the development of teaching and learning programmes that enable diplomates to be effective in the world of work and society (Teichler, 2000; Foster and Stephenson 1998; Garrick and Kirkpatrick 1998; Teichler 1998; Department of Education, 1997; Department of Education, 2001).

5.2.2 Similarities between the responses of the students, lecturers and employers with regard to the implementation of the ABET programme

The following section presents two phases of implementing the ABET programme.

The first implementation phase was from January 1995 to December 1995 and the second phase was from January 1996 to the present. In both phases attention is focused on the following three areas:

- Target population
- The teaching process
- Assessment of on-site learning or practice teaching

5.2.2.1 Target population

The responses from both lecturers and students who had registered for the diploma in 1995 gave an indication that from January 1995 to December 1995 only working ABET practitioners who were teaching Literacy and Numeracy in ABET workplaces were admitted to the ABET programme.

The responses of the students who enrolled for the diploma in 1998 and 1999 and the lecturers highlighted that there was a change in the target population. From January 1996 to the present anyone who had obtained a Senior Certificate was admitted into the ABET programme regardless of the ABET work experience.

5.2.2.2 The teaching process

The responses of both lecturers and students indicated that the students who registered in 1995 attended classes part-time as they were working in their adult

learning centres. Attention was focused on the teaching of Literacy, Numeracy, Adult Education and Practice Teaching.

The teaching process changed from January 1996. Part-time classes were changed to full-time classes and practice teaching or on-site learning that was designed to take place in the workplace was taught in class. More subjects that were less relevant to the ABET workplace were introduced.

5.2.2.3 Assessment of on-site learning

The students and lecturers pointed out that on-site learning was assessed by both lecturers and employers in 1995 as the students were employees who spent more time in real class situation in the workplace.

When the teaching process changed in 1996, the employers became less involved in the assessment of on-site teaching as the students spent more time in lecture rooms. At first the time allocated for on-site learning was three weeks in April and three weeks in August but later it was reduced to three weeks per year. This meant that the employers had less contact with the students.

It can be concluded that although the ABET programme was implemented as designed in 1995 it was not implemented as designed from 1996 onwards and services were not delivered as originally intended (Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

The time allocated for on-site learning in the full-time ABET programme is insufficient and not all the relevant stakeholders are involved in the assessment of on-site learning. The reduction of time allocated for on site learning is a cause for concern because the development of the teaching skill is a process that needs a substantial amount of time. In addition the involvement of employers in the assessment of students is crucial as it could add value and provide more input that could enhance the improvement of the diploma, hence the need for greater co-operation between the workplace, society and the higher education sector is emphasized (Lundall, 2002). Supporting the same view Hirschham, Gilmore and Newell's (1989) argue that the training based on the separation of the training encounter from the natural world of work is viewed as unsuited for helping people learn new roles and skills necessary for the workplace. Harvey (2003) also advocates for collaborative efforts when he states that higher education institutions should develop an integrated strategic approach to employability issues as the students have to work with employers after obtaining their diplomas.

5.2.3 Similarities between the responses of the diplomates and employers with regard to the impact or effectiveness of the National Diploma in the workplace

From the responses of employers and diplomates in the workplace it was possible to outline the following summary of the findings:

- The majority of the ABET diplomates find it difficult to cope with their employers' expectations regarding the structuring of lesson plans. It is difficult for them to understand the unit standards.

- It is difficult for most of ABET diplomates to understand the learning outcomes and that makes it impossible for them to design their learning activities to assist learners to achieve the required outcomes. The employers stated that the dropping of class attendance is caused by confusing learning activities designed by the diplomates who find it difficult to assist adult learners to achieve the required outcomes.
- The ABET diplomates find it difficult to assist their learners with the compiling of their portfolios which are part of learners formative assessment.
- Since it is difficult for the ABET diplomates to facilitate learning towards the achievement of learning outcomes they struggle to assess the learning process. According to the employers, the learners' pass rate is decreasing due to lack of assessment skills of the employed diplomates.
- It is also difficult for ABET diplomates to select, adapt and develop suitable and relevant teaching materials for their learners.

Therefore it can be concluded that ABET diplomates experience difficulties in the workplace and that the diploma does not entirely prepare the diplomates to perform all the duties of the workplace. The weaknesses in the diploma are due

to the fact that the diploma was not implemented as it was conceptualized and designed. This highlights the need and importance for continuous reflection and evaluation of programmes as recommended by Richards (1990) that reflection should be done as it leads to improvement in terms of institutional practice and competence levels of ABET diplomates. It has also been suggested that in order to produce efficient and employable graduates higher education institutions have to evaluate their programmes (Galagan, 1994; Carnevale, Gainer and Villet, 1990; Brinkerhoff, 1989; Swanson, 1987).

5.3. THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the conclusion that on-site learning is the most important component of the National diploma in ABET and that collaborative efforts between the lecturers and employers are crucial. This section recommends the following two ways of implementing the ABET programme that could strength collaborative efforts between workplaces and higher education and improve competence levels of ABET diplomates.

5.3.1 LEARNERSHIPS

A learnership is a mode of delivering a learning programme which combines work based experience with structured learning. This means that a person who completes learnership will be equipped to demonstrate the practical application of competencies such as, skills, knowledge, values and attitudes in an employment

context (ETDP SETA, 2001). The details of the learnership programme have been discussed in Chapter 2 (2.2.2.1).

Although Young (2003) has identified problems related to the implementation of the NQF, the learnership mode of delivery is worth trying if the impact or effectiveness of the full-time ABET programme in the workplace is minimal. As Symes and McIntyre (2000) suggest, work-based learning should be seen as a cause for rethinking our educational institutions and educational practice in general.

5.3.2 SERVICE LEARNING

Service-learning is another way that could improve the delivery of the ABET programme. As stated in Chapter 2 (2.2.2.2), service-learning is a "course-based, credit bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets the identified community needs (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995: 12).

Service-learning builds partnerships between communities, higher education institutions, public sector, non-governmental and private sector. As stated in Chapter 2 the integration of service-learning in the ABET programme could enable prospective adult educators to spend more time in developing their own practical skills which in turn could lead to community development. Thus service-learning

could develop a variety of skills, values and attitudes in students, thereby preparing them to be efficient and effective in the world of work and to participate as active, responsible citizens in building their country.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ABET DIPLOMATES

1. When did you enroll for the National Diploma in ABET? (Year)
.....
2. What caused you to enroll for the diploma?
.....
.....
3. What work experience did you have when you enrolled for the diploma?
.....
.....
4. For how long did you do on-site learning/practice teaching when you were still enrolled for the diploma?
.....
5. Who assessed you for on-site learning?
.....
.....
6. Which subjects of the diploma have been relevant and useful in the workplace?
.....
.....
7. Do you think that the diploma has prepared you well to perform all the duties of the workplace?
.....
8. Which workplace duties are difficult for you to perform? (What problems or challenges do you face in the workplace?)
.....
.....

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS OF ABET DIPLOMATES

1. Were you involved in the conceptualization and design (planning) of the National Diploma in ABET?

.....

2. Were you involved in the implementation of the ABET Programme?

.....

3. Do you think that the National Diploma in ABET has prepared ABET diplomates well to perform all the duties of the workplace? (or cope with the demands of the workplace)?

.....

4. Give examples of the duties that are difficult for ABET diplomates to perform well.

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APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE LECTURERS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE CONCEPTUALIZATION, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABET PROGRAMME.

Conceptualisation and design of the ABET Programme:

1. Why was the National Diploma in ABET offered in Higher Education?
2. Who was the target population?
3. How was the programme conceptualized and designed to meet work needs?
4. Who was involved in the conceptualization and design of the programme?

Implementation of the ABET Programme

5. Who is admitted to the course at present? (Admission criteria)
6. How is the ABET programme taught currently?
7. How is on-site learning/practice teaching assessed?

**APPENDIX 4: POINTS TO BE CHECKED FROM THE CURRICULUM
DOCUMENTS OF THE NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN ABET.**

Design of the ABET Programme:

- What are the exit level outcomes?
- How do they relate to work needs?
- How is the programme structured – Is there adequate time allocated to on-site learning?
- How is the programme planned to be taught?