PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRES AND COMMUNITY NEEDS: THE CASE OF JABU NGCOBO IN PIETERMARITZBURG

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DECLARATION

I, Wilson Myboy Nzimande, declare that this dissertation hereby submitted by me for the degree: Master of Education (Adult Education) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg) is my own work unless otherwise indicated.
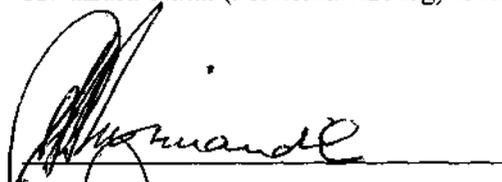
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ABSTRACT

Jabu Ngcobo Public Adult Learning Centre is a learning centre of the Department of Education and Culture where Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is provided. Its operations are expected to reflect the provisions and norms of the Policy for Adult Basic Education and Training (1997) and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000).

The aim of this study was to investigate the provision and delivery of ABET programmes offered by the Jabu Ngcobo PALC, which is situated in Imbali Township, Pietermaritzburg. This study focused specific attention on how the programmes offered at this centre addressed the learning needs of the learners and the community of the Imbali Township and its immediate surrounding areas.

The literature reviewed covered numerous sources that informed and supported this study. Both qualitative and quantitative tools were used as part of the data collection process. Data was collected from the different stakeholders and role-players involved with the PALC. These include the Centre Manager, practitioners, current and ex-learners, community leaders and Departmental officials.

The results of this study indicated the extent to which the learning needs of adult learners and those of the community are inadequately addressed by the PALC. Some suggestions are made on how Jabu Ngcobo PALC should adjust its programming in order to accommodate the learning needs of the community of Imbali Township where the PALC is situated. The results further provided baseline information that could be used by other PALCs and by the Department of Education and Culture in KwaZulu-Natal.

INTRODUCTION
Statement of the Problem

Since the researcher started teaching at a Public Adult Learning Centre (PALC), he has heard and listened to adult learners voicing their aspirations and expressing their views about the programmes offered by the PALC. It was clear that adult learners came to the PALC with a variety of learning needs. They expected the PALC to address their learning needs that range from learning basic literacy and numeracy, and the need to learn English, to life skills, survival skills for coping with the social and economic pressures of modern living and technical skills. They believe that these skills will empower them to face the challenges in their daily lives. They often believe that the programmes offered by the PALC should improve their chances for employment by equipping them with knowledge and skills that will enable them to find employment or to become self-reliant. PALCs are also expected to provide programmes that are relevant to the needs and problems of communities. Unemployment, poverty, crime and health are keys issues to be addressed.

The researcher has also listened to the complaints of learners about the programmes offered at the PALCs. What the adult learners had to say prompted the researcher to investigate the provision and delivery of ABET programmes at Jabu Ngcobo in order to develop a better understanding of the role of the PALC. The research study looks more closely at how the programmes offered at Jabu Ngcobo PALC related to the learners' needs and the needs of the community of Imbali Township. The research also looks at whether Jabu Ngcobo PALC programme delivery is in line with the expectations of the ABET policy and the ABET Act. The ABET Act clearly states that the issue of learners' needs is paramount in adult learning. PALCs are therefore expected to ensure that their programme delivery processes encompass the learners' needs. The Act further asserts that the PALCs' programmes should respond to the needs of the target communities.

This study is directly linked to the Department of Education's vision of transforming the old night school system into effective provision and delivery

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sites. In 1997, the Department of Education renamed the old night schools PALC, and introduced a Regulatory Framework that guided the transformation of night schools into PALC (Department of Education, 1997a). In that same year the Department of Education published the first comprehensive policy and implementation plan for ABET, which also focused on the transformation of delivery sites. The regulations are now reflected in the programme's requirements of PALCs since 1997. This study therefore focuses specifically on the way PALCs respond to the needs of adult learners.

This research study has revealed that Jabu Ngcobo PALC's curriculum does not adequately meet the learners' learning needs or the needs of the surrounding communities. It is mainly based on basic and general education similar to that offered by formal schooling and hardly any training opportunities for adults are being offered. The curriculum reproduces the curriculum categories of formal schooling and educators employed at the PALC are playing a central role in the process. According to the *Integrated Development Plan for Msunduzi Municipality 2002-2006* (Msunduzi Municipality, 2000: 35), the community of Imbali, where the PALC is located, is affected by a number of socio-economic problems including unemployment, poverty, poor health, low income, women abuse and lack of access to information and education. This investigation found that the programmes offered by the PALC do not reflect a response to these problems.

This study further revealed that the Department of Education provided inadequate support to the centre in relation to the implementation of curriculum including essential resources such as learning support material (LSM) and furniture required to support implementation. It also revealed that some of the learning programmes did not reflect the outcomes defined in the curriculum components or Unit Standards.

The researcher believes that this study is significant because it highlights the need for community centres and programmes that reflect the needs of adult learners and the broader community. This study also benefits the centre and primary beneficiaries and the Department of Education because the suggestions made point to how the learning centre can improve its programme provision and delivery processes.

The research study is presented in four chapters. The first chapter provides the conceptual framework for the investigation and deals briefly with a number of key issues including the theory of human needs, a history of night schools, the concept of human needs, the policies which are related to ABET like the *Regulatory Framework for Transforming Night Schools into PALCs*, the *National Multi-Year Implementation Plan*, the *Policy Document on ABET* and the ABET Act. Other issues that are examined are policies of adult education in countries like Nicaragua, Mexico, Cuba and Tanzania. During the research process, the researcher found limited research with a similar focus conducted in other countries. This chapter further looks at effective adult education centres around the world.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the research methodology. It looks at issues relating to Jabu Ngcobo PALC like the site population, rationale for employing qualitative research design and methodology, as well as qualitative and quantitative tools that are used and the evaluation of the methodology.

Chapter Three presents the findings about the learning programmes for different ABET levels, the state of adult education in South Africa, programmes in Pietermaritzburg and the profile of the Imbali community.

Chapter Four describes results and findings that emerged during the research process. The findings are specifically based on the learning programmes curricula given to learners at Jabu Ngcobo PALC. This chapter also provides an overview of the organizational and programmatic requirements at the PALC. This chapter also raises issues that the researcher believes should be addressed by the Department of Education and Culture in KwaZulu-Natal. It concludes with the researcher's suggestions.

CHAPTER ONE

Literature review

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the key concept and constructs relevant to his research study. This chapter starts with a brief discussion of the literature sources that were consulted as part of this study. This is followed by a focus on the history of night schools and the transformation of night schools into Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs). The key policy documents including the legislation and plans are used to present the developments related to PALCs. This discussion highlights the emphasis that is placed on PALCs as community learning sites that are meant to respond to the learning needs of learners and communities.

This is followed by a review of literature that deals with community education models, the contemporary debates about needs and the theory of needs as well as community development curriculum. Thereafter, a brief overview of literacy education in selected countries is provided to highlight the social, economic and political significance that countries have attached to adult literacy and basic education. The final section of the chapter looks at a number of effective learning sites in different parts of the world. These centres present models of how PALCs could deal more effectively with the need of learners and communities.

1.2 Main literature sources

The primary literature sources that have been used for this study include the following:

- Literature that reveals how adult education is administered in other countries with the result that the programmes offered to adults have addressed the learners' needs.

- Literature that states how the ABET programme in PALCs should be run in South Africa.

1.3 Availability of literature for survey

The literature review was limited to sources that informed the research in terms of the following:

- Theory of human needs
- A selection of adult education programmes in other countries
- Adult basic education in South Africa, particularly in the province of KwaZulu-Natal
- Available literature related to ABET programmes in Pietermaritzburg
- Available literature related to the community of Imbali
- Policy, legislation and plans of ABET in South Africa
- Available literature related to the history of night schools in South Africa

1.4 The history and current context of PALCs

The need for community-based planning and the role of adult education have recently been recognised by government (Department of Education, 1997a). Particular attention has been given to the transformation of the night school system, which has been in use for almost a century (Bird 1984:18). Hutton (1992) discusses the role played by night schools in the past. Her discussion helps us to understand the effects of the limitations of pre-apartheid and apartheid adult education policies[1] on night schools as well as the present role that PALCs should play in the delivery of adult education programmes. In the section below I summarise some of the key points about night schools.

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[1] Prior to 1995 South Africa had no clearly defined policy for adult basic education. Adult literacy classes were governed by the same policies for general schooling.

1.4.1 The Role of Night Schools during the United Party and National Party Rule (1920 – 1948)

Night schools were first established on the Reef in Transvaal (now Gauteng) during the early 1920s (French cited in Hutton, 1992: 55). I summarise some of the key historic points about the history of night schools below.

- The South African Communist Party's night schools during the 1920s were concerned with worker education, mainly in English, and politics rather than basic literacy. The United Party government supported the idea of subsidized night schools (ibid.56).

- When the National Party government came into power in 1948, it undermined the United Party's policy of support for night schools in a number of ways. One way of doing this was to neglect and refuse applications for subsidies.

- Education policies as well as the security legislation of the 1960s placed legal constraints and inhibitions on non-governmental literacy programmes.

- The banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African congress (PAC) in the 1960s removed important sources of committed and organised support for community-based literacy work. The poor policy support of the National Party government during this period resulted in the ineffectiveness of night schools (ibid: 56).

- During the 1980s, the state resuscitated the night schools because of the economic pressure resultant from the rising demands for a better trained workforce as well as international efforts to combat illiteracy (ibid: 75).

- The curriculum focused on mother tongue literacy, literacy in English and Afrikaans and supported by prescriptive teaching methods.

An interesting shift in the content of adult literacy is noticeable when one compares adult literacy provision during the 1920s with the provision during the 1960s. The content of adult literacy in the 1920s seemed to have had greater relevance to the needs of the participants and the community. During the 1920s the content of literacy programmes were largely informal with a stronger focus on politics and civic education. Studies about the role of adult education in relation to community development in South Africa during this period are limited or non-existent and I would argue that night schools as sites of learning and education responded more appropriately to the immediate community needs because literacy programmes focused on relevant issues affecting people and participants at the time. During the 1980s the role of night schools started to change. Instead of addressing the community needs and the learners' needs through the provision and delivery of civic literacy and political education, the Nationalist Party government firstly limited the number of night schools by closing many of them, and secondly, forced night schools to focus on the production of trained workers because of the limited number of skilled workers in the country (Baatjes, 2003: 184). The curriculum of night schools during this period was limited to literacy acquisition, mother tongue, literacy in English, as well as numeracy. Without a clear policy for adult basic education, the curriculum used in night schools was the same as that used in primary schools.

1.4.2 The Transformation of Night Schools during the post-apartheid era

After 1994, with the African National Congress (ANC) in power, adult education gained greater attention. The Constitution enshrined the right to basic education and states that 'everyone has the right to basic education including adult basic education' (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 14). In 1995 the Department of Education (DoE) published the *National Adult Basic Education and Training framework's Interim Guidelines* (Department of Education, 1995). These guidelines focused mainly on curriculum with specific focus on outcome statements in Communication and Numeracy. A significant development, however, was the DoE's realisation that night schools were still largely ineffective and this realisation led to the formulation of the *Regulatory Framework for the*

Transformation of night schools into Public Adult Learning Centres (1997).[2] In that same year the DoE published the first comprehensive policy for ABET which also focused on the transformation of delivery sites, that is, Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) had to address the needs of their communities.

The DoE recognised that the system of night schools failed to address the basic learning needs of communities because of the pseudo-policy that governed them, and a curriculum that was framed in the same way as that used in schools. The onus was then shifted to PALCs to address the imbalances of the past by delivering programmes that would be more responsive to the learning needs of their communities. Previous documentation referred to PALCs and Community Learning Centres. A term still used by the Western Cape Department of Education that signals the role that these sites should play within communities. In the ensuing section I will briefly discuss the Regulatory Framework and its contribution in the formulation of the ABET policy and the National Multi-Year Implementation Plan for ABET.

1.5   Regulatory framework: transforming night schools into PALCs

The document reiterates that ABET is a basic human right which implies that all adult learners have the right to quality learning and teaching and that the state has an obligation to protect and advance this right so that all citizens irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age have the opportunity to develop their capacities and potential and make their full contribution to the society (Department of Education, 1997a: 6).

The document further discusses the aims of ABET, types of Adult Education Centres, governance and administration of public centres, appointment and remuneration of staff, registration and administration of PALCs and the monitoring and evaluation of PALC. An interesting element in this document is the emphasis placed on learning needs. For example, the aspect of evaluation

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[2]   The Regulatory Framework guided the transformation of night schools into Public Adult Learning Centres. This document proposed policy similar to the Schools Act which has since been inserted into the ABET Act, No. 54 of 2000.

includes relevance of programmes to the needs of adult learners and those of communities (Department of Education, 1997a: 27).

The document proposes similar policy to the Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) regarding governance. Some of the functions of the governing body proposed in relation to learner and community needs include:

- needs assessment of adult learners;
- setting of community objectives;
- linking ABET directly to community needs and interests;
- ensuring that the centre is run to the benefit and in the interests of the community.

In the past, night schools functioned through using largely prescriptive curricula, but with their transformation into PALCs, the learning content should, according to policy, be determined by the learners' needs and the needs of the community, while at the same time it should adhere to the provincial curricula requirements which conform to the expectations of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)[3] and the National Qualifications Framework (Department of Education, 1997a: 18). The framework laid the foundation for the ABET policy and suggested how ABET could promote forms of adult learning including the recognition of learning experiences and prior knowledge. In the section to follow the researcher briefly discusses how DoE aims to promote ABET in the PALCs through its policy and how it would ensure that the implementation of the policy is effective.

1.6 Policy document on adult basic education and training

The policy very clearly states its purpose of serving a variety of needs. This is captured in the following statement:

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[3]   South African Qualifications Authority. This body is responsible for overseeing the development and maintenance of the National Qualifications Framework.

It is envisaged that the new policy will serve the needs of a diverse range of
learning constituencies, including organised labour in the formal economy, self-
employed and under-employed, unemployed youth and adults in the urban areas
and settlements and the rural unemployed. (Department of Education, 1997b: 3).

The significance of meeting community needs and the needs of learners in various
contexts and communities is also supported by the White Paper on Reconstruction
and Development (RDP). It states:

The basic needs of people extend from job creation, land and agrarian reform to
housing, water and sanitation, energy supplies, transport, nutrition, health care, the
environment, social welfare and security. In creating the infrastructure to meet
these needs the RDP will encourage and support the participation of people in
making the key decisions about where the projects should be and how they should
be managed. (Republic of South Africa, 1995 cited in Baatjes, 2002: 27).

The policy seeks to develop an enabling environment in which high quality ABET
programmes can flourish. The key component of this policy is to guide providers
and not to control and prescribe what they do. The onus now rests with PALCs to
ensure that their programmes address the learning needs of the community, which
they serve, rather than prescribing what should be done. The ABET policy further
seeks to encourage linkage between ABET programmes and training in marketable
skills to ensure that learners are able to enter the formal economy and initiate self-
employment.

To ensure the success of learning programmes, the policy states that the
programme developers would require planning for a range of learner options and
interests. In so doing, they will need to take into account the immediate individual
and family needs of learners. Among principles, the policy states, 'ABET must
seek to equip learners with skills to participate in all forms of economic, social,
political and cultural activities' (Department of Education, 1997b: 28).

1.7 ABET Act

The ABET Act is based to the Regulatory Framework which elaborates on the
content of the ABET Act. The Act attempts to respond to the needs of the country,
the labour market and the communities through ABET as one vehicle of socio-
economic development. The issue of needs is paramount in the process of adult
learning. The ABET Act asserts that it aims to restructure and transform

programmes and centres to respond better to the human resources, in addition to the economic and development needs of the country. Centres operate through guidelines from the ABET Policy and Act, and their operational acts are informed by these policies. This study seeks to ascertain whether the programmes that are offered by Jabu Ngcobo PALC, address the needs of learners and the community of Imbali Township. In the next section, the researcher discusses the National Multi-Year Implementation Plan through which the DoE wants to ensure that ABET is accessible to all people and that ABET implementation is effective in the PALCs.

1.8 The national multi-year implementation plan for ABET

The plan responds to the challenges for realistic target-setting and to ensure that approximately 9,4 million South African adults, who have had less than nine years of schooling, receive basic education (Department of Education, 1997: C: V). During its first phase, the Plan suggests that all role players support the establishment of the systems required to ensure effective and efficient delivery at a scale that is sustainable and well managed. The second phase of the Plan concentrates on delivery at a scale with the intensified recruitment of learners during the year 2000 and 2001. The Plan has proposes interesting delivery phases through its proposals and recommendations:

- It proposed the link between Adult Basic Education and Adult Basic Education and Training, as the latter's skills training can be utilized to improve employment opportunities for the individual.
- Mass media such as pamphlets, radio and television may be used to disseminate information about ABET.
- Recommends that ABET programmes should demonstrate the integration of education and training.
- In developing ABET programmes the notion of skills development should be considered as critical.
- The plan recommends that teachers need to be trained because most of them have received no training in adult basic education.

The creation of the plan demonstrates the state's commitment to ABET and this established the good foundation for the operationalisation of the ABET Policy and Act. As the plan appears to be good on paper it is of utmost importance to know how this Plan translates into action at the delivery sites. At the time of this study the implementation of the plan was already restricted due to a lack of funding and little progress was evident.

1.9   Theory of human needs

Many adult educators have written about learning needs, community needs and about needs in general (Cafferella, 1994; Maslow, 1991; Merriam, 1991; Rogers, 1989; Vella, 1995; Doyal & Gough, 1985). Doyal & Gough are two writers who have contributed to the needs-debate and, for the purpose of a discussion on needs, I draw on their work. A description of the contribution by some of these writers is summarised below.

1.9.1 Individual Needs

The concept of human needs is an essential component in formalising a feasible socialist vision of what the future could be like (Doyal & Gough, 1985: 6). Basic individual needs are defined as these goals that must be achieved if any individual is to achieve any other goal (Ibid: 10). These needs fall into two pairs, which are survival or health, and autonomy or learning. There are four preconditions or basic societal needs without which individuals cannot satisfy their basic individual needs and they are:

(a) Production
(b) Reproduction
(c) Culture or communication
(d) Political authority

These needs will be discussed in more detail, later.

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Doyal & Gough's theory of human needs embraces both individual and societal needs and argues that the two are dependent on each other for overall success. It rejects Maslow's hierarchy of needs in which the most basic needs must be satisfied before other needs can be met and argues that human needs are systematic or interwoven like a web (ibid: 11). Uses of the word needs fall into two categories that are sometimes kept separate and sometimes conflated. Firstly, 'need' is used to refer to a particular category of goals that are related to all people. It can also refer to strategies which are believed to provide successful routes for the achievement of any goal whether these goals are regarded as needs or wants. This theory further states that health rather than survival, both physical and mental, is the most basic human need and the one that will be in the interest of the individual to satisfy first.

> Physical health entails the recognition that there is a minimal empirical point beyond which the capacity for successful actions is so reduced that an actor will be regarded by others as abnormal although the abnormality may be culturally regarded. (Doyal & Gough, 1985: 16).

Health needs which include physical and mental health, such as nutrition, enough sleep, emotional support, opportunity for emotional expression and privacy are important needs to be satisfied. According to Doyal & Gough (1985) the second set of basic needs that must be met for actions to be successful, relates to individual identity or autonomy. It is important for people to initiate actions. The basic need for autonomy or learning translates into the need for creative consciousness. For this need to be met in practice, teachers will be required who already possess their own autonomous identities and physical and mental skills that go with them (Ibid: 17). This is because people do not teach themselves to act but they have to learn. The skills that are learned vary from culture to culture. It is important for individuals to meet their basic needs of health and autonomy. According to Doyal & Gough, success depends on the actors' learned sense of self and self-potential that in turn depends on how a person is taught (Ibid: 18). The researcher's assumption is that it is important to teach learners the most relevant content, as that will enable them to be autonomous human beings. It is also clear from this theory's point of view that successful individual actions are influenced by past and present social interaction with other people. This theory further states that it is possible for health and autonomy to be achieved through education.

"The degree to which individual needs are met will depend on individuals who are healthy, autonomous and educated enough to know what is expected of them" (Doyal & Gough, 1985: 21).

This necessitates the acquisition of relevant education by individuals.

1.9.2 Basic Societal Needs

The theory of human needs identifies the following basic societal needs:

- Material production
- Reproduction
- Communication
- Political authority

For material production, the essence is that all the activities that are performed by the society must be directed towards material production of things such as food, clothing and shelter. Biological reproduction as cited in this theory, entails infant care and socialisation. This highlights the importance of effective socialisation as far as the division of labour is concerned. For communication, language plays an important role as it helps people to understand and accept issues that are presented to them. Techniques and rules play an important role in communication. Obeying rules enables the society to survive and it also enhances effective political authority.

1.9.3 Optimising basic needs

According to Doyal & Gough (1985) people need to learn about what they are capable of doing and that will help to unlock their potential. The process of learning and the ability to translate what is learnt into practice, constitutes human liberation. Human liberation helps people to select correct options to meet individual and societal needs. To maximise the basic needs of health and autonomy, people need to make correct choices. The maximization of health and autonomy will help people to meet other basic needs. Understanding of the societal problems helps the society to act in an appropriate way. "Education will

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help participants to understand and interact with others in terms of complicated set of linguistic and social norms" (Ibid: 25). This entails an appreciation of the rules of argument and a willingness to allow them. Lastly, ecological constraints may play a role in the maximisation of needs (Ibid: 30). For this reason, it is not possible to improve the satisfaction of basic individual or societal needs unless sufficient material resources are available.

In conclusion, Doyal & Gough's theory of human needs shows that human needs are intertwined. It also states that in order to satisfy them, participants need to have some degree of understanding and education. Although needs are interwoven, the learning need is of utmost importance because it facilitates the meeting of other needs. In light of this, it is important for learning programmes offered to communities to be aimed at addressing the individual and societal needs as this will empower communities and also help in the meeting of other needs. Therefore it is in this spirit that the researcher of this study undertakes an investigation to ascertain whether the programmes of Jabu Ngcobo PALC address the basic learning needs of the target community.

1.10 The concept of needs in adult education

Fotheringham presented four types of educational and developmental needs (Fotheringham, 1998: 5). She stated the following needs:

(a) Felt needs
(b) Expressed needs
(c) Normative needs
(d) Comparative needs

1.10.1 Felt Needs

These are needs that are perceived wants of the individual or community after the community has been assessed. After doing needs assessment, service is then offered to the community. Felt needs are often defined as being what people really want (Fotheringham, 1998: 5). These types of needs are also felt needs that are outwardly and publicly expressed or demanded (Fotheringham 1988: 5). The

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difference between expressed needs and felt needs is that a felt need may not be expressed or demanded, it could be articulated in other less obvious ways. For example, if adult learners feel that their needs are not being met, they might just drop out of a class without demanding or expressing their needs in other ways. It is then clear that felt needs are defined within the community and the programmes offered thereafter become relevant.

1.10.2 Expressed needs

This type of needs is also felt needs, but the only difference is that expressed needs are publicly expressed or demanded. They are termed real needs. For example, the need for houses.

1.10.3 Normative needs

Normative needs are those seen as desirable against a standard proposed by professionals, experts, bureaucratic administrators and social scientists (Fotheringham, 1998: 5). For normative needs, a standard is used to determine the level of their adequacy. Then, if the community or an individual demands something, that standard is used to determine whether that community or individual definitely is in need of something. This type of needs is defined externally, that is, from above, because it disregards what the community or the individual really needs.

1.10.4 Comparative needs

Comparative needs are when individuals and organisations are compared with others and are found to be lacking. Comparative needs are also defined or determined by experts thereby making them similar to normative needs.

In conclusion, the concept of needs in communities must to be clearly understood. What is important is for the community needs to be considered in whatever service that is rendered to the communities. Therefore for education and social services in communities to succeed, providers should understand the felt needs of the target communities. A crucial aspect of this needs debate is how strategies to meet needs

are translated into curricula and learning programmes that are provided to adult learners.

1.11 Community education models

Lovett et al. (1983) developed a number of community education models on the basis of his experience in community and adult education in Ireland. These models are very important because they provide guidelines on how adult education centres could function in order to respond more appropriately to the needs of the learners and those of the communities.

According to Lovett et al. (1983) there are at least four community education or development models, each with its own educational pedagogy or philosophical orientation (Lovett et al., 1983: 36). These models are:

(a) Community organisation/education model
(b) Community development/ education model
(c) Community action/education model
(d) he social action/education model.

The section below provides a brief description of these models.

1.11.1 A Community Organisation/Education Model

This model attempts to combine aspects of community organisation and community work and relate these to adult education provision (Lovett et al., 1983:36). This model concentrates on the delivery of educational resources available to meet local needs and interests. It advocates the appointment of outreach workers to work outside institutions in local communities where there is little or no take-up of adult education provision. It concentrates on working class communities and does not do anything to eliminate problems like poverty and inequality.

1.11.2 A Community Development/Education Model

This model concentrates on community work and community development in it, adult educators' work in local communities in a variety of community projects where they provide information, resources and advice. This model tries to educate the institutions and organisations that are concerned with the provision of services and resources for the local community. It accepts the nature of a pluralist society and concentrates on improving communication and understanding between the various conflicting groups in an effort to improve local community problems (Lovett et al., 1983: 38).

1.11.3 A Community Action/Education Model

It concentrates on combining community education and community action. It emphasises the need for adult educators to identify with and commit themselves to local working class communities (Lovett et al., 1983: 38). This model is of the view that community action is in itself an educational process that offers opportunities for consciousness raising about community problems. It ensures that communities come to a deeper understanding of the factors that affect their lives and realise the need for change. In essence, this model advocates the creation of alternative institutions at local level that will offer local communities the opportunity to change.

1.11.4 A Social Action/Education Model

This model appears to be congruent with what the current ABET policy aims to achieve through ABET provision and content, educational effort, social action and working class effort (Lovett et al., 1983: 39). It also stresses education that is more structured, systematic and formalised. There is some emphasis placed on the origins of community problems in the larger social, economic and political structure of society. Adult learners through dialogue and discussion must be convinced of this ability to undertake, successfully, the educational journey by boosting their self-confidence.

The researcher believes that the role of PALCs should be located within an understanding of these community models. A PALC should be a learning site driven by a clearly defined community model. The researcher also believes that a PALC cannot successfully operate if it is divorced from the realities and problems of a community it is meant to serve.

1.12 Community development curriculum

Another body of literature focuses on the involvement of the community in the process of community programmes. Midgley (2002) in the United States of America asserts that community organizations responsible for teaching should adopt an African community development approach in order to raise the standards of living at local levels.

Midgley (2002) discusses the process of community development in many parts of Africa. He first highlights the emergence of this concept, for example, he states that the origins of community development in Africa can be traced to sources like communalism and cooperativism. He further states that the idea of African community development is rooted in British colonial policy that advocated indirect rule and the idea that economic development should be made through the effort of the people themselves (Midgley, 2002: 3). The other source of this concept came from the missionaries whose efforts at proselytization included a concern for the material and social improvement of local communities (Brokensha & Hodge cited in Midgley, 2002: 3). In essence, the concept of community development emphasizes the importance of consulting local people if one intends to provide educational programmes. This highlights the significance of community involvement in shaping the role of learning sites and the curriculum content to be taught.

Community development curriculum emphasis is on community-based programmes. These programmes emphasize economic and social development at the local level. Community-based programmes respond to the poverty problem by directly involving local people in a variety of projects that seek to raise their income and standard of living. In order to be successful the community development process combines local community resources with those of external

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agents to enhance standards of living and to promote community integration. Local people are involved in making democratic decisions about programme priorities and the way projects are implemented.

African community development has placed a substantial emphasis on establishing social and economic development projects that have the explicit goal of raising standards of living and enhancing the material well-being of the community (Midgley, 2002: 4). The said goal can be achieved through four types of programmes, which are:

- Creation of economic infrastructure. For example building of roads and waterways.
- Enhancement of productive activities. Poor communities should be engaged in income-generating activities like agriculture, family-based projects and the promotion of crafts and small industries. Women have to play a leading role in these projects.
- Enhancement of social well-being. These community development programmes involve local people in the provision of social services such as adult literacy and the management of sanitary and drinking water projects.
- Creation of social infrastructure. In this instance, community projects involve the construction of schools and clinics.

In conclusion, the community development curriculum is vital for the success of any community-based programme. For example, in Sudan and Ethiopia the Nile waters have been used to irrigate surrounding lands and extend agricultural areas thus improving productivity for local communities (Midgley, 2002: 4). In Ghana, enthusiastic social welfare administrators initiated mass education campaigns in an attempt to saturate whole areas with agricultural, health, literacy and other development projects. It provides a useful framework for learning programme delivery in communities where a great need for basic education exists. Although Midgley's analysis does not relate directly to education, it is quite evident that education plays a critical role in community development.

1.13 Theory of learning

Theories of learning play an important role in learning programme design and in adult learning. All adult educators place learning needs and experience central to learning (Jarvis, 1995; Freire, 1989; Maslow, 1968; Knowles, 1984). Of the many theories put forward, the one most relevant to this study is that of the Humanist Theory.

1.13.1 Humanist theory

This theory is based on the assertion that perceptions are centred in experience as well as the freedom and responsibility to become what one is capable of becoming (Merriam, 1991: 257). There are two psychologists who have contributed to our understanding of learning from this theory, namely, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers.

Maslow states that human motivation is based on the hierarchy of needs. He states all the needs such as hunger, thirst, safety, love, self-esteem and the need for self-actualisation. It should be pointed out that any of the physiological needs (hunger, thirst, safety...) and the consummatory behaviour involved with, serve as channels for all sorts of other needs as well (Maslow, 1554: 81). For example, the person who thinks he is hungry is actually seeking comfort and dependence more than vitamins or proteins. Undoubtedly these physiological needs are the most prepotent of all needs (Maslow, 1954: 82). For example a person who is lacking food, safety, love and esteem would most probably hunger for food more strongly than anything else.

At once other higher needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism, and when these in turn are satisfied, again new needs emerge. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organised into a hierarchy of relative prepotency (ibid: 83).

Even if all these needs are satisfied, we may still often expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop unless the individual is doing what he or she is suited for. This need can be referred to as self-actualisation.

Cognitive capacities (perceptual, intellectual, learning) are a set of adjustive tools, which have among other functions, that of satisfaction of our basic needs. Consequently it is clear that any danger to them or deprivation of their free use, must also be indirectly threatening to the basic needs (ibid: 93).

For Maslow self-actualisation is the goal of learning and educators should strive to bring this about (Merriam, 1991:257). Carl Rogers was involved with learning that leads to personal growth and development. For him such learning was characterised by personal involvement, where the affective and cognitive aspects of a person should be involved in self-initiated learning. For him learning should make a difference in the behaviour, and essence in meaning, meaning that when experiential learning takes place, its meaning to the learner becomes incorporated into the total experience. Rogers maintains that the learner could best determine whether the experience is meeting his or her needs.

This theory of learning incorporates the views of other important adult educationists like Knowles (1984) and Caffarella (1994). The principles of the writings of Knowles, Caffarella and Rogers are based on the assumption that the learner takes primary responsibility for his or her own learning. The process of learning is centred on the learners' needs (Merriam, 1991:258). The process of learning is also seen as being more important than the content that is being learnt. Because the learners' needs are important, educators are expected to act as facilitators or guides, during the learning process.

In conclusion, the principles of the humanist theory are grounded on the idea that learning should be based on the satisfaction of the learners' needs. This is very important because adult learners have vast knowledge and experience. When they join any adult centre, it is the responsibility of that centre to develop their potential through addressing their learning needs.

1.14 What makes 'good' literacy and numeracy provisions?

Guenther & Falk (1999) highlight some key principles for the effective delivery of basic skills training in rural areas of Australia. These principles as proposed by Guenther & Falk can assist the South African community especially the PALCs. My perception is that these principles can be effective in the South African context because Australia was able to apply these principles with success in different sites and contexts. After all South Africa is faced with a high rate of illiteracy and it is imperative to ensure that effective mechanisms are employed which will help the South African government to reduce illiteracy and raise the standard of living for the South Africans, especially the previously disadvantaged communities.

1.14.1 Principles of effectiveness

Guenther & Falk (1999: 25) suggest the following principles:

- Outcomes of adult literacy education are enhanced with the presence of supportive and continuing structures. This principle highlights the importance of adequate resources and funding.
- Effectiveness of adult literacy delivery is improved when content is targeted to meet individual and community needs. This principle highlights the importance of programmes that meet the needs of the community.
- Community ownership results in effective usage of resources and higher participation rates. The local community should have a say in the site which provides basic education in their area because that will lead to a sense of ownership and the site is likely to effective eventually.
- Trust and collaboration between providers and communities underpins successful programmes. There is no doubt that trust will be built if the programmes that are offered to the community address their needs and if the community is involved in the programme delivery process.

These principles provide useful tools and in some ways overlap with the needs debate as described in this chapter as well as some of the models development by Lovett et al.

1.15 Rationale for selecting Nicaragua, Mexico, Cuba, Australia, South Wales and Tanzania

In the next section the researcher draws on examples of other countries that have excelled in their literacy and adult basic education programmes. These countries have been chosen for two reasons. Firstly, they provide a range of a comparison between First World and Third World countries. Secondly, most of them are developing countries with economies that are similar to that of South Africa. South Africa stands to learn effective ways of drastically reducing illiteracy from their adult education policies. In some of these countries, for example Nicaragua and Tanzania, new governments were faced with high rates of illiteracy on coming into power, but through effective adult education policies they were able to reduce illiteracy and the researcher believes that the new South African government can also learn something from these countries. South Wales has been chosen to display her pedigree on the promotion of community economic development, working with the marginalized in a variety of settings. For the purposes of this study, attention is focused on Nicaragua, Mexico, Australia, South Wales, Cuba and Tanzania.

1.15.1 Education policy in Nicaragua

Nicaraguan is a good example of a state that addressed the problem of illiteracy through an effective adult education policy. Adult education has fulfilled many roles in the process of social transformation of the Nicaraguan state (Torres, 1990: 112). For example, it has been pinpointed as a powerful instrument for the social and political legitimation of the newly formed state.

In July 1979, twenty years after the Cuban Revolution, the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacionah (FSLN) brought to an end the authoritarian and corrupt regime of the Somoza family that controlled much of the Nicaraguan economy.

The Sandinistas inherited one of the least developed educational systems in Latin America. In the mid-70s, due to radical population increases, about 65% of Nicaraguan children 7-12 years of age attended primary school and only 18% of those 13-18 years were in secondary school. About 50% of the population over 10 years old were completely illiterate and in the countryside the illiteracy rate reached 76%. In rural areas only one in four Nicaraguans could read or write. In the early stages of the revolution the emphasis was on mobilisation through popular education.[4] This was done first in the form of a literacy crusade and later in the creation of a popular basic education system.

By 1984, the Nicaraguan literacy campaign had taught over 406 000 people to read and write. The illiteracy rate was lowered from 50.3% to less than 15% in a period of just five years. The success of the Nicaraguan literacy campaign can be credited to a literacy crusade that was organised as a second mass insurrection not against Somoza, but against ignorance. It involved more than 80 000 brigadistas (literacy workers), 50 000 youth brigade members and 30 000 literacy teachers and more than 400 000 adults. Eventually, individuals were able to write their names, read a short text aloud and answer questions. Educational changes were in all respects related not only to the perceived needs for improvement in the quality and availability of education for all Nicaraguans, but changes were also a symbolic gesture from the new government to enhance its legitimacy. In the South African context, the government needs to provide adequate funds, personnel and increase advocacy about literacy programmes. Attempts should be made in introducing income-generating skills to our literacy programmes.

Given the absence of an adult education system at the time of the revolution, the Sadinista's education policies yielded positive results as the illiteracy rate was decreased from 50.3% to less than 15% in just five years. The new Sadinista government was able to reduce illiteracy in Nicaragua although conditions later changed. For example by 1989 Nicaragua was faced with external aggression and that affected their educational programmes (Torres, 1990: 91).

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[4]   Popular education aims of providing for the more disadvantaged classes of society some skills considered necessary for their survival or helpful to living more productively within the existing social order.

1.15.2 National policies of adult education in Mexico, 1976-1988

Adult education in most of Latin America was concerned with the needs of the most impoverished social groups that completely lack power and are localised in the lowest level of the social stratification (Torres, 1990: 49). Lovett argues:

> Pedagogically, there must be a change towards an outreach and needs-oriented educational delivery system, whilst this requires considerable political and structural change to achieve full success, potentially important beginnings can be made through educational programming that is based in the community, that recognises community needs. (Lovett, 1988: 260).

The adult education programmes in Mexico did consider the element of learners' needs as programmes varied from literacy training, basic education and work training. According to the statistics on adult education in 1976-1977, Mexico had approximately 6 million absolute illiterates, 13 million adults with primary schooling incomplete and 7 million with secondary schooling incomplete. 74% of the total population over 15 years old were potentially clients for the services of adult education. From 1976-1981, attention was paid to adult education by distinct channels, modalities and institutions. The centres of basic education developed activities, which were concerned with literacy training and intensive primary training. Centres were located in urban areas. In 1980, 1983 (one thousand, nine hundred and eighty-three) CEDA[5] served a total population of 99 903 adult learner. In the academic year 1978-1979, 24 625 pupils graduated. Cultural missions served the rural communities. In 1980 there were 215 missions with 1 700 teachers that served 645 communities and a total population of 202 800 adult learners. There were also secondary television programmes, which in 1980 operated as a federal programme in 10 states. Declining enrolments and increasing dropout rates forced the Mexican government to change the National System of Education (NSEA) in favour of the PRONALF[6]. With the PRONALF in place, the National Institute of Adult Education was organised. The Mexican literacy policy was effective because by 1988 some areas had wiped out illiteracy, whilst in other areas illiteracy rates were at levels lower than 6%. Conditions might have later changed because of political, social and economic instability in this country.

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[5] Centros de educacion para adultos, meaning centres of basic adult education.
[6] Programa Nasional de Alfabetization. This was a state literacy programme.

1.15.3 Adult education in Cuba

"The Cuban literacy campaign which Fidel Castro announced in 1960 has been described as one of the truly great achievements of mankind… It was a remarkable achievement for many reasons, but principally because it worked" (MacDonald cited in Mayo, 1997: 66).

During the early 60s, 25% of Cubans were illiterate, but by the end of 1961, after the Year of Education, illiteracy was down to less than 5%. Literacy was seen as the key to economic development, as it was improving the knowledge and skills of the workforce. It was also seen as contributing to political and social goals. Workplace-based organisations organised production to release urban workers to participate. The Cuban Federation of Women and the Committees for Defence of the Revolution mobilised volunteers and they also encouraged illiterate people to come forward to participate.

Technical programmes followed up the literacy campaign for workers and continuation classes for the newly literate. After the US blockage, which was mainly influenced by different political ideologies, education programmes were adjusted to take into account changing pressures and needs. For example, the Cuban Federation of Women ran classes in cooking and healthy eating. There were also practical classes to meet immediate needs of learners as well as classes, which provided broader education. Because of political, social and economic conditions in the last 43 years, the result has been some change in the state illiteracy in Cuba.

1.15.4 Adult education in Tanzania

Adult education in Tanzania has always been geared towards the promotion of both economic and social development. This was to be based upon active people's participation in the workplace and in the community. In 1967, President Nyerere set out the goals for his path for democratic socialist development based on self-reliance and cooperation. Adult education was then seen as a key to these objectives. 1970 was the year of adult education with the focus upon education for development based upon participation.

"The purpose of education was the liberation of man from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency" (Nyerere quoted in Brown, 1983: 42-3). Residential colleges were set up in 1975 as Folk Development Colleges to provide further education for those who had graduated from the literacy scheme. There were programmes for workers' education to increase productivity. Adult education was also used to provide knowledge on social issues. For example, the radio was used to promote health education. There was a close link between the political party, which had worked for independence, and the national centre for political education, Kivokoni College.

Although the achievements of the Tanzanian experience had been valued so highly, there were also key problems and limitations. For example, Lovett has argued that the whole strategy of promoting market-socialism through self-help and cooperative development, which Nyerere and TANU pursued, was inherently flawed and failed to take adequate account of external structural factors (Mayo, 1997: 65).

1.16 Examples of effective adult education centres

Literature on formal adult learning sites and their role in community education is limited. This section looks at examples of sites that have effectively addressed the learning needs of their communities by providing community-based programmes. Though the programmes of these sites, community needs, such as basic education, skills training, poverty, unemployment and hygiene, have in some ways been addressed. This is because the programmes offered at these sites have been geared towards what the communities need.

1.16.1 Hoima literacy centre in Uganda

The positive effects of literacy programmes at this centre in Uganda have been highlighted by many people (Okech, 2001: 91). Mothers who attended the literacy programmes could, as a result of their attendance, follow how to administer drugs to their children. Women became more aware of AIDS and family planning. They also learnt the importance of safe water and general cleanliness. Learners

from the centre started to build latrines in their homes. The acquisition of literacy helped local women to improve on reading and writing, which led to easier loan acquisition. This helped alleviate poverty as former learners started their own income-generating projects.

People who participated in the literacy programmes had improved food security because of improved agricultural methods that they acquired from the literacy classes. The acquisition of better agricultural skills enabled participants not only to support their families, but also to gain some income because they were able to sell their products. Literacy programmes also help learners from Hoima literacy centre from being manipulated. "Before, we used to be cheated and we depended on others to read for us. Sometimes even the one's we trusted connive with the produce buyers to cheat us" (Okech, 2001: 87).

There is no doubt that basic education, in conjunction with skills training, can empower any community and lead to better life in the previously disadvantaged communities. What is important though, is that whatever form of educational programming is offered should be reflective of the learning needs of the target community. Programmes offered at Hoima literacy centre emphasized functional skills training in edition to basic literacy. A wide range of topics, including health related issues, agricultural practices, environmental protection, civics and political awareness, were covered during the classes. The Hoima literacy centre is therefore a good example of an effective site for programme delivery because it addresses the social, political and economic learning need of its target community. The researcher therefore believes that the recipe for success of any adult centre is to address the learning need of its target community.

1.16.2 Amman Valley Adult Education Classes

Adult education in South Wales was aimed at addressing the learning needs of the local people (Mayo, 1997: 87). Programme designers therefore spearheaded the promotion of community economic development, working with the excluded and the marginalized in a variety of settings.

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An example of the first type comes from the Welsh mining valleys in the aftermath of the defeat of the miners' strike (1984-5). After that strike demoralisation ensued with pit closures and redundancies, loss of associated welfare, cultural and recreation provision. The Amman Valley adult centre brought assessable programmes to the local communities. The programmes reached women who had been effectively excluded via traditional forms of provision. In these programmes, skills training were available, for example in basic computing, but there was also broader educational provision, which developed people's understanding of the situations.

> This was an important ingredient in enabling groups to develop strategies for change. In particular people worked together to develop community enterprises and community projects to meet local need like childcare, youth provision, collectively organised community care and credit union. (Ibid: 87).

Programmes offered at Amman Valley helped to develop the community of South Wales. It is then vital for adult learning centres to ensure that they provide programmes which will address the learning needs of the target communities, as it was the case with the Amman Valley adult education classes, which were aimed at promoting community economic development of the Welsh people.

The key point to be highlighted here is that programmes based on the community learning needs enable the community to develop strategies for change. They empower the community to face its own problems with vigour and to tackle them. For example, local community economic development in the Amman Valley emerged through local adult education classes offered by the Amman Valley Centre to the local community.

1.16.3 Coonara Community House in Australia

A third example is the Coonara Community House in Australia. In the late 80s, adult education in Australia was based on the community needs and the community groups played a leading role in its provision, as the ensuing extract indicates:

> In community houses and centres for community education the focus of methodology in educational programs is the active participation of adults in their

own learning, determining what they want to pursue and how they will do it. To a
large extent programs and content are determined by the community response.
(Jones, 1995: 82).

Programmes run in the Coonara Community House included classes with special
vocational emphasis, such as word processing, typing, professional tailoring,
desktop publishing and creative writing. This centre is not a typical example of
one that provides basic education, but has succeeded in addressing key learning
needs of learners with higher educational skills. From this reading it became
apparent that if programmes are based on community needs, they can help the
community become empowered, as was the case with the adult learners at the
community houses in Australia.

1.16.4 Ulster Peoples' College in Belfast, Northern Ireland

The final example of an effective learning site is that of the Ulster Peoples'
College in Northern Ireland. The aims of the College were to provide learning to
the local community and to enable them to reflect on their common problems. The
initiative was influenced by the radical independent tradition in adult education.
The College was to provide an accessible secular, neutral venue where working
class people from Catholic and Protestant religions could come together to explore
common problems and perceived differences. There is inter-religious conflict in
Northern Ireland (Catholic and Protestant), which cuts across working class
communities. Social, political and economic problems are compounded by
violence and sectarianism. Lovett argued that a more conscious and determined
effort was required to grasp the nettle of community divisions and conflicts, and to
work for peace and reconstruction (Mayo, 1997: 129). Working class Protestant
and Catholic were engaged in fighting the same problems of poverty,
unemployment, redevelopment and the resulting alienation from those in authority
(Mayo, 1997:129).

The Ulster People College ensured that people received assistance in order to
tackle issues like unemployment, vandalism, housing and lack of social and
recreational facilities. The college then provided short informal courses targeted at
young people, women, community activists, trade unionists and peace and
reconciliation groups. The college did some form of needs analysis of its

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participants, that is, it made sure that it had a critical understanding of the participants' learning needs. The college also introduced long-term courses in its efforts to address the learning needs of its participants. The results of the peoples' college were positive in a sense that participants' lives changed. Programme participants were able to face their former problems and solve them.

What we learn from the peoples' college is that for any centre, which aims to assist its people, it is important for it to first do the need analysis of its potential participants. This helps the centre to design programmes that are based on the learners' learning needs. The researcher believes that Ulster Peoples' College programming was relevant and effective because it addressed the learning needs of the Protestants and Catholics as indicated in the discussion.

1.17 Conclusion

In this chapter key concepts and constructs relevant to my research study were presented. The history of night schools revealed that it is possible for adult education sites to lose focus of learner and community needs. This is true if one looks at the role that was played by night schools. The system of night schools failed to address the learning needs of South Africans. South Africa has a high rate of illiteracy because the system of night schools has failed. The other aspect, which contributed to the lack of success of night schools is that they mainly concentrated only on basic education and thereby neglected other basic learning needs of adult learners and the community needs. It is then important for PALCs to ensure that their programme delivery process addresses the learning needs of adult learners and needs of the community.

The Department of Education is trying to ensure that PALCs become effective and relevant to adult learners. Policies like the Regulatory Framework transforming night schools into PALCs, the Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training and then the ABET Act are meant to ensure that PALCs address the learning needs of learners and the community needs. The experiences of night schools and the state's policies towards ABET have prompted the researcher to undertake this study, of determining whether Jabu Ngcobo PALC addresses the community learning needs.

For our PALCs to succeed in providing programmes that will address the community needs, it is imperative for South Africa to look at how other countries dealt with the problem of illiteracy. This has then prompted the researcher to bring in examples of countries like Nicaragua, Mexico, Cuba, Australia, South Wales and Tanzania. The policies of these countries proved to be effective in dealing with the problem of illiteracy in these countries.

The focus of this study is to determine whether Jabu Ngcobo PALC addresses the learning needs of the community of Imbali Township. With this in mind, the researcher thought it was imperative to explore effective adult education centres around the world. From these centres we can learn why they are termed effective. We can also learn how they deal with their target communities, the type of programmes that they offer in the process of meeting other community needs and the needs of learners. Jabu Ngcobo PALC stands to learn a lot from centres like Hoima in Uganda, Amman Valley in Wales, Coonara Community House in Australia and the Ulster People's College in Belfast, as these centres have been able to address the needs of their target communities.

The researcher believes that it is important for PALCs to understand the concept of needs. This prompted the researcher to explore literature dealing with the theory of needs, the concept of needs in adult education and the community development curriculums. This literature provides insight into the importance of community needs and on how to address them.

The researcher believes that PALCs will not function effectively if they do not follow a certain community education model. The community education models are very important because they provide direction to the PALCs. PALCs operate within communities and they are therefore expected to serve those communities. They will only be able to serve communities if they understand the community learning needs. The literature by Lovett provides four community development models which are meant to guide community sites. The researcher expects Jabu Ngcobo PALC to be using at least one of these community models because they provide direction and relevance to a PALC.

To know how effective adult learning takes place, it is important to understand how adult learners learn. The only thing to clearly inform us about adult learning is theories. In this chapter the researcher presented the humanist theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of needs in adult learning and the significance of experience as fundamental to the learning process. It highlights why it is important to incorporate the learners' learning needs and the community needs when teaching adult learners. There is a lot that can be learnt from the literature presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Research methodology

In this chapter, the site population, aims of the research, the rationale for selecting a qualitative approach and the specific tools utilized are explored.

This is an evaluative study. Evaluation refers to the quality of curricula, educational programmes and whole education systems (Kemmis & Stake cited in Fotheringham, 1993a: 3). Evaluation research thus differs in its emphasis from other major types of social research as exploratory studies, which seek to formulate new problems and hypothesis or explanatory research which places emphasis on the testing of theoretically significant hypothesis or descriptive social research which documents the existence of certain social conditions at a given moment or over time (Wright, 1968: 198).

This study uses the formative evaluation approach to ascertain whether the ABET programmes at Jabu Ngcobo have been adequately adapted to the social reality of learners from Imbali Township. Formative evaluation relates to the development and implementation of a programme. Its aim is to shape the programme so that it will have the greatest beneficial impact upon the target community. Also, many large programmes use formative evaluation at regular intervals during the life of the programmes to ensure that the intervention adapts to changes in social reality and thus continues to have the greatest possible impact (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 49).

2.1 The Case Study

The research uses a case study approach of one education centre. As no prior research has been undertaken at the Jabu Ngcobo Centre, this was a somewhat exploratory research project. Despite the exploratory nature of the inquiry, this

study was, nevertheless, detailed and systematic which, according to Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:43), is characteristic of a case study.

In addition to the exploratory nature of the research, there was a strong element of historical research inherent within the research design. The historical element to the case study is one that accords with the view of Stenhouse (1988: 49) who states that the case study can resemble a history. Deshler & Hagan (1990: 160) are of the view that historical research in adult education would, in the last decade of the 20th century, be one of seven specific areas of adult education research. Deshler & Hagan state:

> An increase in historical research is forecast mostly because it is long overdue. Large expenditures of public money for adult education have been made throughout the world. The history and patterns of these efforts are likely to spur a historical perspective before continuing investment is warranted. (Deshler & Hagan, 1990: 160).

McNamara (1999: 1) notes that the case study has the following characteristics, most of which pertained to this research.

- Data are collected by a variety of methods, including documentation such as histories, questionnaires and interviews.
- A case study is a narrative - a highly readable story that integrates and summarizes key information around the focus of the case study.

The researcher intended that this study would lead to a critical reflection by the Department of Education, ABET directorate, which is responsible for programmes that are offered in PALCs, especially with reference to Jabu Ngcobo PALC at Imbali. The objective is to highlight the need of programmes that are offered in the PALCs to address the needs of adult learners. Adult programmes have to do this in order to be learner-centred. Stenhouse considers that researchers conducting educational case studies are aiming to "enrich the thinking and discourse of educators by the refinement of prudence through the systematic and reflective documentation of experience" (Stenhouse, 1988: 50).

2.2 Summary of aims

The aims of this study were as follows:

- To provide information about literacy programmes at Jabu Ngcobo PALC.
- To contribute to the development of models of ABET provision and delivery throughout KwaZulu-Natal.
- To benefit Jabu Ngcobo Centre and the Department of Education through suggestions on how to improve the programme provision and delivery.

2.3 Site

Jabu Ngcobo PALC is located at Imbali Stage II in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The centre is located some 20 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg. The centre was started by Jabu Ngcobo in 1988 for the purpose of providing literacy programmes to adults in the community of Imbali Township. Initially it functioned as a night school. The centre has been providing literacy, and more recently ABET, for almost fifteen years. The centre was later named after Jabu Ngcobo. In 1997, the Department of Education renamed the old night schools PALCs and introduced a regulatory framework that guided the transformation of night schools to PALCs. The Regulatory Framework was later replaced by the ABET Act (2000).

The centre is hosted by the Ndabenhle Primary School. Like most adult centres, it relies on the resources of Ndabenhle Primary School for administration and accommodation. Initially the centre catered for Imbali community, but after the 1994 elections and the political violence of the early 90s, it now caters for the community of Imbali and the informal settlement of Slangspruit, which started as a refuge settlement. Its location is ideal for both communities as it is at the centre of Imbali Township. The centre was opened to address the needs of the previously disadvantaged community of Imbali, as "most people in the areas around Pietermaritzburg don't have jobs, they rely on pensions or on small businesses or income-generating projects or get money from family members who earn or from casual or piece work" (Harley et al., 2000: 35). Considering that KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the highest levels of illiteracy in the whole

country (Aitchison, 1999: 101), Jabu Ngcobo PALC is expected to play an important role in its literacy programmes. It is also vital for the programmes to address the learning needs of the previously disadvantaged community of Imbali and those of the informal settlement of Slangspruit. The population sample of this study, as will be discussed, will provide data that will clearly indicate whether the policy used by PALCS enables them to provide educational programmes that address the learning needs of adult learners and the communities.

2.4 The sample

The sample in the study consists of stakeholders selected on the basis that they could reasonably be expected to provide data that would relate to the research questions. Thus the sample consisted of:

- Centre manager
- Educators
- Focus group of current learners (8 ABET level 4 learners)
- Focus group of ex-learners (5 learners)
- Councillor of Imbali
- Community leaders (one school leader and a leader of a women's organization)
- Superintendent of Education Management ABET section, Pietermaritzburg region.

All these stakeholders played a major role in the functioning of Jabu Ngcobo PALC. Although their roles are diverse, they are intertwined.

2.4.1 The Centre Manager

The centre manager is Mrs Motaung. She took over the reigns of management and administration of the centre from Jabu Ngcobo. She is very familiar with the centre and she is an educator at the host school (Ndabenhle Primary School).[1]

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[1] Interview with Mrs Motaung: 2001:05.06).

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2.4.2 Educators (Facilitators)

The centre employs thirteen educators. For this study four educators were selected for an interview process. It was assumed that as they represented the levels they taught, which were ABET 1, 2, 3 and 4, and that adequate information was going to be obtained.[2] Four educators were also selected from each of the levels. On the researcher's request, their lessons were observed and the observation sheet was used.

2.4.3 Focus groups

Eight current learners were interviewed. The group was representative as all the ABET levels were represented. Questions invited their opinions about the PALC, about the programmes, about educators and their suggestions on how programmes could be improved.

2.4.4 Councillor of Imbali

Based on the assumption that he knows the needs of the community, he was interviewed about the community needs.

2.4.5 Community leaders (a Church Leader and a Leader from a Women's Organization)

The researcher felt it was imperative to gain a deep understanding of the needs of the community. The leaders of the church and women's organization were chosen to identify what they perceive as the main problems of adults in the community, their opinion about illiteracy and the kind of assistance which they could provide to the centre which provides literacy programmes.

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[2] For ABET, adult learners are grouped into ABET levels according to their education experiences and capabilities. Compared to school grades ABET level 1 is equivalent to Grade 3, ABET level 2 is equivalent to Grades 4 and 5, ABET level 3 is equivalent to Grades 6 and 7, and ABET level 4 is equivalent to Grade 9.

2.4.6 Superintendent of Education Management (ABET)

He is responsible for monitoring the ABET centres in the Pietermaritzburg region. He was chosen to address questions about policy and programming and his views about what makes a site effective.

2.4.7 The researcher

Having worked as an educator for three years at the PALC, the researcher believes that he will provide objective insight in this study. The researcher will use the combination of research instruments. The instruments will be designed using 'explorer and surveyor-in-residence' approaches. The researcher also believes that his knowledge of the community will add weight to the research study.

2.5 Rationale for using qualitative research design and methodology

The most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its express commitment to viewing events, actions, norms, values, etc. from the properties of the people who are being studied (Bryman, 1988: 61). Bryman's assertion highlights the importance of qualitative research methods as they can enable the researcher to deepen his or her investigation. The data obtained from qualitative research methods can be applied and adjusted to many situations to guide understanding (Morse, 1997: 227).

Qualitative research has the natural setting as the source of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 29). This is because researchers spend a lot of time in settings like schools, educational settings and in other general settings, searching for data that they eventually analyse using qualitative research tools. Qualitative researchers recognise that issues are not simple, but are intimately linked to political, social, historical and particularly personal contexts, and therefore cannot be separated from the broader milieu (Dickson, 1995: 15). Therefore it is true that there is an implicit longitudinal element built into much qualitative research, which is both a

symptom and cause of an undertaking to view social life in processual rather than static terms (Bryman, 1988: 65). The argument that is being presented here is that qualitative researchers are interested in studying the reality of everyday life. They also use the approach when examining social phenomena and that allows them to have access to unexpectedly important topics that may not have been visible to them if they had used rigid methods. For example, when conducting interviews the researcher learns more from an interviewee (through personal interaction), which cannot be the case when using a quantitative tool like a questionnaire. Qualitative researchers emphasize the uniqueness of individual lives and experiences.

Qualitative research is descriptive (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 30). This statement simply implies that in most cases the data collected using qualitative research tools is in the form of words rather than numbers. The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. Unlike their quantitative research counterparts, qualitative researchers are non-reductionists because they do not reduce pages of narration and other data to numerical symbols (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 30). This study attempted to analyse data with all of its richness as closely as possible to the form in which it was recorded or transcribed. This was done because "...qualitative research demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 30).

Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 31). This simply implies that qualitative researchers do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses they hold before entering the study, rather the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 31). Furthermore, unlike the quantitative approach, interpretation is not confined to the identification of variables and the development of instruments before data gathering. This is rather reflected in the study to be described as the researcher attempts to construct a

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picture, to raise an argument or to draw conclusions. This eventually leads to vertical generalization.

Vertical generalization is accomplished by considering the texts generated by qualitative research and by asking questions that will lead to insights regarding substantive theory (Morse, 1997: 201). This means that the findings of a qualitative study contribute to the development of a substantive theory. Morse further argues, "Although it might be claimed that much of qualitative research does not posses horizontal generalizability, it is rich in its ability to illuminate existing theory" (Morse, 1997: 201).

Meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997: 32). Qualitative researchers are interested in the ways different people make sense out of their lives. Therefore this accounts for the researcher's mission to enter into a dialogue with his subject to gain some perspective. Hence questions to capture participant perspective were posed during the focus group discussions. The questions give clues as to how participants structure this world and are also important in checking that the researcher's interpretations match those of the informants.

2.6 Qualitative tools used

A multi-method approach was used for qualitative data collection in this study because using a single method and finding a clear-cut result may delude the investigator into believing that they have found the right answer (Jack, 1979 in Robson, 1993: 12). Furthermore, a multi-method approach enabled the researcher to "obtain greater density in information, more vividness of description and greater clarity of meaning" (Jack, 1979 cited in Strumpfer, 1990: 224).

2.6.1 Interview schedule

Qualitative interviewing is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their world (Rubin & Rubin, 1995: 1). Through qualitative interviews, the researcher can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which he or she

did not participate. In this research project the interview schedules were used with the centre manager, educators, focus group of current and ex-learners, the SEM of ABET in Pietermaritzburg Region and with the community leaders. (See Appendices A and B). The semi-structured interviews were used as the researcher introduced the topic and guided the discussion by asking specific questions (Rubin & Rubin, 1995: 5).

With the centre manager the interview schedule was used to find out the statistical information concerning contact times, number of current and previous learners, educators, educators versus learners ratios, time tabling and programming (See Appendix A). With the educators, the interview schedule was used to find information about curriculum, staff development, programme delivery and policies (see Appendix A).

The interview schedule was also used for the focus group of current and ex-learners. With the SEM[3] of ABET, it was used to find out data related to policy issues (see Appendix B). With the Councillor of Imbali, the women's organization and the church leader, interviews were used to find out about the community needs and their opinion about the programmes (see Appendix B). An interview is the best way of getting an in-depth understanding of a situation from the viewpoint of the participant (Van Rooyen, 1996: 103). An interview involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 106).

Given the low literacy skills of some of the respondents of Jabu Ngcobo PALC, the interview schedule was highly suitable as learners could express themselves orally, which they did with ease. The usage of interviews was beneficial as they helped to provide insight about programming at Jabu Ngcobo PALC. Through qualitative interviews, researchers evaluate all kinds of projects and programmes, whether for social reform or managerial improvement (Rubin & Rubin, 1995: 5). During the interview process, the researcher used a tape recorder to record

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[3] SEM - Superintendent of Education Management

information from the interviewees. A tape recorder allows the interviewer to capture more than he or she could be relying on memory (Morgan, 1989: 1).

2.6.2 Observation method

"As the actions and behaviour of people are the central aspect in virtually any enquiry, a natural and obvious technique is to watch what they do, to record this in some way and then to describe, analyse and interpret what we have observed" (Robson, 1993: 190). The researcher's observations and reflections were used for qualitative data collection. The researcher used the observation sheet to collect data on how the educator(s) present their lessons (see Appendix D). This method is known for its directness, but a major concern is the extent to which an observer affects the situation under observation and consequently the result. This aspect was noted in this study. The researcher discussed certain issues with the educators from ABET Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 before observing their lessons. This was done to ensure that the environment was conducive for the observation of their lessons. Educators were also informed about aspects that were going to be observed. The other reason for using the observation sheet was to compare the educators' practice with what they said during the interview process, especially in relation to programme delivery.

2.6.3 Focus groups

Since it is important that participants benefit from a research endeavour, an approach which encouraged both learner exploration and which facilitated data generation was sought. The use of focus groups thus appeared to be most suitable. Focus group sessions of 8 current learners and 5 ex-learners were held. The session of the current learners was run during the teaching or contact time which was 15h00 to 16h00. The main aim of the researcher was to find out about the learners' needs and their opinions about the programmes (see Appendix B). From ex-learners the researcher's main aim was to collect data about programmes and opinions on what the centre could do to meet contemporary and future challenges (see Appendix B).

Morgan (1997: 6) defines focus groups as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. This is what the researcher felt was an appropriate technique in an exploratory study. In such a study it is the researcher's interest that provides the focus, and the data comes from group interaction (Corey & Corey, 1992: 7). This method was suitable because it allowed the researcher to focus the group and consequently produce concentrated amounts of data on precisely the topic of interest (Morgan, 1997: 13). It not only discloses what is important to individual respondents, but it attempts to provide a situation where the synergy of the group adds to the depth and insight. Thus the group strives to provide in-depth qualitative data that could not be obtained as efficiently any other way (Anderson, 1996: 241). In this manner the data is gathered efficiently.

Efficiency in gathering data is also enhanced by the fact that focus groups can access a number of people within a short space of time. For this study focus groups were ideal because the subjects were ABET learners from different ABET levels and the researcher wanted to collect data from all levels simultaneously and minimise disruptions and waste of time.

2.7 The researcher

The researcher has looked at different existing literature for this study. Through this process, it has emerged that studies about South African adult education, as a whole, are limited. The researcher was assisted by the few existing studies to undertake this research process. Studies reviewed for this research study are those written by researchers like Aitchison, Land, Fotheringham, Baatjes, Harley and Houghton. The researcher will explore their contributions in Chapter Four, where data will be analysed.

2.8 Quantitative method used

2.8.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire method is the most structured way of getting information directly from respondents (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 107). A questionnaire may be either structured or unstructured, mailed or self-administered. Structured questionnaires have a fixed wording and sequence of presentation, as well as more or less precise indications of how to answer each question (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 107). Unstructured response questions or open-ended questions are particularly useful in pilot investigations or at times when the researcher has little knowledge of the number or variety of responses that might be expected, or needs to collect data that fully reflects the feelings or perceptions of respondents (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 107).

For this study self-completed questionnaires were designed so that they had closed questions (see Appendix C). The closed questions were used because "open-ended questions are more difficult to code and analyse" (Robson, 1993: 247). Questionnaires were used in order to gather information about the programmes and the facilitation methods from the adult learners at Jabu Ngcobo PALC.

2.8.2 Advantages of Questionnaire

There are a number of advantages of questionnaires, such as the following:

- The questionnaire allows a wider range and distribution of the sample than the survey interview method.
- It provides an opportunity for respondents to give frank, anonymous answers.
- It allows greater economy of effort (that is, a single instrument, duplicated and distributed to numerous respondents can produce a large amount of data).

- It can be constructed so that quantitative data are relatively easy to collect and analyse.

- It facilitates the collection of large amounts of data in a short period of time (Busha & Harter, 1980: 62).

2.8.3 Disadvantages of the questionnaire

- It precludes personal contact with respondents, perhaps causing the investigator to gain insufficient knowledge about participants in a study.

- It does not allow respondents to qualify ambiguous questions.

- If the prepared instrument does not arouse respondent emotions, that is when the questionnaire is too impersonal and valid responses might not be elicited.

- Poorly worded or direct questions might arouse antagonism or inhibitions on the part of respondents.

- More questionnaires cannot be designed to uncover causes or reasons for respondents' attitudes, beliefs or actions.

- It is difficult to obtain responses from a representative cross-section of the target population.

2.8.4 Structured questions

Closed questions are easy to code and limit unnecessary answers. They help the respondent in focusing his or her answers to the question asked. Other advantages of closed questions include the standardization of questions and the ability to precode (Van Rooyen, 1996: 100) as well as assisting in avoiding ambiguity and misrepresentation. They also tend to be easier to answer and therefore not demanding much of the student's time.

2.8.5 Unstructured questions

These forms of questions are difficult because the researcher does not have the opportunity for clarification and explanation of interesting responses (Bawden, 1990: 37). They do, however, leave the participants completely free to express

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their answers as they wish. Unstructured questions are "well adapted to exploratory studies or studies based on quantitative analysis of data" (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 122) but answers may be quite complex and not easily comparable to those of other respondents. Their recordings and scoring gives rise to some difficulties. Furthermore, they tend to produce replies that are more difficult to analyse than those of their structured counterparts (Busha & Harter, 1980: 70). They also tend to be more difficult to answer, which places more demand of the time on the respondents and their ability to answer involved questions.

2.9 Evaluation of the methodology

There should be procedures built into the research design to ensure the collection of reliable data prior to actual data collection (Van Rooyen, 1996: 8). Utility, reliability and validity are the three criteria that are standards of quality that the researcher must address during the planning process to ensure that findings accurately describe the research problem and to assist the researcher in making sure decisions are based on information, that accurately reflects a true picture of programmes at Jabu Ngcobo PALC.

2.9.1 Utility, reliability and validity

If the study has utility, the findings can be used to suggest specific decision areas that require attention or offer strategies by which the effectiveness of the organisation can be improved (Swisher & McClure, 1984: 732). In this study it is anticipated that the data collected will be used to benefit not only the centre being investigated, but that other centres around Pietermaritzburg will benefit from the findings as they will be able to use them to reflect on how they deliver their ABET programmes.

Reliability is concerned with the consistency of measures (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 130). Reliability of measurement implies stability, consistency, dependability, predictability and repeated measurement should produce the same data (Swisher & McClure, 1984: 95). Thus, the greater the consistency in the

results, the greater the reliability of the measuring procedure (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 130). In this study, it is anticipated that under relatively similar circumstances, the instruments used would produce similar results.

Validity is an assessment of the extent to which data collection procedures actually measure what the researcher intended them to measure (Swisher & McClure, 1984: 97, 98). Unless we can be certain that our techniques are actually measuring the things that they are supposed to be measuring, we cannot be certain what the results mean (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 185). There are many different types of validity and the three that will be briefly mentioned are internal, external and face validity.

2.9.2 Internal and external validity

Internal validity asks if the researcher has the correct interpretation of the data, if an additional factor has not been acknowledged, and whether the instrument did measure the variable intended (Swisher & McClure, 1984: 98). External validity asks if the findings can be generalized from a sample to the population as a whole or if these were unique factors associated with the data collection techniques, the research design or the selection of subjects or cases that allow one to suggest that the results are not representative of a larger population (Swisher & McClure, 1984: 99).

2.9.3 Face Validity

Face validity is concerned with the way the instrument appears to the participant (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995: 139). It is important that an instrument be tailored to the needs of the subjects for whom it is intended. Some instruments may appear too simplistic or too difficult to the respondents, resulting in the giving up before they begin.

In this study all efforts were made to ascertain face validity by simplifying difficult terms. Validity was also obtained by giving respondents enough time to answer the questions.

2.10 Limitations of the study

Limitations emerged with the administering of questionnaires. The terms that were used were difficult to some learners and the researcher had to explain them in order to facilitate the learners' understanding. The explanation of some terminology may have contaminated the results of the questionnaire (Appendix B) because the explanations given may have been the researcher's interpretation and this may have resulted in the learners giving a biased answer. Some English terminology was translated into Zulu.

The unavailability of documents, which show the history of the centre, was also a problem because the researcher had only the centre manager to provide information about the centre. It would have been ideal if there was something written to show the history of the centre over the years. The findings have however shed some light on whether the programmes offered at Jabu Ngcobo PALC do address the needs of the learners and the community of Imbali Township and its surrounding areas.

2.11 Conclusion

In the chapter the methodology that was used in the study was outlined. The rationale for using qualitative and quantitative tools like interviews, observation sheet and questionnaires was outlined. A sample population for each centre comprising of centre manager, facilitators (educators), superintendent of Education Management, councillor, member of the women and church organizations and the focus groups of current and ex-learners was described. The analysis of data was briefly described and finally the issues of ability, reliability and validity, which are essential in any methodology, were discussed. The essence of qualitative and quantitative tools used in this study will unfold in the coming chapter on research findings.

CHAPTER THREE

Key Findings

In this chapter the key findings are presented. The findings are presented in seven sections. Data was obtained from role players through the use of interview schedules, questionnaires and an observation sheet. A tape recorder was used to assist with the collection of data. Tape recording is the best method as the raw data remains for later study and not having to take notes enables the researcher to take part in the conversation in a natural way (Burns, 2000: 429). In this chapter, the main focus is on the learning programmes provided by Jabu Ngcobo PALC, but a number of issues that affect the provision of programmes are also presented. The first section locates the investigation within the current realities of adult illiteracy in South Africa. It provides a picture of the scale and scope of adult illiteracy in South Africa and in Imbali Township. It furthers provides a description of the socio-economic conditions with specific focus on unemployment, educational levels and the income of the inhabitants of Imbali. Thereafter the focus shifts to the PALC and detailed data about the PALC are provided. The data include information about programmes, programme administration staffing and the curriculum. The views of different stakeholders are also presented.

3.1 Some statistics on adult literacy in South Africa

Aitchison (1998: 1) argues that there are 12 million adults in South Africa who have not received a full general education. This means that they have not completed nine years of schooling. Of these, 3 million (11% of adults) have never been to school. The statistics are presented in the diagram below.

This pie graph shows the state of illiteracy in South Africa.
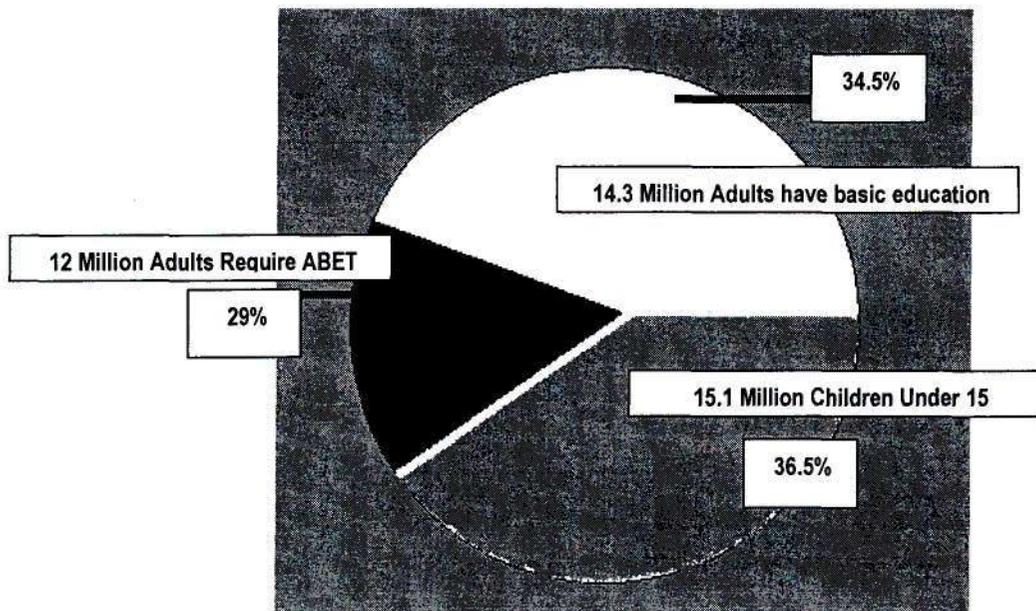
This suggests that there is a great need for literacy and basic education provision and delivery in the country.

3.1.1 Adult literacy in KwaZulu-Natal

KwaZulu-Natal has the largest number of adults with less than Standard 5. Aitchison et al., (1999: vii) points out that in KwaZulu-Natal close to 1 million adults 20 years and older have not been to school. This figure indicates the considerable degree of illiteracy amongst a large part of the population. Add to this number 747 586 more people with less than Standard 5, the number of functional illiterate people in the province amounts to 1 704 803. It is also quite evident that illiteracy and under-education in rural communities are high. This suggests a great need for adult literacy and basic education. Aitchison et al., (1999: vii) further highlights what I would consider the essence of this study, the state of the programmes of Public Adult Learning Centres. They state:

> There appears to be little practical being done towards a broad renewal of the old 'night schools' as genuine multi-level learning centres. The prioritising of ABET, whilst a logical starting place for the reform of the PALCs, seems not to have taken into consideration this broader perspective. Not much linkage is being made with training in ABET programmes while in some cases such a linkage is misconceived. (Aitchison et al., 1999: xv).

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Aitchison et al. further suggest that there is a mismatch of programmes in the workplace because the candidates for ABET might be technically proficient but they do not have the basic education that would enable them to access further education. The need and quality of ABET programmes are therefore important in supporting adult learners to access further learning. A key aspect of ABET programmes is how they take into consideration the needs of learners and the communities they live in.

3.1.2 Adult literacy programmes in Pietermaritzburg

Educators often assume that educational need is the priority for any community programming. However, in many communities in South Africa education has to be seen in the context of other developmental issues. The Centre for Adult Education was involved with supporting a literacy project in the Happy Valley informal settlement just outside Pietermaritzburg in 1994. The project failed for a number of reasons, one of which was that the providers assumed a substantial felt need for literacy. In a paper that reflected on this mistake, the providers said:

> We did not ask fundamental questions that should have been asked such as 'is literacy a priority in the community?' and 'what evidence is there of a need for literacy?' We assumed the need for literacy and took it for granted. Because literacy classes had started, because forty learners had asked for classes, it seemed clear to us that there was a need...We also took the relationship between literacy and other development work for granted. Or rather we did not establish the link at all. BESG[1] was facilitating overall development work in Happy Valley, such as housing and called on us to support the literacy project. (Fotheringham, Kunene & Krone, 1995: 4).

This extract points out the importance of knowing the felt community learning needs. So we have to assume or we need to conduct a thorough needs assessment in order to address the learning needs of the community that we are serving.

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[1] BESG is a Black Empowerment Company that is involved with housing projects in Pietermaritzburg.

3.1.3 Imbali Township

This urban area is situated near Pietermaritzburg. It is the area for this research study because Jabu Ngcobo is in this area. Concerning this area, the 1996 Census revealed that the population of the area is approximately 31 410 with 14 011 male and 17 399 female. Other data in the community profile is:
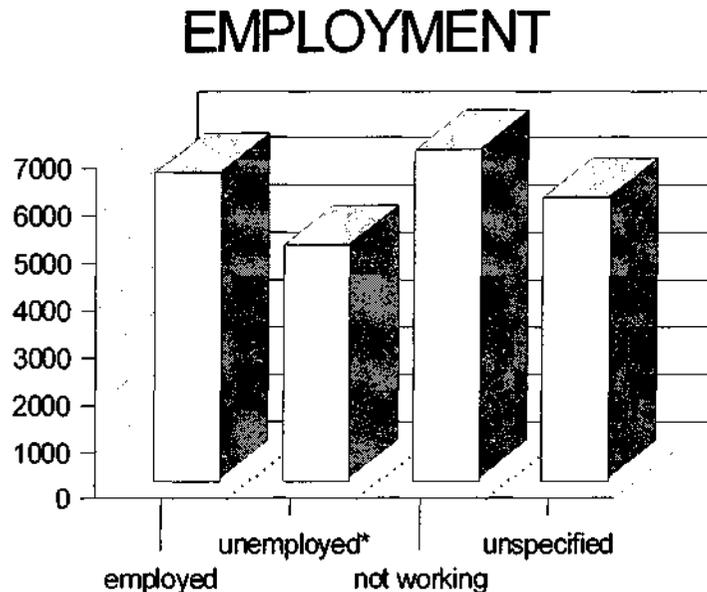
EMPLOYMENT

* Looking for work

This graph reflects the conditions of employment in Imbali as reflected by Census 96. The figures should have changed, but with many factories (especially shoe factories) pulling out of the city, it would be reasonable to state that the rate of unemployment has increased.

The primary source of data on income breakdown remains population census data. Although the latest census data were not available, the 1996 national population census gave a very good overall picture of the income breakdown for Imbali.

EDUCATION
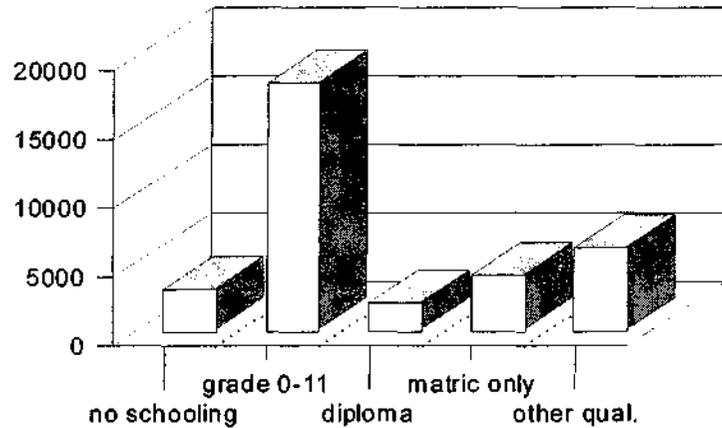
Census 1996 shows that the community of Imbali Township needs basic education. The statistics suggests that about 3 000 have no schooling. Approximately 18 000 have less than Grade 11. There are approximately 5000 with Matric certificates. Figures for no schooling and Grade 0-Grade 11 clearly indicate a great need for education programmes that should address the needs of Imbali Township.

Census 1996 also shows that there are very few people with a post-Matric qualification. In essence the statistics show that more than 50% of the population of Imbali require basic education. It is then incumbent upon the programmes of the PALC to respond to the learning needs of the Imbali Township.

3.1.4 Income breakdown for adults
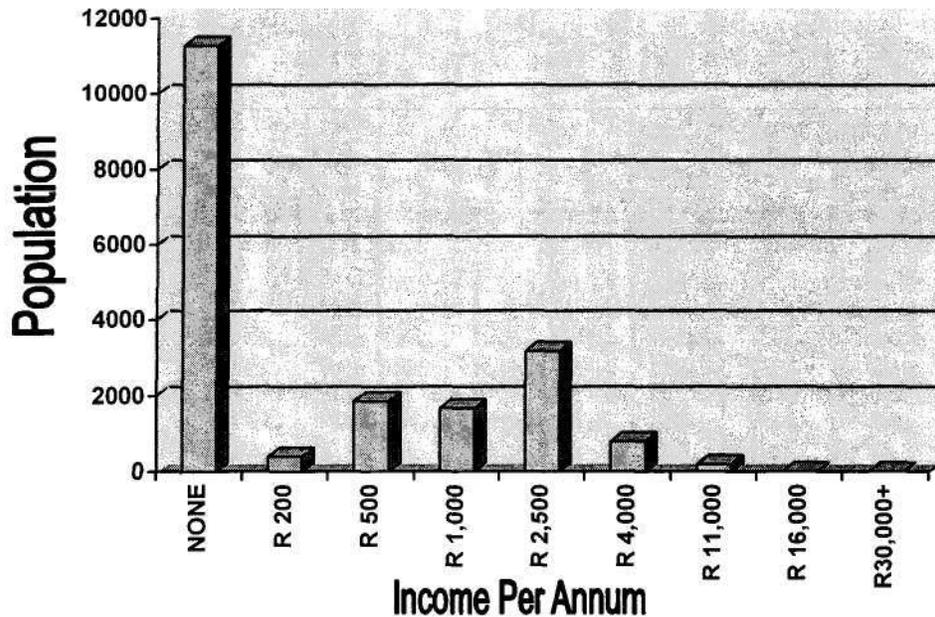
The population of Imbali Township as per Census 96 is approximately 31410. There is a high percentage of people who live below the poverty line. Many people earn between R500-R1000 a month, while many are unemployed. Harley et al. (2000) argue that:

> Most people in the areas around Pietermaritzburg don't have jobs. People rely on pensions, or on small businesses or income-generating projects, or get money from family members who earn, or from casual or piece work. Some work as gardeners or domestic workers in town or in local factories. (Harley et al., 2000: 35).

These figures show that adults who come to Jabu Ngcobo PALC are looking for programmes that will uplift their standard of living. They are looking for literacy programmes that would help them economically, socially, politically and emotionally.

3.1.5   Human rights and development projects

Research conducted by the Centre for Adult Education and the Midlands Women's Group (1998) in the areas of Pietermaritzburg, Matatiele, Kokstad, Mpophomeni, Nottingham Road, Ixopo, Nxamalala and Greytown revealed that women in these areas have similar needs to the men. According to Land (a

literacy specialist and researcher based at the Centre for Adult Education), women experience a number of needs including employment opportunities, clean water and electricity, information on child abuse, skills training to help one start a small business, proper health facilities, houses and toilets, information on HIV/AIDS and sexual harassment, agricultural skills, information on government grants, information on the rights of women, access to learning centres and security. Land's finding clearly indicates that women need general, technical and political education that will empower them economically, socially and politically. The findings also suggest the content for learning programmes and curriculum that could be taught in communities through learning centres.

3.1.6 Legal rights and resources for women who live in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands and surrounding areas

The Centre for Adult Education and the Midlands Women's Group (1998) highlighted important issues that affect women who live in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands and the surrounding areas and offer some form of advice on how to deal with these issues. Issues discussed include earning money, marriage and divorce, health, government grants, violence, death, homosexuality, land and housing, consumer issues, children and youth, services and transport. These issues, which are closely related to those identified by Land apply to women who live in Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas of Pholela, Underberg, Richmond, Umvoti, Mooi River, New Hanover, Kranskop, Impendle, Ixopo and Lions River. These also suggest what the content of learning programmes should entail.

3.1.7 Integrated development plan 2002-2006 for Msunduzi municipality

According to the Integrated Development Plan for the Msunduzi Municipality, approximately 60% of the City's residents live in Edendale and Vulindlela. 53% of them are female (Msunduzi, 2000-2006). People in these areas are highly affected by low income, a lack of economic opportunities, poverty, unemployment, poor health, a lack of access to information and education, substance abuse and related issues, crime, rape and child abuse.

The Integrated Plan further highlights that about 88000 adults in Msunduzi area are living with HIV. The estimate of the backlog of housing in the Pietermaritzburg and Greater Edendale areas is 17000 units, where currently families are living in informal settlements (Msunduzi Municipality 2002-2006: 35). The Plan has prioritised the following issues to be attended to within its time frame of 2002-2006 (Msunduzi Municipality 2002-2006: 83).

- Creation of jobs
- Skills development for the local community
- Equitable access to:
    - Land and housing
    - Education and literacy and numeracy promotion
    - Health and nutrition and health issues
    - Elimination of poverty, slums and informal settlements

The municipality's plan identifies similar problems and recognises the need to address issues such as unemployment, skills development and the promotion of literacy. It also suggests that educational programmes should provide general, political and technical education that would respond to a set of similar needs raised by Land and others.

3.2 Jabu Ngcobo PALC

3.2.1 Demographic details

The participants consisted of current learners, ex-learners, educators, the Centre manager, district officials and community learners. The ex-learners and current learners were Black between the ages 18 and 35. The learners were Zulu-speaking and included both men and women from Imbali, Slangspruit and Kwanyamazane. Since Zulu is their first language, some participants struggled with some of the information required as it was written in English, but the problematic areas were explained and where there was a need, a Zulu equivalent was given. Details about the interviews are presented in the tables in the sections below. The educators

were all schoolteachers employed in different schools in Imbali. The district officials were familiar with the area and the community leaders were active members of the Imbali and surrounding communities. All were Black.

3.2.2 Documentation available at the PALC

The table below indicates important documents that are related to ABET. Knowledge of these documents can promote effective administration and management of a PALC by a centre manager. As part of the data collection it was important to establish which documents were available at the PALC. The implementation of policy is often impeded by a lack of information and training available at the delivery site and it was necessary to establish whether this might be the case at the PALC.

Document	Yes (✓) No (X)	Published (Year)	Date available at PALC (Year)
1. ABET Policy	✓	1997	2000
2. Provincial Multi-Year Plan	✓	1997	1999
3. Regulatory Framework[2]	✓	1997	1999
4. PAM Document[3]	✓	1998	1999
5. Conditions of Service (Educators)	X	1998	Outstanding
6. GETC Proposal	✓	1998	2000
7. Standards of Adult Educators	✓	1997	2000
8. Placement Tools	✓	1998	2000
9. Social Mobilisation Strategy	X	1998	Outstanding

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[2]   The Regulatory Framework proposes policy similar to the Schools Act and provides details how night schools should be transformed into effective sites of learning where adult learners are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills required for employment opportunities and further learning.

[3]   The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) is a departmental document that provides details about the Conditions of Service of adult educators and how they are remunerated.

10. Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy	X	1998	Outstanding

The table indicates that Jabu Ngcobo PALC appears to have most of the documents that provide guidance to help it to function. It was noted that some of these documents arrived late at the PALC. For example, the Regulatory Framework was published by the DoE in 1997 but it was only sent to the PALC in 1999. This trend indicates that documents that are published which inform implementation at delivery sites take too long to reach the PALCs and this affects the provisioning in some way. The delay in delivery of the Regulatory Framework resulted in a delay of effective transformation of the delivery site. It suggests therefore that in order to affect policy implementation it requires more efficient disseminating information and the provision of capacity to implement policy.

3.3 Administration

Jabu Ngcobo was first established as a night school in 1991. According to the centre manager, the centre employs fourteen part-time educators who teach at different ABET levels, from ABET level 1 to 4. The Centre Manager is responsible mainly for administration and management of the PALC. During the interview process the Centre Manager described some of her duties which include the recruitment of learners, record keeping, reporting, teaching of an ABET class, monitoring and fundraising. The centre operates without any additional administrative support. According to the Centre Manager, the PALC has put the following policies in place:

- Learners' Code of Conduct
- Rules for the centre
- How to conduct assessment
- Code of Conduct for educators

During the interview, she revealed that learners attending the PALC came from Imbali Stage II, Slangspruit and from France.[4]

3.4 Programming

3.4.1 Programme Schedule

The PALC operates according to a set schedule from Monday to Thursday. Classes are conducted from 15h00 to 19h00. This means that the operational time for the centre is four hours per day and a total of four sessions per week. The Centre Manager feels that the contact time is inadequate because there is often not enough time to complete the learning programmes. These time restraints were further shortened because the centre often starts classes later than it should.[5]

3.4.2 Curriculum

The centre receives designed learning programmes from the regional ABET office in the Pietermaritzburg Region. These learning programmes indicate what the centre should teach and are therefore very prescriptive. In the centre manager's view although the centre tries to address key issues of health and poverty issues like HIV/AIDS, they have to adhere to the learning programmes because learners write external examinations at ABET level 4.[6] The learning programmes therefore do not appear to relate to the immediate needs of the immediate community

3.4.3 Learning Programmes

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[4]   This is a new settlement with two-roomed houses built by the government for people who were homeless because of the violence which occurred around Pietermaritzburg in the 1990s.

[5]   ABET classes are meant to run over a 40 week period per year. Enrolment figures often determine if a centre would operate and when it starts operating. Jabu Ngcobo complains about the daily starting time.

[6]   Standardized examinations which are written by ABET learners in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal in June.

In the section to follow, the researcher presents a summary of the learning programmes for different sub-fields of learning from ABET level 1 to level 4.

What is of crucial importance here is that the system does not give learners credit for first and second (and additional) languages, but the schooling system does. In ABET, the languages are grouped together in one learning area called Communication. ABET learners are disadvantaged and their need for Mother Tongue Language (MTL) and English is ignored. They are forced to choose and all choose English.

3.4.3.1 Mother tongue and English as a Second Language

ABET level 1 focuses on the three fundamentals sub-fields of learning, which are Numeracy, Mother tongue (isiZulu), and English as a Second Language (ESL).

- ESL ABET 1: covers themes such as life skills, communication, story telling, advertisement, grammar, minute taking, letter writing, filling forms and forms of reading.
- The learning programme for ABET Level 2 covers themes such as myself, my family, my community, careers, food, farming and budgeting.
- The learning programme for Level 3 covers the themes: kinds of transport, public service, private sector and other themes similar to those in Level 2. For similar themes the difference occurs in the range on which each theme is delivered.
- Themes covered in Level 4 are slightly different from those covered in the other levels. They focus on the following: communication, culture, education, health, vocation and rights and ethics.

3.4.3.2 Numeracy ABET Levels 1-4

- The learning programme for ABET Level 1 focuses on: conversion of numbers, number patterns, common fractions, word problems, capacity, time, distance and mass.

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- For ABET Level 2 the following themes are covered: place value, decimal fractions, common fractions, percentages and geometry.

- For Level 3 the learning programme covers the themes: whole numbers, word problems, multiples, number patterns, common fractions, decimal fractions, time, percentages and geometry.

- In ABET level 4 the themes of measurement, data, algebra, mathematical modes, number patterns, maps, shapes, space, geometry, agricultural products are covered.

3.4.3.3 Mother tongue (isiZulu)

- The learning programme for Level 1 covers the following themes: communication, careers, shopping and society.

- In Level 2 the themes society, health, food, careers and communication are covered.

- In Level 3 the themes under investigation include transport, water, unemployment, farming, hygiene and clothing.

- ABET Level 4 covers the themes of: communication, education, culture, health and ethics and issues related to urban and rural areas.

3.4.3.4 Natural Science (NS)

Natural Science is classified as on of the core sub-fields of learning. Core sub-fields are only offered from ABET Levels 2 - 4.

- Themes covered in the learning programme for ABET Level 2 are concepts of science, energy and change, water, the impact of science on human life, socio-economic needs versus scientific advances.

- ABET Level 3 covers the themes of living and non-living things, technology, people and their environment and socio-economic needs versus scientific advances.

- In Level 4 the themes of life and living, matter and materials, earth and beyond and energy and change are covered.

3.4.3.5 Human and Social Sciences (HSS)

An HSS learning programme was only offered at ABET level 3 at the Centre at the time of this study.

- Themes covered in ABET level 3 included: natural resources, technological devices, natural events and phenomena, South African provinces and their Premiers, skills appropriate to HSS, types of government, ecosystem, dumping sites, provision of services, causes of the Soweto uprising, physical map, political map and type of education with regard to different governments.

3.4.3.6 Small Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME)

This sub-field of learning was offered as an elective at the time of the study and was only offered at ABET Level 4.

- This learning programme covers the following themes: entrepreneurship, market research, business plan and internal and external environment of a business.

The key observation made by educators on learning programmes is captured in the following statement:

"They do not accommodate the learners' needs...they are exam-driven... Learners complain about learning certain learning areas as they prefer things which will equip them with life skills."

3.4.4 Placement tools and assessment

The Department of Education also provides centres with placement tools. Through these tools learners are placed into different ABET levels according to their performances. Learners who are unable to write the placement tasks are asked to give oral responses. There is a need for educators to know how to administer the

placement tools because failure to administer them properly can affect the learners and eventually result in an increase in the dropout rate.

Towards the end of June and November, learners write examinations that are set by the Department of Education. ABET levels one, two and three examinations are designed by the examination section in the province, whilst ABET level 4 examinations are designed by the national Department of Education and moderated by the quality assurance body called UMALUSI. After completing of ABET level 4, learners who have passed the requisite number of examinations receive a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC). According to the Centre Manager the current pass rate at the centre is above 50%.

3.4.5 Learning and Support Material

When asked about the Learning and Support Materials,[7] the Centre Manager revealed that LSMs were of the greatest importance in the learning process. She said they make teaching and learning easy for adult learners. The educators also affirmed this point and that they cannot do without them. There is, however, a lack of LSMs and learners play no role in the selection of LSMs.

3.5 Statistics

The following table provides a summary of the sex and numbers of learners enrolled in the different ABET programmes (ABET levels 1-4) in 2002.

ABET Levels	Male	Female	Total
1	2	13	15
2	-	10	10
3	2	15	17
4	3	22	25
Total	**7**	**60**	**67**

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[7] Learning and Support Materials facilitate teaching and learning. They can either be structured or unstructured. Examples are textbooks, workbooks and readers (structured); newspapers, newsletters, magazines and worksheets (unstructured).

The table shows that ABET levels 1, 2 and 3 had few learners and that adult learners in the higher levels are more likely to participate in programmes. The centre's enrolment statistics also show that 90% of the learners are women. The DoE educator/learner ratio requirement is 1:20 although a lower ratio of 1:15 is tolerated. In the case of this PALC ABET level 2 does not meet the requirements of the DoE and was facing the possibility of being discontinued for the academic year.

In essence these figures show that the enrolment at the centre is not good. The Centre Manager stated that she was not happy with the current enrolment rate although the centre used some recruitment strategy. A loudspeaker system that is driven through the streets is used to inform potential learners about the learning programmes and the PALC. Learners are also informed by word of mouth and advertisements are placed in the *Echo*.[8] The researcher believes that there are contributory issues that might be the cause for this proportional state. Poverty and unemployment might be some of the issues. The table below shows the capacity of the centre, and the number of learners enrolled in the last four years.

Year	Enrolment	Capacity[9]	Completed
1999	80	200	35
2000	65	200	25
2001	62	200	32
2002	67	200	X (unknown)
Average	**69**	**200**	**31**

Clearly, the figures in the table show that there is a decline in the enrolment pattern over the given years. The table also indicates that there is a high average attrition rate of 58%. The table also indicates that the centre can accommodate about two hundred learners but it is failing even to recruit even half of its capacity. The average capacity rate is only 35%. The centre manager recognises

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[8]   It is a newspaper that is the supplement of The *Witness*. It is aimed at Pietermaritzburg's Black readership and circulated around Pietermaritzburg free of charge every Thursday.

[9]   Capacity refers to the number of learners the centre can accommodate.

that the centre was experiencing a low participation rate and a high dropout rate. Her understanding of the high dropout rate is captured below:

"There are many projects around the centre and that non-governmental organisations around the centre provide programmes which teach learners skills like making polish, stay-soft and the growing of vegetables..."

The educators cited different reasons for the high dropout rate. These included:

> Learners are lazy...They also say they only want to learn English... They want to learn skills like computers... They say they want skills which will help them to cope with their short-term problems, things which will enable them to be self-reliant and be able to support their families.

To address the high dropout rate, the centre manager together with the educators said they once introduced a skills programme involving the production of yoghurt. The yoghurt produced was then sold in the community. This project generated much interest among the learners and it helped the centre to sustain its enrolment figures. The male learners received bricklaying skills training on certain days at Sukuma Training Centre and a construction company building houses in the immediate area employed many of them. Most of these learners did not return to classes. It shows that skills programmes are of great importance to adult learners and that they might dropout of classes when they find work.

The Centre Manager believes that as the PALC grows older, the enrolment patterns decrease because learners know that the programmes do not provide them with what they want. For example, during the recruitment process learners attend in greater numbers but that a high attrition rate is experienced within one month of enrolment. She argues that the DoE can address this problem by providing literacy programmes that have greater relevance to the communities' needs. She identifies literacy and basic education programmes that focus on economic and social skills as solutions. During the interview, she revealed that more than ten learners (15%) at the centre were employed and that it was indicative of the high unemployment rate in Imbali and its surrounding areas including Slangspruit and France.

3.6 Staffing

ABET Levels	Male	Female	Total
1	-	2	2
2	-	3	3
3	1	4	5
4	1	2	3
Total	**2**	**11**	**13**

This table shows that there are a total of thirteen educators including the centre manager employed at the PALC. Of the thirteen educators, eleven are female and two are male. Adult educators are selected and employed according to their:

- knowledge of adult education;
- qualifications in adult education -- ABET certificate/ABET diploma;
- professional development in ABET.

Educators are required to teach sub-fields of learning at specific ABET levels. The high dropout rate has forced the centre manager to combine ABET Levels 1 and 2. Educators of these levels are now teaching across the levels. Educators are employed on a part-time basis and remunerated at an hourly rate as stipulated in the PALC Managerial Document. Most of them are educators who teach children during the day.

The Centre Manager acknowledged that educators need ABET or adult education qualifications in order to be able to teach at the PALC. Only five of the educators or 38% had adult education qualifications. In order to equip educators with adult education teaching skills, support programmes in the form of mini workshops are provided by the Department of Education and Culture/ABET section. Educators who perform well are presented with certificates of merit.

3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The DoE through its Superintendent for ABET (SEM) or the District ABET coordinator is responsible for monitoring or evaluation of the centre. During visits the SEM writes a report based on administrative issues, teaching of educators and the learners' work. The centre manager is then given feedback about the visit. The Regulatory Framework state:

> An internal evaluation shall be conducted three times a year by the Programme Coordinator and provincial officials. The aspects of evaluation will include learning and teaching, progress, suitability of teaching methods and learning materials and the relevance of programmes to the needs of adult learners. (Department of Education, 1997a: 27).

The interviews revealed that visits do take place but monitors do not give reports on all the aspects as per the stipulated requirements. They only concentrate on whether the centre has enough learners and on the availability of learning materials and resources. They pay little attention to the possible reasons why the attrition rate is high and the participation rate is declining. The needs of the learners then, to some extent, remain unfulfilled. There is no discussion with the learners. Learner participation is a great problem and it is possible that the high attrition rate could be attributed to a curriculum that is incompatible with the needs of learners and that of the community. An investigation of this relationship requires further investigation and was not the focus of this study.

3.8 Staff Development

In accordance with standards registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Skills Development Act, ABET educators are supposed to be trained and some of the key areas include training in the areas of assessment, the design of LSMs, teaching of adult learners and the implementation of outcomes-based education.

Interviews with educators revealed that they have attended more workshops on assessment than other topics or themes. Assessment is receiving much more attention than any other aspects. I would argue that although assessment is important, greater emphasis should be placed on improving the quality of teaching rather than assessment.

Educator support is inadequate. The educators expressed the need for more training which is currently limited to one workshop per year. Meetings between educators are also limited and there is little discussion between adult educators. Staff development meetings were held once every three months. Educators recognise the need for more training to increase their understanding of the curriculum and the selection of appropriate learning content.

3.9 Classroom observation of the learners

One lesson was observed in each ABET Level. The reason for conducting these observations was to determine whether the content used in class and the discussion held reflected the needs of the community and the learners. The following was noticed:

3.9.1 Teaching and learning

The facilitation of lessons was of a reasonable standard. The activities directed learners towards the attainment of the outcomes as defined in the learning programmes. Teaching methods used, however, were largely teacher-centred methods and the learners were very passive. The content of the lessons were very similar to that used in formal schooling and connections with everyday life experiences were hardly made. All learning programmes are meant to be taught in English (except for Zulu) all the learners are Zulu-speaking. Lessons were meanly taught in Zulu. This practice by educators, affects adult learners because when they sit for examinations, their examination questions are in English.

3.9.2 Learning environment

The classrooms were reasonably comfortable. Classes had few posters or wall charts.

3.9.3 Knowledge

What the learners learnt had limited relevance to their everyday experiences. The lessons, however, encouraged learners' thinking skills and problem-solving skills. This was evident in the class activities that were given to the learners. The lessons, however, did not develop the learners' skills in learning how to learn, for example the ability to work with information and the ability to assess their work.

3.9.4 Skills

The lessons from all the ABET levels inculcated thinking and problem-solving skills. They did not equip learners with life skills, as more content was presented to the learners. The educators did not offer learners practical activities to develop their skills. No skills training programmes were available at the Centre.

3.9.5 Values and Attitudes

The lessons for level two and three to a lesser extent promoted values and attitudes. Tolerance and motivation were promoted. For level 1 it was difficult to determine the values and attitudes as the lesson was teacher-centred.

3.9.6 Resources and learning support materials

Educators in Levels 1 and 2 did not use any resources or learning support materials during their lesson presentations. They introduced the topic and the lessons were developed on the chalkboard. In ABET Level 3 the educator used a homemade worksheet as her resource materials. Learners were requested to fill in the worksheet and it was used to assess certain information from learners.

3.10 Focus group with current learners

The focus group consisting of ten ABET Level 3 current learners consisted of nine women and one man. During the discussion it emerged that all of them were unemployed. They raised different reasons for joining the centre.

> "I want to get a certificate which will help me to find a job" ..."I came here to further my education."... "I joined the centre to learn English." ..."I joined the centre to acquire skills which will help me to be self-reliant because there are no jobs."

They believe that the centre is to some extent addressing some of their needs, for example, they do acquire some basic education, but they feel that the centre needs to do more than simply focusing on general education. They believe that the centre is organisationally effective and programmatically partially effective. Learners suggested that the operational hours of the PALC were appropriate and that it does not present a barrier to participation. They feel that the centre still has an important role in the community and its surrounding areas of Slangspruit and France, but that the programmes need to include skills programmes and programme content that reflect a variety of political information and topical issues.

During interviews, learners revealed that some of the courses offered at the centre were relevant. They cited courses like SMME[10], technology, English and Economic Management Sciences. They feel these courses respond in some way to their immediate needs and that more courses of this nature should be offered to learners. Some of the learners connected the irrelevance of courses to the attrition rate. This is captured in the following statements:

> "Some of them have joined the projects like sewing, brick making and gardening...They are lazy...They say what we are learning will not help them because even their children with diplomas are not employed."

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[10] Small Medium and Micro Enterprises. This is a learning area that equips learners with business related skills.

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Finally, for the centre's future role they suggested that the centre should provide courses like the making of beads, gardening projects, welding, sewing, baking and computer studies. In this way, the relevance of the centre will be sustained and the enrolment figures will increase.

3.11 Focus group with ten ex-learners

The ex-learners' comments showed that they joined the centre for different reasons including:

- To get a certificate so that they could improve their positions at work.
- To improve their English.
- To acquire life skills that would help them meet their everyday needs.

They had mixed feelings about the role of the centre. Learners who started their courses for ABET level 1 believed that the courses were worthwhile as they gained basic literacy skills, but they felt that the centre needs to introduce courses which address the needs of the community. Unemployment, poverty, crime and access to health care were cited as the main needs of the community.

Learners also revealed that the centre needs to adjust its programming in order to meet the needs of the community and they believe that the high drop-out rate and non-attendance were caused by the failure of the programmes to meet the social and economic needs of learners. They say ABET provision fails to include skills programmes. Their suggestions were that the centre has to address the immediate needs of the community in the form of teaching adult learners survival skills as it was evident that learners were leaving it to join projects offered by NGOs which were offering training programmes such as candle-making.

3.12 SEM of ABET Pietermaritzburg Region

The key concern of the SEM for ABET was the effective running of the school and emphasis was placed on whether the Centre was implementing the policy and

regulations. One of the key areas of concern was the need to increase the capacity of the centre manager and educators. He argues that more attention should be focused on educators' ability to understand the learning programmes and to implement the learning programmes. He also highlighted that learners should attain good results from the examinations and that the centre manager should develop his/her staff by giving them all the necessary information that will help them to achieve good results.

3.13 Community leaders

3.13.1 The Councillor of Imbali Stage II

The Councillor of Imbali recognises the role that the PALC should play in addressing the main problems of unemployment, crime and poverty. He believes that education and training programmes are also key vehicles that could be used to respond to community problems. The Councillor was involved in assisting with the establishment of a vegetable garden and that a piece of land was being sought where these skills could be developed and used to provide some food.

3.13.2 Other leaders

The leaders of these organisations highlighted the same community problems as described by the councillor. The leader of the women's organisation cited certain problems with regard to the ABET programmes offered by the centre. She stated that some members of her organisation are former learners of the centre and they left the centre because they felt that literacy alone would not help. She believed that there was a need for the centre to work with other community organisations especially those organisations that offer skills to complement the basic education that is offered to adult learners. Both leaders revealed that the centre for support has never approached them, nor have they approached the centre to provide some support.

3.14 Conclusion

In this chapter research findings were presented. Issues like learning programmes, learners, policies, staffing and statistics were reviewed. In the next chapter, thorough discussion of these issues will be presented and analysed in relation to the key theoretical constructs drawn from the literature reviewed. It is quite evident from the data captured through interviews that the PALC is currently not responding to the needs of learners and the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

In this chapter the researcher considers the results of the study in the light of literature on the programmes offered at Jabu Ngcobo PALC. The first section provides further analysis of learning programmes offered at the PALC. The analysis indicates that the PALC fails to respond to the needs of the learners and the community. It also suggests that alternative models of institutional visions should be considered that deal more appropriately with the needs of communities. The analysis further shows that the failure of programmes might create barriers to participation and that this could result in an increase in the attrition rate as well as preventing participation in programmes. The analysis also identifies programmatic and organisational difficulties that need to be addressed as part of any effective learning site. These issues are clearly stipulated in policy, but seem to be difficult to put into practice. In the final section a few suggestions are made using the models and constructs that underpinned this study.

4.1 Learning Programmes

The interview with the centre manager revealed that learning programmes[1] are preconceived, and pre-packaged by the Department of Education. The centre is then expected to adhere to these learning programmes and to prepare learners for the examination. These programmes are based on Unit Standards[2] and they provide some form of uniformity for what should be learnt in ABET Levels 1 to 4, regardless of where the learner lives, be it in urban or rural areas, or the type of learning site in which a learner is enrolled. The ABET policy states:

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[1]   Learning programme refers to an education or training programme course or set of course modules or course units through which learners can achieve agreed upon learning outcomes.

[2]   Unit Standards describe in detail the outcomes that need to be achieved. They also describe ways of how learners should be assessed.

Learning programme developers will need to plan for a range of learner options and interests. They will need to take into account the immediate individual and family needs of learners together with the need for them to have access to and to cope with the demands of continuing and further education. (Department of Education, 1997b: 19).

The Department of Education is playing a vital role in designing learning programmes for the centres and to help educators to teach adults, according to standards set by SAQA and the DoE. Learning programmes also assist educators who are unable to interpret the Unit Standards that are too complex for them. What is important though is that the policy recognises the need to respond to the immediate needs of the learners. This implies that a PALC should know the needs of its surrounding communities and through its programmes address the needs of its learners. This also brings into question whether the DoE should provide preconceived and pre-packaged learning programmes that are too general and not reflective of the needs of learners and the communities they come from. It further suggests that this approach is far too prescriptive and is informed by the deficiency model or pathology model. These models suggest that the DoE knows what adult learners need.

The Centre Manager revealed that the centre does have some idea of the learners' needs. Programmes that improve general knowledge and provide political education remain relevant, but more skills development programmes are required to help people to develop the community and that would create employment opportunities that are urgent. For example, learners come to the PALC in hope of learning basic education and to acquire income-generating skills, but because of the centre's failure to address these needs, they leave the centre and seek learning opportunities that teach hard skills that encourage self-sufficiency and self-reliance. The Centre Manager revealed that the centre tries to address the learners' health needs like teaching them about HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hygiene and pollution, but she admits that it is failing because of time constraints.

Educators felt that the learning programmes offered by the centre do not accommodate the learners' needs because learners complain about both the content and the way classes are conducted. For example, learners argue that many of the learning areas are not relevant to them. Learners suggested that the

programme content is too school-based and that they need courses that would help them cope with immediate problems as well as helping them to develop technical skills. They want to learn basic education and skills that will help them to cope with issues that will enable them to be self-reliant and be able to support their families. The ABET Act highlights the importance of programmes direct response to the needs of the communities for which they are designed. This points to a contradiction. The ABET Policy and supporting legislation recognise the importance of individual and community needs, but at the same time, programmes are prescribed and pre-packaged. This has contributed to the failure of the centre as an authentic community centre that is aware of the range of needs to respond to.

In the case of Jabu Ngcobo PALC there is a clear problem. In spite of receiving designed learning programmes, it shows that the centre was aware of what the learners need and in 1998 it was able to simultaneously implement the prescribed learning programmes and teach learners skills like yoghurt making and brick laying but it failed along the way to respond to the learners' needs. After that positive attempt, it has chosen to adhere to the designed learning programmes as its sole guide to the education of adults. By so doing, the centre is doing a disservice to the community of Imbali and its surrounding areas.

4.2 Institutional models

Lovett et al. suggest four community education/development models, each with its own educational pedagogy or philosophical orientation (Lovett et al., 1983: 36). These include the community organization/educational model, community development action/education model and the social action/education model that are briefly described in Chapter One. The social action/education model appears to be congruent with what the current ABET policy aims to achieve through ABET provision and delivery at PALCs. This model stresses education that is more structured, systematic and formalised. There is some emphasis placed on the origins of community problems in the larger social, economic and political structure of society. The role of PALCs is located within an understanding of

these community education models. The researcher believes that a PALC should be a learning site driven by a clearly defined community education model, as a PALC cannot operate as an institution that is divorced from the realities and problems of a community it is meant to serve.

Lovett et al. suggest that education programmes could be established in a number of different ways. ABET provision and delivery should not be limited to a single model but should consider alternative models that are more appropriate to the immediate context and the dynamics of a community. This means that communities need to play a much bigger role in shaping the role of community-based institutions in order to ensure that the community needs are met through the provision and delivery of appropriate programmes.

4.3 Effective delivery sites

According to the councillor, the community of Imbali is facing problems such as high unemployment rate, crime, a shortage of houses, poverty and many of the community members are functionally illiterate. They are all faced with similar problems, namely, poverty and unemployment. The Irish people were able to overcome them through education programmes that they acquired at Ulster Peoples' College in Belfast (Mayo, 1997: 129). This shows that the community problems and needs can be addressed through effective programmes that are directly linked to the needs of the target community. In South Wales, the Amman Valley education classes brought accessible programmes to the local communities. These programmes reached the women who had been effectively excluded from traditional forms of provision. Through these programmes, people worked together to develop community enterprises and community projects to meet local needs (Mayo, 1997: 87). The success of these programmes was a result of the community's interest in them. The community's interest in any programme on offer is aroused if they realise that they are gaining by attending and shaping such programmes. The survival of any PALC therefore rests on its programme delivery process. It should ensure that it offers programmes that are compatible with community needs.

Adult learners who attend Jabu Ngcobo PALC at Imbali do not need basic education only. Discussions with them and with educators clearly suggest that their specific problems demand skills that will help to improve their material condition as well as their capacity to participate more effectively in the life of the community. Programmes that are on offer at the centre are under the auspices of ABET which means that they should equip learners with basic education and training. The interviews revealed that the training aspect is still lacking. Not much linkage is being made with training in ABET programmes. Aitchison et al. identified this as problematic (Aitchison et al., 1999: xv). The adult learners are only exposed to basic education whilst they are told that they are offered adult basic education and training. The positive effects of the combination of basic education and training are evident in the literacy programmes of Uganda, especially in the Hoima centre. The survey revealed that the great majority of the sampled graduates – four fifths - reported that they used and valued their new skills and knowledge. Three fifths reported involvement in income-generating activities connected with their classes and skills, and claimed that their lives had improved as a result (Okech, 2001:92).

This highlights the importance of literacy programmes to our communities as they change people from being subjects into being citizens. Adult education empowers people from being manipulated objects to being independent people. Training is also vital and the Hoima literacy programmes demonstrate this well.

> Some programme participants mentioned improvement in household income, for example, I planted in the right season and I got 25 bags of maize. I sold each bag for 100 kilograms @ U Sh[3] 220 per kilogram. I got U Sh 550 000 out of the 25 bags. (Okech, 2001:88).

This quotation shows the importance of equipping adults with basic education that is combined with training. For the Imbali community and its surrounding areas of Kwanyamazane and France, the provision of training programmes could alleviate them from the plight of unemployment, poverty, functional illiteracy and crime. For example, when people are employed or working, they will have something to

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[3] U Sh - currency of Uganda similar to our own Rand > Ugandan shilling.

support themselves and their families. That will then reduce unemployment and poverty. Although crime is not caused by illiteracy or unemployment, the improvement of people's lives will certainly reduce crime. The situation of the Uganda literacy programmes indicate that offering both basic education and training develop people in totality. People are able to cope with social, political and economic needs facing them. It is in this light that the researcher believes the combination of education and training can also improve the lives of adult learners from Imbali and its surrounding areas.

To provide only basic education to these communities is not enough. Attempts should be made by the centre manager to learn from other countries the effective ways of providing programmes. The mistake that the researcher believes is being made by PALCs, is to enrol adult learners without doing proper needs analysis of individuals and the community. Understanding our learners' needs is vital to check the relevance of what we are teaching (Fotheringham, 1998:18).

4.4 Incorporating learning needs

The implications for the failure of the centre to address the learners' needs are evident in the enrolment patterns of Jabu Ngcobo PALC over the period of the last 3 years (enrolment to be discussed in depth under the sub-topic of learners). Even if you have a set course to teach, it is useful to understand your learners' learning needs so that they can be incorporated into the course (Fotheringham, 1998: 19). This simply indicates that even if the PALC receives ready-made learning programmes from the DoE, it is important for the PALC to ensure that it incorporates the needs of its adult learners in its programme delivery process. Therefore, there is no excuse for Jabu Ngcobo PALC not to cater for the community needs with the excuse that it is because they receive ready-made learning programmes from the DoE to implement. ABET must seek to equip learners with skills to participate in all forms of economic, social, political and cultural activities (Department of Education, 1997b: 29). An important mechanism through which this could be addressed is to enhance the capacity of educators.

The need to provide more relevant programmes cannot be seen in isolation of other basic needs. The need for relevant programmes should therefore be seen in relationship with the need for work, basic housing, poverty, access to health and so forth.

4.5 Learners and deterrents to participation

The majority of adult learners enrolled in the programmes are unemployed adults. They believed that the centre's programmes would equip them with the necessary skills that will help them to gain employment or become more self-reliant. Although they cited different reasons for joining the PALC, it is clear that the learners believed that basic education should be complemented with forms of practical and technical training. The researcher also believes that as the area is facing a high unemployment rate and poverty, it would be a good idea to offer adult learners some form of training that would help them to generate some form of income in order to support their families. Learners argue that learning only basic education is limiting. They clearly regard certain learning areas as being irrelevant to their everyday life experiences. English was viewed as the most important learning area. Learners believed it was important to know English, as it was the language that is mainly used for commercial purposes.

The failure of the ABET programmes to respond to the immediate needs of the learners is clearly a reason that explains the high attrition rate at the PALC. Baatjes et al. (1999; 2002) describe a number of reasons why adult learners drop out of programmes or why they are unable to attend classes. They argue that adult learners are facing a number of interrelated barriers to participation including situational, structural and psychological barriers. It would appear that their explanation provides a succinct analysis of why adult learners in Imbali and the surrounding areas are dropping out or are not attending classes at all. Their explanations also help to shed light on how attrition rates in ABET classes should be understood. They highlight poverty, unemployment, unmet basic needs, poor facilitation skills of the educator and irrelevant curricula as key deterrents to

participation. It suggests that a better understanding of the community context is required and that programmes should take these into account when they are designed.

4.6 Programmatic and organisational issues

From the data collected it is also evident that a number of key organizational and programmatic issues have been highlighted. These might not have direct links to the relationship between the learning programmes and the needs of the learners and communities. They do, however, provide useful information that point to area of improvement in order that the efficiency of the PALC be improved. I provide a brief summary of these before I make some suggestions related to the role of the PALC as an institution that responds more effectively to the needs of learners and communities.

4.6.1 Administration of the centre

The centre manager indicated that she is unable to perform her management and administrative role effectively because she does not have assistant personnel. The position is a part-time position. The solution to this problem could best be addressed through the appointment of an administrator or by increasing the number of hours that the centre manager works. This would require additional financial resources. The community and learners have very little involvement in the running of the centre. Greater participation from the community might also offer a solution to the management and administrative problems that the PALC is experiencing.

4.6.2 Capacity of educators

Training and orientation of practitioners is vitally important as it affects all the other components of the ABET system (Department of Education, 1997b: 33). A well-known problem, which is often debated and referred to, is the quality of teaching in PALCs. South Africa has very few well-trained adult educators and

PALCs employ mainly schoolteachers who work as part-time adult educators. The need to train adult educators is recognised, but training remains rudimentary and largely delivered through cascade models involving trainers with limited or no experience in the teaching of ABET. It is well known that the quality of learning is directly, although not exclusively, related to the quality of teaching. Provincial sub-directorates for ABET are also limited in their capacity to provide ongoing support to educators. The restructuring of provincial departments in some provinces is also contributing to the existing lack of capacity of these sub-directorates

The SEM of ABET in Pietermaritzburg revealed that there were problems that the centre faced regarding the capacity of educators. "There is broad consensus that an adult education qualification is an essential requirement to facilitate adult learning and that a school teacher qualification is not" (Department of Education, 1997a: 5).

Jabu Ngcobo PALC has five qualified educators out of thirteen, meaning that approximately only 38% of the educators at the centre are qualified. Intensive training programmes are required to build capacity including needs analysis of individuals and communities.

4.6.3 Learning Support materials

"Well designed learning programmes and materials are essential if the goals for ABET are to be met. Learning Support Materials (LSM) are vital tools that inform learning and enrich the teaching and learning encounter" (Department of Education, 1992: 27).

When you are planning a learning programme or a lesson, you always think about what materials you will use to achieve your goals (Land et al., 1999: 118). The interview with the Centre Manager and her educators revealed that they understood the importance of LSM in the teaching of adults. However, the key problem is with the shortage of good structured materials including readers, textbooks and workbooks. Land et al. also assert that one of the biggest problems

that teachers in PALCs face is that they simply have no materials for ABET whatsoever (Land et al., 1999: 18). Educators at Jabu Ngcobo PALC believed that it was the duty of the Department to supply the centre with the structured materials.

The availability of learning support materials remains a great concern. Although there has been an attempt by the state to increase access to materials, most PALCs continue to operate with a lack of materials and this has obvious effects on the learning and teaching processes. ABET programmes in NGOs and workplaces are usually much better resourced.

Although the observation process indicated that educators were trying their utmost best to design their own materials but some materials were not suitable for certain learning areas. The reasons for such occurrence vary like:

> It is unlikely that teachers with very little in their training and experience that can help them be resourceful, flexible educators will be able to think of enough ways to use everyday materials that they will be able to replace a course of textbook (Land et al., 199: 125).

4.6.4 Assessment

In 2001 the South African Council for Certification (SAFCERT) that has since become the General Education and Further Education and Training Quality Assurer (GEN-FETQA) developed an Assessment Policy for ABET. SAFCERT is now called UMALUSI. This policy was implemented in 2001 through the Department of Education's PALCs. The Department of Education produced summative assessment tools for most of the sub-fields of learning that constitutes its learning programmes (Baatjes, 2002: 50).

Training in assessment of learning is a key priority.

4.6.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure that PALCs function effective by a good monitoring and evaluation system is required. Although some monitoring and evaluation is taking place, it is limited and the reports are often not discussed and problems identified are not addressed. The researcher believes that the goal of evaluation is to determine the strength and the weaknesses of the PALC. One key issue is to understand how the PALC responds to the community needs.

4.7 Suggestions

4.7.1 Develop appropriate models of community education

With the increase in unemployment and the deepening social crises in poor communities, relevant social, educational and welfare resources need to be more effectively linked to local needs, interests and problems of people in communities. ABET should therefore be more effectively linked to community development and community action. Adult learners suffer from a multitude of problems as a result of poverty, unemployment, health issues, hunger and overcrowding. As parents they are also interested and concerned about their children's education, but their most pressing problems are outside the school and PALCs. "They are often brave, resilient and resourceful in the face of tremendous problems that are not of their own making" (Baatjes, 2003). Community action must foster a commitment to the education of the community's inhabitants and make ABET an essential component of community development and community events. There are a number of possible community education models and variations, thereof that could be used to provide ABET programmes. These models reflect not only different educational pedagogies, but also different views of the world and the role of education in the process of social and political change. Some of these models are not new, but present alternatives. We need to emphasise that each one has its own strengths and limitations, but nevertheless provides alternative ways of looking at the provision and delivery of ABET. The most appropriate model should be adopted for the PALC.

4.7.2 Curriculum should be based on learner and community needs analysis

Jabu Ngcobo PALC receives designated programmes from the Provincial Department of Education. These programmes prescribe what the centre should teach adult learners. That is, there are themes for each learning area offered at the centre that are covered. The problem is how to adapt centrally determined curricula and provided programmes, to groups which are each different in their background and in their response to the programmes Rogers (1992: 147). National and Provincial curriculum development seems to have shifted from the needs curriculum model to the product curriculum models. This is because ABET is driven by outcomes-based education. This has resulted in limited attention being given to the real needs of learners and their surrounding community. Adult educators in the PALC have great difficulty with curriculum design and unit standards. It is problematic to expect adult educators, who are not properly trained, to become curriculum designers and learning programme developers.

In the case of Jabu Ngcobo PALC, the councillor of Imbali revealed that this community was affected by a high rate of unemployment, crime, poverty, lack of housing, poor health, informal settlements and a need to promote education and literacy. The learners affirmed his words during the interview process. The centre manager also affirmed them and these are also reflected in the profile of Imbali and the IDP of the Msunduzi Municipality. Clearly the programme offered at Jabu Ngcobo should address these issues.

My suggestion is that programmes should not be based upon predetermined and imposed decisions, but on the specific needs of the area. Educators at Jabu Ngcobo should first do the needs analysis of learners. This will help them to understand what their learners need. The needs analysis process will lead to the integration of the learners' learning needs with the pre-designed learning programmes. The content offered at the centre should integrate learners' learning needs.

4.7.3 Provide more technical training

Jabu Ngcobo PALC's curriculum does not meet the learners' learning needs. It is mainly based on basic education and the training aspect is missing. The issue of Omission 'T' is a cause of concern in ABET programmes offered by the Department of Education. As Aitchison et al. argue, there is a silent 'T' in ABET programmes (Aitchison et al., 1999: 55).

Basic learning needs are not static. They change over time because knowledge and technology advance and because social realities are in continuous change (Torres, 2001: 26). Based on this assertion by Torres and by looking at what other centres have done with regard to their programme delivery processes, the researcher suggests that Jabu Ngcobo should change its practice. It should offer training in marketable skills and skills required by communities to ensure that learners are able to enter the formal economy or initiate self-employment. The curricula of some learning programmes should be changed.

The researcher's suggestions is that this centre should change its curriculum and adapt it to the learning needs of its learners. In doing this, the centre should adopt the social action/educational model. The centre's education has to be more structured and systematic. Learning area themes should change to incorporate the learning needs of the learners. Educators should act in solidarity with local people. They should align themselves with the local community and provide specific forms of educational support that will help learners to solve their problems. Adoption of this model would enable the centre to locate through education the origins of local community problems in the greater social, economic and political structures in society.

4.7.4 Provide more programmes for women

Women comprise 90% of adult learners who attend ABET programmes at Jabu Ngcobo PALC. These women face problems such as unemployment, poor

housing or lack of houses, sexual harassment, high crime, poverty and health problems. The researcher believes that the centre's curricula should cater for the women's learning needs in its programmes as they form the majority percentage of programme participants. The researcher's suggestion is that this centre should learn from the literacy programmes of Nepal, called the Women's Economic Empowerment and Literacy programme. Nepal's curriculum catered for women issues like food, security, micro-enterprises, discussions on women roles, savings, business development and basic numeracy and literacy (Oxenham et al., 2002: 17). It can also learn from the Ethiopian programmes called Women in Self-Employment (WISE) that focused on training women to develop and manage business (Oxenham et al., 2002: 19). According to the ABET policy document, ABET is directed to the previously disadvantaged communities and the women are among those who should benefit from the ABET programmes. Based on this promulgation and on how other countries' literacy programmes deal with women's needs, Jabu Ngcobo PALC's curriculum should pay greater attention to this historically disadvantaged group.

4.7.5 Provide more Learning and Support Materials

This research project has revealed that there is a problem with regard to LSM at Jabu Ngcobo PALC. Learning and Support Materials can be classified into structured materials and unstructured materials. Structured materials include readers, textbooks and workbooks. Unstructured materials include worksheets, newspapers, newsletters and magazines. Jabu Ngcobo PALC is short of structured LSM in all but one ABET level. It was ABET level 1 which had Zulu and English textbooks. In other ABET levels educators were forced to design their own unstructured LSMs using newspapers. The issue of LSM seems to be a big problem as it forced educators to use textbooks that are designed for mainstream schooling.

The researcher's suggestion is that the PALC should contact companies that produce print media. For example, it can contact *The Natal Witness* to supply it with old newspapers and with the *Echo*. It should also contact other centres and discuss effective ways of designing LSM. Networking will help the educators

because with regard to unstructured materials, there is danger of using the material which is not suitable to that ABET level. Regular learning area meetings can also assist in this regard because learning area educators can discuss ways of acquiring and designing the unstructured materials.

4.7.6 Increase the resources in PALCs

The shortage of resources at Jabu Ngcobo does not reflect well on the Department. Jabu Ngcobo PALC is a state-run adult centre in need of resources. The Department should provide this centre with resources like Learning and Support Materials, furniture and necessities. To minimize this problem the Department should increase the budget allocation for the ABET sector. In conjunction with PALCs, it should also identify people who could provide certain resources to the centres. In the case of textbooks, PALCs should be given a list of people who can provide them with books.

4.7.7 Review learning programmes

The Department provides PALCs with learning programmes. Learning programmes designers use Unit Standards to design learning programmes. Examples given in the learning programmes are meant to cover the learning needs of rural and urban PALCs but that is not true because the criteria that are used do not ensure that in each learning area there are educators from the rural and urban areas. This result is that in some learning areas there is bias favouring urban areas. The researcher believes that effective control mechanisms should be in place to ensure equal representation of rural and urban areas during programme designing process. A lack of quality assurance mechanisms to check the relevance and appropriateness of programmes are also a great concern. Educators revealed that they have been using learning programmes for more than three years. The researcher's concern therefore is that these programmes are not only inappropriate but also outdated and should therefore be revised.

4.7.8 Increase educator training

The training and development of adult educators should produce educators who do not only provide a good quality of teaching, but also have an in-depth understanding of the communities in which the work is imperative. For PALC to function properly the Department of Education should not rely on educators who teach in schools. The Department should use a combination of Pre-service training (PRESET) and In-service training (INSET) programmes that would develop both the theoretical and practical competence of adult educators. It would be essential that these adult educators have a broader understanding of the contextual realities of the communities they serve and acquire a solid foundation of community education.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed for this study clearly suggests that the illiteracy rate amongst adults is high. Although ABET is being offered through PALCs and other providers, provincial statistics show no decrease in the adult illiteracy rate. In KwaZulu-Natal illiteracy remains a major problem and KwaZulu-Natal remains the province with the highest adult illiteracy rate in the country. The township of Imbali in KwaZulu-Natal faces many problems of which illiteracy is a significant setback. The problem of illiteracy is viewed in relation to other social problems including poverty, unemployment, health and crime.

As part of its strategy to address illiteracy and under education in the province the Department of Education established PALCs with the aim of providing ABET programmes that would reduce illiteracy in communities.

This case study of Jabu Ngcobo PALC has shown that it is unable to address the community and learning needs of adult learners. The purpose of undertaking this research study was to determine if a PALC addresses the learning needs of learners and communities. The findings also indicate that the Department of Education is facing numerous changes with regard to learner participation and attrition, proper resourcing of PALCs, the training and development of educators and the provision of LSMs.

This study is presented in four chapters. In Chapter One, the key literature sources, which support this study, were reviewed. The literature sources revealed the history of night schools and the current context of PALCs; adult education programmes in other countries and showed what South Africa could gain from adopting some of the techniques, policies and methods applied in these countries. The chapter further looked at effective adult education centres around the world and from their practices. The researcher was able to provide information that he believed could clearly benchmark how PALCs should function in order to meet the community needs and the learning needs of adult learners.

In the same chapter, the researcher also discussed the concepts, the theory of human needs, and the concept of needs in adult education, community education models, community development curriculum and the theory of learning.

The second chapter looked at the research methodology. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were explored and the rationale for employing these approaches was discussed. The site (Jabu Ngcobo PALC) was discussed. The researcher provides a detailed description of the research methodology and also identified some limitation of the study.

In the third chapter, the researcher presented all the important findings gathered during the research process. The information quite clearly suggests the limitations of the PALC as a site that responds effectively to the needs of adult learners and the immediate community. The researcher began this chapter by presenting information about the state of literacy (ABET) in South Africa and more specifically KwaZulu-Natal and around Pietermaritzburg. The researcher further presented information on the human rights and development projects in the areas like Pietermaritzburg, Matatiele, Kokstad, Mpophomeni, Nottingham Road, Ixopo, Nxamalala and Greytown. Finding revealed that women are also the main participants in adult learning programmes. This highlights the great need to provide programmes for women. The legal rights and resources for women who live in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands and surrounding areas and the IDP for Msunduzi Municipality were also discussed. This chapter also provided important information on the Learning Programme (curricula) used at Jabu Ngcobo PALC for each ABET level, from ABET levels 1 to 4. The researcher ended the chapter by presenting other information which he believed was of major importance to the research study.

In the final chapter the researcher provided further analysis of the study. Data was analysed in relation to the literature used in the study. It was through analysis of the results that the researchers declared that Jabu Ngcobo PALC's learning programmes do not address the community needs and the learning needs of adult learners. Some suggestions, which the researcher believe could improve the role

of the PALC as a community centre, are also made. The researcher also presents these suggestions as key pointers to assist the Department of Education and Culture to play a greater role in assisting PALCs to become relevant community sites of ABET programmes delivery.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE SUPERVISORS/CENTRE MANAGERS AND EDUCATORS

Centre Manager

Are you familiar with the following prominent documents? Tick and provide information in the relevant columns:

Documents	Yes	No	In Store	Where Specify

Abet Act
Abet Policy
Provincial Multi-year
     Implementation
     Plan
GETC Proposal
Regulatory Framework for
     the
     Transformation
     of Night Schools
     to PALCs
PAM document
Other/Specify				

Administration/Centre Manager

2.1 How old is your centre?

2.2 How many educators do you have? How did the numbers change over the past years?

2.3 Who helps you to run the centre?

2.4 Can you briefly describe your duties as a centre manager?

2.5 How many classrooms do you use for your centre?

2.6 Do you have a logbook?

2.7 Do your learners use transport when attending lessons? What form?

2.8   Does the centre have an admin support? If your answer is 'NO' would you like to have one? Why?

2.9   Do you have a Centre Policy? If your answer is 'YES', briefly explain what it entails. If your answer is 'NO', do you plan to have one?

2.10   Do you have any Code of Conduct for your learners?

2.11   Are you a full time or part time centre manager?

2.12   When do educators sign the time book attendance register?

2.13   Where do most of your learners come from? i.e. area of their origin?

Governance/Centre Manager

3.1   Who to you work with in this community?

3.2   Does your centre have a school governing body? YES or NO. If your answer is 'YES', who are they?

3.3   How were they selected?

3.4   Does your SGB have a Constitution? (If 'YES', copy.) (If 'NO', why not?)

3.5   Do you hold meetings? How often?

3.6   Does your SGB attend workshops? How often?

Programme Centre Manager

4.1   At what times are classes held?

4.2   How many hours and sessions per week?

4.3   Do you think the contact time is enough?

4.4   How do you feel about the location of your centre?

4.5   What is meant by ABET in your centre? (Tick appropriate box/boxes)

o	MEANING OF ABET
	. The acquisition of literacy and numeracy through English.
	. The acquisition of literacy and life skills through English
	. The acquisition of literacy and numeracy through the mother-tongue
	. The acquisition of literacy, numeracy and life skills through both mother-tongue and English
	Other (specify)

Monitoring and Evaluation Centre Manager

5.1 Do you have a monitoring or evaluation system for your centre?

5.2 Who evaluates your centre?

5.3 What does it involve?

5.4 Has evaluation of your centre been done? If your answer is 'YES', is the report for the evaluation process available?

Staffing Centre Manager

6.1 How many educators do you have in your centre? Please provide the breakdown.

Level	Male	Female	TOTAL

6.2 How are educators recruited, by whom and what criteria? If you form an interview panel, can you briefly explain its composition.

6.3 What is the educator-learner rate?

6.4 Describe the teaching load of the educators. Do they teach at an ABET level, across levels, learning area, language?

6.5   Are they full time or part time?

6.6   What other work do they do?

6.7   What is the educational requirement to be an educator? Why is it so?

6.8   Do educators have an ABET/Adult education qualification?

6.9   Do you think it is necessary for them to have such qualifications? Why do you say so?

6.10   Do you provide support to your educators? If your answer is 'YES', what kind of support and how often? If your answer is 'NO', what makes you not to give support?

6.11   What incentives are available for educators?

Finance/Centre Manager

7.1   How does your centre raise funds?

Curriculum Centre Manager/Educators

8.1   Describe your curriculum; do you include issues like AIDS and other social issues in your curriculum?

8.2   Do you design learning programmes or does someone design them for you?

8.3   Explain what you understand by the following terms: learner-centredness, outcomes based assessment and facilitation.

8.4   What is the language policy of your curriculum?

8.5   What is your opinion of the language policy, is it working?

8.6   What is your biggest concern about the learning programmes?

8.7   What is the requirement for obtaining the GETC?

8.8   Assessment

8.8.1 How do you place new learners into different levels?

8.8.2 Do you have placement tools for learners?

8.8.3 What do they look like?

8.8.4 How are they assessed/internal or external?

8.8.5 Who does the assessment?

8.8.6 What is th4e success rate of your learners?

8.8.7 What do you feel about the term, Recognition of Prior Learning? Why?

8.9 Learning support material and resources

8.9.1 What do you understand by the term Learning Support Material?

8.9.2 How do you select them?

8.9.3 What role do learners play in their selection?

8.9.4 Where do you obtain LSMs and resources?

8.9.5 How do they help them?

8.9.6 What can you say about their role in relation to the way adults learn?

8.9.7 Do learners have access to a library?

Statistics Centre Manager

9.1 Indicate the sex and the ABET level of learners in your centre?

ABET levels	M (Sex)	F (Sex)	Total

9.2 How do you feel about their number?

9.3 How do you recruit them?

9.4 What is your current capacity (total number of learners you can accommodate) and the number of learners enrolled in each of the years indicated.

YEAR	ENROLMENT	CAPACITY	COMPLETED
1999			
2000			
2001			

9.5   How many of the learners are employed/unemployed?

9.6   Can you enumerate some of your former learners who benefited from your centre?

9.7   Do you experience the dropout problem among your learners? If your answer is yes, is it high?

9.8   How has it changed over the last two to three years?

9.9   What are the reasons for learners to dropout?

9.10   What are the reasons provided by learners themselves?

9.11   What is being done in your centre to address the dropout rate?

9.12   What do you think should be done by the DoE to address the dropout rate?

EMIS/Centre Manager

10.1   How does the centre keep information of past and present learners?

10.2   Do you keep learners= information only or do you keep other information as well? What is that information?

10.3   What do you feel about the current results of your learners if you compare them with the last two years?

10.4   When do you update information concerning your learners i.e. at the beginning or end of the year?

10.5   What is the usual average age of your learners?

10.6   Usually, which sex group forms the majority of your learners?

Staff Development/Educators

11.1   Did you attend any workshops last year and in the current year? YES or NO

11.2   How many workshops have you attended in the years in question?

11.3   Tick aspects that were covered by the workshops that you attended.

°	How to implement OBE	How to teach adult learners	How to design LSMs	Assessment	Other/Specify
2000					
2001					

11.4 Do you hold staff development meetings? How often?

11.5 Can you enumerate some of the problems that you face as an educator with reference to adult learners?

11.6 Do you experience any dropout problem among your learners? If your answer is yes, what do you think is the cause of the problem?

11.7 What do you do to lessen the problem?

11.8 What do you understand by the term Unit Standard?

Program Delivery Educators

12.1 How to you plan your lessons? Why do you plan them like that?

12.2 Do you have any seating arrangement for your class? If your answer is yes, do your learners benefit from that seating arrangement?

12.3 Can you enumerate some of the teaching methods that you often use in your lessons? Why do you often use them?

12.4 When one looks at the concepts, teacher-centred teaching and learner-centred teaching, which one do you favour or do you favour both concepts? Why?

12.5 Which one do you use in your class?

Advocacy Centre Manager

13.1 How do you inform people, i.e. potential learners, interested parties and community members, about your centre?

EDUCATORS

How familiar are you with the following:

Tick	Concept	Familiar	Not familiar	Well informed
	1. Qualification and assessment systems document			
	2. Learning programme examples			
	3. Assessment policy for grades 0-9 and ABET			
	4. Draft RPL Framework			
	5. Interim strategy for monitoring and evaluation			
	6. Draft Standards for ABET Facilitators			
	7. Administrative guide for placement tools			
	8. Social mobilization and advocacy strategy for ABET			
	9. Policy Document on Adult Basic Education & Training			
	10. Conditions of Service for Adult Educators employed in PALCs			
	11. A National Multi-year implementation plan for Adult Education and Training: Provision and Accreditation October 1997			

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CURRENT AND EX-LEARNERS

Opinion about the PALC

Why did you join this centre?

What is your view of an effective site? Organisationally and Programmatically.

In your opinion, what do you think is required to create an effective PALC?

What is your opinion about this centre?

Does it meet your requirements of an effective site? Yes or No.

If your answer is 'No', what do you think the PALC needs to do in order to be effective?

Are you comfortable with the time at which classes begin?

If 'No' say why.

What do you feel about the role of the centre?

Opinion about the programme

2.1   Do the courses you do at this centre assist you? Yes or No

2.2   What do you think needs to be added from what you are currently learning? Why?

2.3   What do you think is the cause for some of your colleagues to drop out?

Opinion about educators

How are educators at the centre? i.e. their teaching styles

Suggestions

What would you like to see being done in the centre in future?

Question for the SEM of ABET

5.1   What is your view of an effective site?

5.2   In your opinion would you describe Jabu Ngcobo as being effective or not effective? Why?

5.3   How often do you visit the centre?

5.4   From your visits, what have you perceived to be the centre's main problem?

5.5 What programmes are in place to address the centre's main problem(s) if any?

5.6 What do you feel about the development of ABET practitioners? How often do you organize workshops for them?

Questions for the community leaders

6.1 What have you perceived to be the main problems of adults?

6.2 I believe that illiteracy is a cause of concern for many communities; in this community what are you doing to address this issue?

6.3 As a community leader, what kind of assistance could you give the centre if they asked for it?

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CURRENT LEARNERS AND EX-LEARNERS

TICK THE APPROPRIATE ANSWERS

1.

SEX	M	F

2.

EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED

3   Current ABET level.

1	2	3	4

4.   Learning Areas

Small Medium and Micro-Enterprise SMME	
Mother Tongue (MTL)	
English second language (ESL)	
Natural Science (NS)	
Human and Social Science (HSS)	
Numeracy	
Technology (Tech)	
Economic and Management Sciences (EMS)	
Auxiliary Health Care	

How have you been recruited, i.e. how did you know about the centre?

From the friends attending the centre	From the community leader	From the newspaper/Echo	From my organisation

Language that is mainly used to present courses;

ZULU	ENGLISH

Do educators use Learning Support Material and resources when presenting lessons?

SELDOM	OFTEN	SOMETIMES

How do you sit in class?

IN GROUPS	IN ROWS

Do you write exams?

YES	NO

When do you write exams?

JUNE	NOVEMBER

When would you prefer to write exams?

JUNE	NOVEMBER

Does the centre have a vision?

YES	NO

Does the centre have a mission statement?

YES	NO

APPENDIX D
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOOL FOR THE LESSON

Teaching and Learning

1.1 Did the educator have clear outcomes for the lesson? Yes/No

1.2 Did he/she communicate the outcomes in some way to learners? Yes/No

1.3 Was there any evidence to show whether learners made progress towards achieving the outcomes?

1.4 Was the educator flexible or rigid in his/her lesson presentation? Why?

1.5 What methods and activities did the educator use in his or her lesson?

1.6 Did the educator use a variety of methods? Yes or No

1.7. Did the educator give clear instructions for the activities? Yes or No

1.8 Did the educator explain new concepts and content clearly to the learners Yes or No? Why?

1.9 Did the educator relate the lesson to everyday life and the learners' experience? Yes/No

1.10 Did the educator cater for different language levels in his or her class? Yes/No

1.11 Did the educator encourage learners to share their ideas and opinions? Yes or No

1.12 Did the educator make sure that the less confident learners were able to participate? How?

1.13 Did the educator give learners feedback on their work? Yes/No

1.14 Did the educator respond to learners' errors with positive criticism and patience? Yes/No

1.15 Did the educator avoid embarrassing learners? Yes/No

1.16 Did the educator encourage quicker learners to help those who were slower? Yes/No

Learning Experience

2.1 Did my learners feel free to express themselves without fear of being mocked or of being told that they are 'wrong' by myself and the other learners? Yes/No

2.2 Is there an atmosphere of respect for each other in the class? Yes/No

2.3 Did learners feel free to ask questions in the class, for example, if they did not understand something? Yes/No

2.4 Did only the more confident learners participate? Yes/No

2.5 Is the classroom environment attractive, e.g. with bright posters? Yes/No

2.6 Is the classroom environment conducive to learning, e.g. desks arranged to suit the learning activities? Yes/No

Learners

3.1 How did the learners work in this lesson? For example, individually, in pairs, in groups?

3.2 If learners worked in groups, how well did they work together? (For example, did only one or two learners in a group participate? Or did the group members take turns to participate? Did learners listen to each other? Did all members of the group help with a group task?)

3.3 How active were learners in the lesson, for example, busy with work, asking questions in a class discussion, etc.

Knowledge

4.1 What kind of knowledge did the lesson develop in learners? For example, knowledge that builds on the everyday knowledge of the learners?

4.2 Did the lesson extend learners' existing knowledge? That is, did they develop new knowledge? Or did it confirm what they already know?

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4.3 Will the learners be able to apply what they have learned in some way to real-life situations? Is what they have learned relevant to their lives? Yes/No (*Please note that this question does not suggest that all activities have to relate to real-life situations: some clearly can make this link and others may develop learners' conceptual understandings*).

4.4 Will the lesson develop learners' thinking skills? For example, critical thinking and problem-solving? Yes/No. Which skills?

4.5 Will the lesson develop the learners' skills in 'learning how to learn'; for example ability to work with information and ability to assess their own work? Yes/No. Which skills?

Skills

5.1 Did the lesson inculcate any skills to the learners? Yes/No.

Values and Attitudes

6.1 Did the lesson promote any values and attitudes to the learners? Yes/No.

Resources and Learning Support Materials

7.1 What resources were used?

7.2 How did they support the learning process?

7.3 How flexible did the educator use the resources? For example, if he/she used materials with some outdated information, was he/she able to leave out the part that was outdated or adapt it for his or her learners? Yes/No.

7.4 Did the educator develop some of his/her own resources e.g. worksheets? Yes/No.