

**BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
AND TRAINING IN THE SEDIBENG EAST AND WEST DISTRICTS
OF THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents:

Risimate Simon Matjeke and Christina Nkokole Matjeke.

Thank you for your life-guidance and for making me a God-fearing person and a model in our society.

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In the name of our Lord God, the most cordial and most forgiving. All praises, honour and gratitude are due to Him for without His benevolence and will, none of this would have been possible.

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SUMMARY

The research problem of this study was the low participation and retention rates of illiterate and semi-literate adults and out-of-school youth in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programmes. In South Africa there are substantial numbers of people who in spite of the availability of ABET centres remain outside the world of ABET. The retention rates of ABET learners in the education sector is notoriously problematic and the main categories of possible barriers were identified as dispositional, situational and institutional barriers.

An empirical investigation was conducted in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education to determine the possible barriers to ABET participation. The most distressing findings of this study were with regard to institutional barriers to ABET in the region. These findings are related to dissatisfaction with organizational issues (55%); teaching (82%) and learning material (87%); lack of textbooks (97%); copying facilities (72%); teaching resources (71%). With regard to the provision of learning material the majority of both the facilitators (54%) and the adult learners (60%) indicated that they have not received it on time.

The skills and attitudes of the facilitator have a determining effect on the success and failure of an ABET activity. As a result of the total responses of the facilitators on a variety of questions there is a general feeling of dissatisfaction, unhappiness and poor moral. In contrast to the learners that are in general satisfied (86%) with their assessment only 59% of the facilitators were satisfied. In contrast to only 47% of the learners, the majority of the facilitators (71%) were of the opinion that the province does not give enough attention to ABET. As in the Foundation Phase of the formal school the problem of communication in English as the language of learning and teaching is a serious problem for the adult learners at Levels 1 and 2. The majority of the respondents (60%) responded that they regard the use of English as LOLT as discriminatory and also indicated that they prefer to be taught in their home language.

OPSOMMING

Die navorsingsprobleem in die studie verwys na die verskynsel dat 'n baie lae persentasie van die ongeletterde en half-geletterde volwassenes en jong volwassenes by Volwasse Basiese Onderwys en Opleingsprojekte (VBOO) betrokke raak en bly. In Suid-Afrika is daar 'n groot aantal ongeletterdes wat verkies om nie by VBOO-sentrums betrokke te raak nie. Om moontlike oorsake vir die probleem te vind, is die moontlike hindernisse geklassifiseer as disposisionele (ingesteldheid); situasionele en institusionele hindernisse.

'n Empiriese ondersoek is in die Sedibeng-Oos en -Wes distrikte van die Gautengse Departement van Onderwys onderneem om plaaslike hindernisse tot deelname aan VBOO-projekte te identifiseer. Die ernstigste hindernisse is ten opsigte van institusionele faktore geïdentifiseer. Hierdie faktore verwys na ongelukkigheid oor organisatoriese reëlings (55%); onderrig- (82%) en leermateriaal (87%); tekort aan handboeke (97%); kopieerfasiliteite (72%) en onderrighulpmiddels (71%). Met betrekking tot die verskaffing van leermateriaal, het die meerderheid van die leerders (60%) en van die fasiliteerders (54%) aangedui dat dit nie betyds ontvang is nie.

Die vaardighede en houdings van fasiliteerders is sekerlik die belangrikste faktor wat die sukses van 'n VBOO-projek bepaal. Uit die algemene response van die fasiliteerders op 'n verskeidenheid vrae, word die idee van 'n algemene gevoel van ontevredenheid, ongelukkigheid en 'n lae moreel geskep. In teenstelling met die leerders wat oorwegend tevrede (86%) met die assessering is, is slegs 59% van die fasiliteerders tevrede. Die meerderheid (71%) van die fasiliteerders was van mening dat die provinsiale departement nie genoeg aandag aan VBOO gee nie teenoor slegs 47% van die leerders. Soos in die Grondslagfase van skole is die gebruik van Engels as enigste taal van leer en onderig (TLO) op veral VBOO Vlak 1 en 2 as 'n ernstige probleem ervaar. Die meerderheid van die respondente (60%) het aangedui dat hulle die gebruik van Engels as TLO as diskriminerend ervaar en dat hulle die gebruik van die huistaal sou verkies.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:8) defines Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) as "...the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally provides access to nationally recognised certificates". For the Department of Education, ABET subsumes both literacy and post-literacy training as it seeks to connect literacy with basic adult education and with training for income generation. The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:33) states that the historic inadequacy of learning facilities and opportunities, especially for black communities, has ensured that a majority of the adult population both in and out of formal employment has had no schooling or only inadequate schooling. The advancement of the provision of ABET is a constitutional requirement and the Ministry of Education views ABET as a force for social participation and economic development.

Although Adult Basic Education (ABET) is a right stated in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (SA, 1996a) and the Government and private sector spent millions of Rand in the last decade on ABET, about 4 to 6 million South Africans cannot read or write and 10 million do not have a general education (Grade 9) qualification (Asmal, 2000:1, Blaine, 2004:1). According to the current Minister of Education (Pandor, 2004b:2) the number of illiterate adults in South Africa is still too large. "Even though significant strides have been made in reducing the absolute number of adults with no education at

all, there are still too many adults with no education at all, there are still too many adults who only have a primary school education. This creates a huge participation barrier in social and economic development, as well as in strengthening the democratic processes of governance in this country”.

It has been observed by the researcher that there are substantial numbers of people who in spite of the availability of ABET centres remain outside the world of ABET. For Asmal (2000:4) it is worrying that the ABET system only caters for six percent of those who most need it: “...only 387 000 people were enrolled for adult basic education and training (ABET) in South Africa while six million people older than 16 years had never attended school and could not read and write”. Pandor (2004a:2 15 July) stated that the retention rates of ABET learners in the education sector is notoriously problematic and a social mobilisation campaign will be implemented to encourage participation and completion of ABET programmes”.

The problem of non-participation in adult education is not only limited to South Africa and other Third World countries. An OECD conference report referred to non-participation as an international phenomenon. Irrespective of their political ideologies, technologically advanced and industrially backwards countries alike testified at the Tokyo Conference that the overwhelming majority of their populations were not participating in ABET (OECD, in Edwards, Sieminski and Zeldin, 1993:14). For Merriam and Caffarella (1991:87) the biggest mystery is why more adults (especially those who might benefit the most) are not participating in ABET. The question posed by Merriam and Caffarella (1991:87) has prompted this researcher to try and identify the reasons why adults with no education at all (illiterate) and those with low-level education are not participating in ABET. This study intends to identify and investigate the barriers that inhibit, stop, or prevent illiterate adults and out-of-school youth without a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC, i.e. Grade 9) from participating in ABET learning and teaching activities.

1.2 What is Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)?

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is difficult to define. There is no clear conclusive definition that is satisfactory to most people (Hutton, 1991:2). It is mostly defined as basic literacy, literacy, adult education, adult literacy, basic adult education, education for adults, adult basic education and adult basic education and training. NEPI (1994:3) recognised ABET as encompassing the whole field of education provision outside the conventional formal system of initial education, including vocational education and training, human resources development, and adult literacy and basic education.

The concept "adult" is multifaceted in nature and can be interpreted in various ways. The meaning attached to this concept differs from society to society. For organisational purposes the criterion that is most often used is the one of age. According to the UNESCO document (1997:47) people, who are 15 years or older can participate in "Adult Basic Education and Training." They are therefore presumably recognised as "adults". South African statistics tend to use sixteen years and older as the criterion for 'adult,' whilst other educational related statistics use eighteen years as the starting point for adulthood (Harley, *et al.*, 1996:17). According to The Adult Basic Education and Training Bill (2004:4) an "adult" means a person who is sixteen years or older. Using age as a criterion for adulthood is a controversial statement. It is difficult to pinpoint a moment at which a person becomes an adult. Although the legal age of adulthood in SA is 18 years, society does not necessarily view an 18-year-old as an adult. The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:15) is committed to provide ABET to "adults and out-of-school youth with inadequate or no formal schooling".

One important aspect of ABET as highlighted by Spies (1995:33) is that it ranges normally from stressing only basic literacy to the one that includes life skills and other meta-cognitive skills. There are a few definitions of literacy education which

have emerged over the last two decades, which might assist to give ABET definition a clear meaning. There are various forms of literacy aspects, which focus on ABET programmes that include Literacy, Numeracy and Life-skills. According to Titmus (1989:548) many writers see literacy as the ability to read and write. The concept sometimes includes the ability to calculate (Titmus, 1989:548). Once learners have gained literacy skills, then they tend to develop the urge to continue learning and that resulted in extending literacy education to formal adult education especially Adult Basic Education (ABE) (Titmus, 1989:548).

The definitions of ABET range from those stressing only limited (basic) literacy to those which incorporate life-skills and other meta-cognitive skills (Spies, 1993:33). Klinedinst (1983:12) defines ABET as: "the instruction in communication, computational and social skills for adults whose inability to use these skills effectively impairs their ability to get or retain employment. The aim of ABET is to raise their level of education and enable them to become more productive and responsible citizens".

The DoE (1997:5) suggests that the term 'adult basic education and training' should subsume literacy and post-literacy in order to link literacy with basic adult education on the one hand and with training on the other hand. The need is further expressed to link it with lifelong learning and development. The following definition is given by UNESCO (1997:47): "all forms of organized education and training that meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy, numeracy, general knowledge and life skills".

Crew (1993:1) quotes the following definition by Taylor: "Adult basic education (ABE) provides remediation and the development of knowledge and basic communication, computational, and social skills. It emphasizes the acquisition and integration of competencies, attitudes, and values, which assist adults in their personal development and enables them to function and progress in

various social, economic, and cultural contexts” According to Tuchten & Nong (1996:4) the definition of ABET must include the following points:

- ABET is the basic education and training phase in lifelong learning
- It is aimed at adults and youth with very little schooling
- The final exit point from ABET should be equivalent to the exit point from compulsory schooling, i.e. Grade 9.

An analysis of the definitions seems to have been conceptualised in functional terms and tend to fall into one of the following categories:

- Literacy is defined as enabling individuals and groups to become generally functional in their own societies, and it is seen as part of economic functionality that tends to promote higher productivity and finally contributes to development (DoE, 1997:11).
- It is also indicated that the term Adult Basic Education and Training subsumes both literacy and post literacy as it seeks to connect literacy with Basic Adult Education on the one hand and with training for income generation on the other hand (DoE, 1997:11).

The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:12) indicated that in 1990, the World Conference on Education for All sponsored by the United Nations, defined literacy in ways, which are relevant to countries’ specific social and cultural contexts. On basic learning needs Article 1 of the Declaration states: “Every person, child, youth and adult shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. The needs comprise

- both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and
- the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning”.

The scope of basic learning needs and how they should continue to be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time" (DoE, 1997:12). They indicated that at the CONFITEA Conference in Hamburg in 1997 another definition was coined where countries of the world agreed that all citizens throughout the world have the active capacity to shape the 21st century, and the creation of a learning democracy in which each women and man have the means to lifelong learning and self development is of utmost importance (DoE, 1997:12). This conference also recognised and reaffirmed the role of adult education in responding to changes taking place in the world, including shifting work patterns, changes in the role of the state and the growth of knowledge-based societies" (DoE, 1997:12). The aim of ABET in SA is to provide adults with education and training programmes equivalent to first exit level in the formal school system, (i.e. grade 9) with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills (DoE, 1997:12).

The White Paper on Education (SA, 1995) states that basic education must be defined in terms of learning needs appropriate to the age and experience of the learner. Basic education programmes should therefore be flexible, developmental, and targeted at the specific requirements of particular audiences or groups, and should provide access to a nationally recognised qualification. For the purpose of this study the researcher would concur with the definition of the Department of Education (DoE, 1997:8) as stated in the first paragraph: Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) is the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally provides access to nationally recognised certificates.

1.3 Barriers to participation in ABET

The main aim of this study is to identify the factors that prevent adults from full participation in ABET in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education. The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:5) states in their policy document on ABET that the previous government put in place policies designed to limit access to education for blacks and paid very little attention to literacy. "The consequence today is a legacy of some 9,4 million adults with less than 9 years of schooling, who express the desire and have the ability to (re) enter the education and training system".

To advance the interest of ABET and the elimination of the impact of barriers in educational institutions in South Africa Section 29 (1a) of the South African Bill of Rights as contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (SA 1996) states that everyone has the right to a basic education including adult basic education which is education from level 1 up to grade 9 (SAHRC: 1997: 4). This section of the Bill of Rights has a major influence on the education system especially after the advent of the 1994 democratic dispensation in terms of eliminating some of the institutional barriers that might have prevented adults from participating in ABET programmes. For example some employers attempt to deprive illiterate adults who work for them from the privilege of engaging in learning processes. The bill intends to eliminate this form of barriers from the side of employers. The bill has also attempted to address many barriers facing adults' deprivation of education, problems preventing restoration of human dignity and barriers that made education not essential for all. However, there are still barriers that continue to paralyse the effective and efficient participation of illiterate and low level educated adults in ABET programmes.

Titmus et al., (1989:141) remarked that under normal circumstances every adult needs to undertake some form of a purposive, systematic learning at some stage during his or her adult life. The idea of undertaking some form of purposive learning, emanated from the point that individuals have a need for learning and a

need to empower themselves. Consequently, adult learners have the basic need to satisfy that need by undertaking purposive learning (Titmus et al., 1989:142). Cross (in Rogers, 1999:205) refers to barriers to participation in ABET rather than barriers to learning. These barriers do not refer to inabilities to learn but rather to barriers that impede the participation in ABET. The factors that prevent adults from participating in learning are sometimes referred to as blockages, constraints, deterrents, impediments or obstacles (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Sutcliffe, 1991; Galbraith, 1991; Titmus et al., 1989; DoE 2002 and NEPI 1993).

However, it should be ensured that once an adult has made that decision and commitments, then there should be no barriers inhibiting participation in ABET. Some writers on adult education, basing their argument on the contention that humans are learning animals, have maintained that if some adults do not undertake purposive, systematic learning projects, it might be due to barriers emanating from their experience and circumstances that prevent them to do so (Titmus et al., 1989:141).

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:136-141,145,146) classify the possible obstacles to participation in the following four categories: situational, institutional, informational and psychosocial barriers. Cross (1981, in Rodgers, 1998:204) in her study of adults as learners identified three main barriers which adults face, barriers which arise from the situation in which they find themselves; barriers that spring from the learning programmes themselves and internal barriers as attitudes which the adults may possess towards themselves.

With regard to compulsory education Section 3 of the South African Schools Act (SA, 1996b) determines that every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend a school from the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. Adults have an obligation to participate in learning

and this obligation to attend should be a moral one, rather than a legal one. Section 11 and 20 of the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (South Africa, 2000) determines that the Governing Body of an ABET Centre "...must adopt a code of conduct for learners at a centre" and that "...every learner at a public centre is subject to such code of conduct, disciplinary measures and procedures as may be determined by the governing body subject to provincial policy". Adults ought to participate on their own free will and cannot be compelled to do so. Adults are mature and understand their needs, thus they must be free to choose for themselves whether to participate in purposive learning or not. They are responsible for deciding what their desires are and how to satisfy them.

The introduction of the ABET Act no 52 of 2000 was one measure implemented to address structural barriers in the provision of ABET. The act is important in the sense that it led to the commitment of the ABET Directorate to focus more on the transformation of ABET centres, implementation of outcome-based education in ABET centres and the appointment of facilitators, the recruitment of learners to ABET centres and finally development of policies and regulations to make the ABET institution viable entities. The Act clearly indicated that government was taking the education of adults seriously. The Act assisted in addressing some of the barriers that affected ABET as an education system. For that matter the Gauteng Education Department, has developed an ABET strategy to effect the objective of the Act. Some of the objectives of the ABET strategy are to develop support systems for a curriculum framework that will equip learners with functional numeracy, literacy, language and communication skills and coordinate the development and implementation of quality assurance standards in relation to national standards and the National Qualifications Framework. Some of the programmes included in the strategy are facilitator development programmes, literacy and numeracy, curriculum and reform (GDE, 2003:9). One of the major challenges identified by GDE is the reduction of adult illiteracy through the mobilisation of ABET structures and systems, and the establishment of a reliable learner and teacher base. For the Department of Education (DoE, 1997:14) a

major indicator of the commitment to ABET is the ratio of expenditure on ABET as compared with overall education expenditure. In the 1995/6 financial year only two provinces Mpumalanga (2,2%) and Gauteng (1,1%) spent more than 1% of their budget on ABET.

1.4 Statement of the problem

The research problem of this study is the low participation and retention rates of illiterate and semi-literate adults in ABET activities. In the previous paragraphs the phenomena of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and possible barriers were briefly discussed. ABET is seen as both a Constitutional right and as a functional economic necessity in a changing society which requires a citizenry engaged in a lifelong process of learning. The national Department of Education (DoE, 1997:6) states that some 9,4 million adults in South Africa have less than 9 years of schooling and despite all the efforts less than 6% were enrolled for ABET (Asmal, 2000:4). For Merriam and Caffarella (1991:35) the biggest mystery is why more adults, especially those who might benefit the most, are not involved in ABET and also why so many adults drop out at ABET centres. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:136-141,145,146) classify the possible obstacles to participation in the following four categories: situational, institutional, informational and psychosocial barriers. For the current Minister of Education (Pandor, 2004a :2 15 July) the retention rates of ABET learners in the education sector is notoriously problematic.

1.5 The aim of the research and the research questions

In order to find a solution for the problem of non-participation in ABET activities it is necessary to determine the nature of ABET in South Africa and to identify possible barriers to participation. In this regard the primary aim of this study is to identify possible barriers that prevent adults in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education to participate in ABET. It will

also help to make recommendations for the more efficient implementation of ABET policies in the area by means of addressing or developing measures that will make facilitators and institutions to understand that learners are affected by a variety of barriers and to be sensitive to those barriers. This aim can be operationalised into the following objectives:

- 1.5.1 The first objective of the study is to investigate the general principles and policies of ABET in South Africa;
- 1.5.2 The second objective is to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices;
- 1.5.3 The third objective is to investigate the ABET opportunities that exist in the two districts;
- 1.5.4 The fourth objective is to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practises in the two districts and;
- 1.5.5 The fifth objective is to make specific recommendations with regard to the ABET practices in the two districts.

With regard to the set objectives this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are the general principles and policies of the national Department of Education with regard to ABET in South Africa?
- What are the possible barriers to participation in ABET practices that have been identified in the literature?
- What are the ABET opportunities that have been offered by the Gauteng Department of Education in the two districts?
- What barriers to participation in ABET practises have been identified in the two districts?
- What can be done to increase the participation in ABET practices in the two districts?

1.6 Research design

The aim of this study will be achieved by means of the following research methods:

1.6.1 Literature study

A review of both primary and secondary literature sources will be done in order:

- To investigate the general principles and policies of ABET that exist worldwide and more specifically in South Africa;
- to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices;

Literature study of primary and secondary sources will be undertaken in order to determine what research says about barriers that leads to non-participation of adults in ABET programs. Literature will also reveal what other writers say about the impact of various types of barriers in adult learning.

1.6.2 Empirical research

An empirical research was conducted to determine the nature, extent and quality of the ABET practises in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education and to identify possible barriers to participation. The objectives of the empirical research were:

- To determine the scope of the ABET opportunities that the Gauteng Department of Education offer in the two districts;
- To gather biographic information about the learners and educators involved with ABET training;
- To determine the perceptions of both the learners and educators involved with ABET practices in the two districts;

- To identify the barriers to participation in ABET practises in the two districts?

The primary objective of the empirical survey is to gauge learners' perceptions about ABET practices and to identify possible barriers that lead to non-participation in the ABET system by illiterate and semi-literate adults.

1.6.3 The measuring instrument

Questionnaires were used to gather information from both the learners and the facilitators involved with ABET practises in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education. Information gathered from the literature study was used to develop and design the questionnaires. The questionnaires were used to gauge the perceptions and understanding of issues pertaining to ABET of both the learners and the facilitators.

1.6.3.1 The learners' questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed to obtain biographical data and to gauge adult learners' perceptions of barriers to learning. A pilot survey was designed to pre-test the questionnaire to determine the logic of questions and the survey process as a whole. Problems encountered were rectified. That assisted the process of research to proceed with no or minimal problems.

The questionnaire consisted of several questions (mostly concerning biographical data and various barriers normally experienced by adult learners) that were positively phrased. As the majority of the learners were either illiterate or semi-literate the researcher had to make use of the facilitators and other staff from the ABET centres to help the learners to complete the questionnaires in a semi-interview situation. The interview technique, which was used, was to answer questions from the questionnaire. The interview served the purpose of eliciting information from the participants and allowed for more details to be

extracted. The interview by the facilitators permitted the establishment of a greater rapport and thus, stimulated the respondents to give more complete and valid answers. The interviewers could also translate the questions in Vernacular for those learners who were not fluent in English. The interview was carried out at the centres for adult education, learner's home and places of work. Permission was obtained from centre heads and employers for the interview to be carried out. The interview was conducted in vernacular, which made the interviewees more free and responsive. The questionnaire consisted of the following main sections:

Section 1: Biographical data (Questions 1-14)

Section 2: The learning centre (Questions 18-23)

Section 3: Attendance patterns (Questions 24-27)

Section 4: Types of barriers (Question 28-52)

Section 5: Relationship within the ABET situation (Question 53-60)

1.6.3.2 The facilitators' questionnaire

The facilitators completed the second questionnaire. Similar questions as reflected on the learners questionnaires were asked in order to correlate the answers. The aim was to compare the responses of learners with those of educators.

Section 1: Biographic data (Questions 1-5)

Section 2: The learning centre (Questions 6-11)

Section 3: Attendance patterns (Questions 12-15)

Section 4: Types of barriers (Questions 16-28)

Section 5: Facilitation skills (Questions 4-49)

Section 6: Relationships within the ABET situation (Questions 50-58)

In February 2003 a trial administration of the questionnaire was conducted and certain changes were made to improve the questionnaire. The final questionnaire was then completed by representative samples of both adult learners and facilitators.

1.6.4 The population

The population includes all ABET learners (N = 1 945) and facilitators (N = 246) involved with the five ABET centres run by the Gauteng Department of Education within the boundaries of the Sedibeng East and West districts of the province (See Table 4.4). The region can be characterized as an urban and as a highly industrialised area and is more commonly referred to as the Vaal Triangle. Sedibeng East includes towns and townships such as Vereeniging, Meyerton, Heidelberg and Sharpeville. Sedibeng West includes Vanderbijlpark, Sebokeng, Bophelong and Boipathong.

The objectives with the inclusion of the facilitators were to get an idea of their formal qualifications, their more specific adult teaching skills and to determine if the facilitators are aware of possible barriers to ABET. The adult learner population included a total of 50 adults who had totally not attended school and who had recently enrolled for the South African National Literacy Initiative Project (SANLI) that has been initiated by the Minister of Education.

1.6.5 The sample

Representative samples of 389 (20% of 1 945) adult learners and 130 (52,8% of 389) facilitators were selected from the five ABET Centres within the Sedibeng East and West districts (See Table 4.4). The samples represent respectively 20% and 52,8% of the total population of each group and both the samples of the adult learners and the facilitators are considered to be large enough to be representative of the adult learners and facilitators in Sedibeng East and West

Districts. No claim is made that the sample is representative of all adults in adult centres in South Africa.

1.7 Statistical technique

The statistical consultancy service of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus in Vanderbijlpark was approached for assistance in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The SAS-programme was employed to process data by computer.

1.8 Feasibility and relevance of the study

The study is feasible in the sense that there are sufficient literature sources available on the topic and that the study will be conducted in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education where the researcher is an employee at the Sedibeng East district office. DIALOG and ERIC searches have been conducted using the following key words: adult basic education, ABET, barriers to participation, learning barriers, literacy, numeracy and life-skills.

The study is relevant to the current trends in ABET as it wishes to investigate the possible barriers to participation and the high dropout rates in ABET. The study will try to make recommendations that will improve the participation level of ABET learners in the two districts. As a result it elicited genuine and useful responses from the study population. The study is within the frame of reference and field of the researcher's field of interest.

1.9 Description of general terms and acronyms

- Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) means the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of

knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts.

- “Adult ” means a person who is sixteen years or older (SA, 2000a)
- “Adult learner “ means any person who is fifteen years or older who has enrolled at an ABET centre
- Adult basic education and training means all learning and training programmes for adults from Levels 1 to 4 where Level 4 is equivalent to Grade 9 in public schools, or NQF Level 1 as contemplated by the South African Qualifications Authority Act (SA, 1996c).
- ABET Centre means a public or private centre where adults receive education through the interaction with facilitators.
- Facilitator means any person who teaches, educates or trains an adult learner or provides professional educational services in a formal adult learning setting.
- DoE: (National) Department of Education
- GDE: Gauteng Department of Education
- GETC: General Education and Training Certificate – NQF Level 1. The GET band consists of the Foundational (Grades R-3), Intermediate (Grades 4-6) and the Senior Phases (Grade 7-9) at schools and Levels 1-4 in ABET.
- FETC: Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC / old matric): The FET Band consists of Grade 11 (NQF Level 2); Grade 12 NQF Level 3”matric”).
- FET Centre: A centre that provides further education and training for adults and out-of-school youth to obtain the FETC or more specifically vocational certificates on NQF Levels 2-4.
- NQF: National Qualifications Framework.
- SAQA: South African Qualifications Framework.

1.10 Division of chapters

Chapter 1 Introduction and statement of the problem

- Chapter 2 Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa
- Chapter 3 Barriers to participation in ABET
- Chapter 4 The empirical research
- Chapter 5 Data analysis and interpretation
- Chapter 6 Summary, findings and recommendations

1.11 Summary

In the introductory section of Chapter 1 the concept of Adult Basic Education (ABET) and the provision of ABET in South Africa were discussed. The chapter then briefly outlined the research design with regard to the problem statement, the research objectives, the research methodology, the research population and sampling. The chapter concluded with a statement of the feasibility of the study, a description of core terminology and a proposed chapter division. The emphasis in the following chapter is on a literature study in order to describe the provision of ABET in South Africa. The main aim of this study is to identify the barriers that lead to learners' non-participation in ABET programmes.

CHAPTER 2 ADULT-BASIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 Introduction: Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)

In this chapter the phenomenon Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and the relationship between ABET and Literacy, Numeracy and Life-skills are explained. It is followed by a discussion of the need for ABET in South Africa and a description of legislation that has an impact on the provision of ABET. In the second part of the chapter the adult learner and the problems associated with his learning endeavours, are enlightened upon.

UNESCO (1997: 17) highlighted the following advantages of ABET:

- ABET empowers individuals because it opens avenues of communication that would otherwise be closed;
- it expands personal choice and control over one's environment;
- it is necessary for the acquisition of many other skills;
- it gives people access to information through both print and electronic media; and
- it equips them to cope better with work and family responsibilities;

The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:1) sees ABET not only as an endeavour to eradicate illiteracy but also as the foundation for access to Further Education and Training (FET) and for adults' and out-of-school and unemployed youth's ongoing need for life-long learning. The term ABET subsumes both literacy and post-literacy as it seeks to connect literacy with basic general adult education on the one hand and with training for income generation on the other hand". For the department (DoE, 1997:5) ABET introduces a culture of learning and provides the foundations for acquiring the knowledge and skills required for social and economic development, justice and equality.

The department (DoE, 1997:10) formulated the following vision for ABET: “A literate South Africa within which all its citizens have acquired basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation”. The core values adopted for South Africa are human dignity, liberty and justice, democracy, equality and national development and the following principles for ABET provision were stated (DoE, 2000a:10):

- Equity and redress: The development of a comprehensive national ABET system which addresses national, provincial and local needs to redress the inequalities created by apartheid.
- Democracy: Basic education for youth and adults is a prerequisite for a truly democratic society because it prepares people for full and active participation in society.
- Development and Reconstruction: The planning and implementation of a large-scale delivery of ABET is an important tool in the process of social transformation and a foundation for economic growth.
- Access: ABET, as with access to general education, is a fundamental right and should form the basis for lifelong learning.
- Development and integration: ABET should form part of an integrated education and training system that allows and enhances opportunities for learners to move and transfer across different institutions, contexts and sub-systems.

ABET undoubtedly had its origins in adult literacy work. In the literature adult basic education and literacy are often used as synonyms. Although there are certain similarities between these concepts, it is generally accepted that literacy underlies adult basic education. The original focus of adult literacy, which was on reading and writing, was later extended to a broader concept of adult basic education (ABE), which refers to literacy as well as numeracy and life-skills. ABE became a preferred term because ‘literacy’ did not adequately describe the kind of instruction and learning that took place and also because of the somewhat

derogatory associations of non-professional charity work it has accumulated in the past. In this sense literacy is commonly used as a term to cover three basic cognitive skills: reading, writing and calculations, the basic skills upon which any program of education must be built (NEPI, 1992:2).

Due to national policy commitments to the integration of education and training, the acronym ABE was replaced by ABET. The "T" in this acronym represents the training aspect. Although the term ABET may represent a commitment to the integration of adult education and training, in practice only the two core subjects areas Literacy (communications and language studies) and Numeracy (Mathematics) are presently presented by most of the ABET providers in South Africa. Many of the providers however follow a life-skills orientated approach to the teaching of these core subjects. For the Department of Education (DoE, 1997:5) ABET brings together literacy and post-literacy as it connects literacy with basic general adult education and training for income generation. According to the Department of Education (DoE, 1997,18) the curriculum must enable individuals to:

- develop literacy, language and communication skills in one or more languages;
- develop numeracy and mathematics skills;
- develop a critical understanding of the society in which learners live;
- develop a critical understanding of the context in which learners live, work and interact with others at a local, national and global level;
- develop technical and practical skills, knowledge and understanding; and
- develop an understanding of the world of science and technology.

2.2 Perspectives on Adult Basic Education and Training

For the Department of Education (DoE, 1997:52) illiteracy is a scourge that blights development efforts in all areas of community life and needs to be eradicated urgently. Citizens disempowered by illiteracy cannot access the

various resources that are bestowed to them by the Constitution. Basic education is important as it prepares youth and adults to effectively participate in the socio-economic and political life of their communities, therefore the state has to accelerate the implementation of ABET in all provinces as well as carry out monitoring and evaluation of Learning activities.

According to the Department of Education (DoE, 2004b:1) the Directorate: Adult Education and Training is accountable for spearheading the policy framework for the provision and accreditation of adult education and training programmes of the government. This includes the promotion of appropriate integrated, outcomes-based programmes in line with the NQF so that all adult learners can access lifelong learning in an open system. The Directorate charged with ensuring that adult basic education and training programmes are not confined to literacy and numeracy only, but that it spans all twelve organising fields of learning proposed by the SAQA. Furthermore, these programmes should allow adults to obtain a General Education and Training Certificate that will give them access to further education and training and employment and also allow them to become employment providers in the future.

The directorate is responsible for the realisation of the department's vision for ABET. The Directorate's vision is a literate South Africa within which all its citizens have acquired basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and transformation. The directorate is responsible for developing and assisting in the execution of legal frameworks for adult basic education and training including policies and laws in this sector. It has already developed an ABET policy and it is preparing an ABET Green and White Paper as basis for an ABET Act (DoE, 2004b:1)

2.2.1 Literacy

Literacy in its simplest form refers to the ability or skills that an individual has acquired on how to read and write. During the Second World War the American Army described a person as illiterate when he/she could not understand written instructions, which were necessary to perform basic military tasks (Levine, in 1992:20). Nxumalo (1990:51) defines illiteracy as the inability to read and write. According to De Lange (1990:5), literacy is also necessary for the development of a critical awareness of one's environment and the performance of many social activities in that environment. Not only can literacy be regarded as a basic human right, but also as a basic human need in so far that literacy can contribute to improving the development of large numbers of people who find themselves in poor socio-economic situations. Literacy is a powerful force in the economic (and political) empowerment process, it is also of particular importance for alleviating poverty that prevails amongst the largest proportion of the disadvantaged communities in South Africa (Coetzee, 1990:13).

In 1951 the UNESCO Expert Committee on standardization of Educational Statistics gave the following description to differentiate between the terms literate and semi-literate: "A person is considered literate, if he/she can both read with understanding and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. A person is considered semi-literate if he/she can read with understanding, but cannot write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life" (Harley *et al.*, 1990: 51). An illiterate adult is described as: "a person aged 15 years or older who cannot with understanding both read and write a short, simple statement about everyday life" (UNESCO, 1997: 47). This document further defines illiteracy as "a lack of mastery of the written language, usually related to a social condition of poverty, but not be confused with ignorance". For Ryan (in Titmus *et al.*, 1989:78) "A person is considered literate, if he or she with understanding can both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. Although reading has been identified as the most important literacy skill. Literacy refers to

a much broader concept that includes comprehension and the ability to express oneself in writing, speaking and thinking. UNESCO and Verhoeven, in Loxy, (1994: 391) recommends that literacy skills must be functional and relevant to an individual's needs. The most important core of literacy education is however to acquire the skill of reading simple sentences with understanding and to comprehend clearly what one is reading. Furthermore, literacy must include the ability to write clearly with good expression and to speak and to think logically”.

2.2.1.1 Functional literacy

Snyman (1987:116) distinguishes between basic literacy and functional literacy. Basic literacy refers to the ability to read and write simple sentences. Functional literacy goes beyond this as it means that the individual must be able to understand and act upon the world in which he lives. UNESCO (1997:47) defined functional literacy as: “a term sometimes used to distinguish the ability to use literacy skills for particular purposes in the home, community or workplace. However, it is now generally considered that true literacy must be functional and relevant to the individual's needs”. For Ryan (in Titmus *et al.*, 1989:78) an individual who is functionally literate, is able to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his/her group and community and also for enabling him/her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his/her own and the community's development”. In this sense functional literacy also includes the ability to calculate (NEPI, 1992: 22).

Soifer *et al.*, (1990:2) quotes Hunter and Harman who defines functional literacy as the possession of skills perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups to fulfil their own self-determined objectives as family and community members, citizens, consumers, job holders, and members of social, religious, or other associations of their choosing. This includes the ability to obtain information they want and to use that information for their own and others' well-being. It includes the ability to read and write adequately to satisfy the

requirement they set for themselves as being important for their own lives. It is the ability to deal positively with demands made on them by society, and the ability to solve problems they face in their daily lives (Levine in Lyster, 1992:29).

During the sixties the term functional literacy gained prominence. In 1964 UNESCO started a five-year plan to make a bold stand against illiteracy worldwide. This scheme became known as the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) and it placed strong emphasis on the economic and development potential of literacy. The essential guidelines as proposed in the "New Approach" to literacy were the following:

- Literacy programs should be incorporated and correlated with economic and social development schemes;
- When eliminating illiteracy, a start should be made with those sections of the population which are highly motivated and where literacy will benefit the people making up those sections, and the country;
- Literacy programs should be linked with economic priorities and should be presented in areas where rapid economic progress is taking place;
- Literacy programs should offer not only training in reading and writing, but also in professional and technical matters which in turn will lead to fuller participation by adults in economic and civil life;
- Literacy should form an integral part of the entire education system of every country;
- These "new" literacy programs should help to secure the main economic objectives, namely an increase in labour productivity, food production, industrialisation, social and professional mobility, the creation of new manpower and the diversification of the economy.

By the seventies, UNESCO was no longer interested in cultural, enrichment but emphasised literacy as a means to improve the economic situation of a country. The results were catastrophic. According to statistics released in 1976 by EWLP, one million illiterates were involved in this programme, which cost 32 million

dollars. However, less than 125 000 people achieved the prescribed standard for functional literacy. Various reasons for the disappointing results were identified:

- The issue was not about literacy per se, but the main objective was the economic development of the countries in which the programmes were presented and the content of the literacy programme was compiled accordingly.
- The second reason for the failure was that the programme was initiated and planned from outside. Communities were not consulted before hand and this meant that an important principle of literacy education was ignored, namely that literacy education should be community-based education if it is to be effective. The interest, aspirations and desires of the illiterates as people were not taken into account with the result that a large number did not achieve literacy.
- The third reason for the failure was that many illiterates were not interested in becoming literate. It was for this reason that Freire (Jarvis, 1987:270) developed the concept of conscientization as a first step in turning illiterates into literates. For Freire conscientization refers to the process in which men, not as recipients but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality'.

Later in the late 1970's after realising Freire's approach to conscientization, UNESCO broaden the concept of functionality comprising not only economic and productivist dimensions but also political, social and cultural dimensions (Jarvis, 1987:270). By rejecting a narrowly conceived, solely work-orientated literacy, UNESCO's thinking had come almost full circle, back to the humanist position associated with the early days of fundamental education. The latest definition of a literate person, according to UNESCO is "one who has acquired the essential knowledge and skills in reading, writing and computation required for effective functioning in society, and whose attainment in such skills makes it possible for him to develop new aptitudes and to participate in the life of his times. A literate

person is seen as one “who can both read with understanding and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life” (World Book Encyclopaedia, 1993:32 and Gillette and Ryan, 1983:20 in Hutton, 1991:10). It is said that a person with this level of ability probably could get along in a village in a developing country. But in a large city of an industrial nation, a person with the same reading ability might be unable to hold a job or perform other necessary tasks (World Book Encyclopaedia, 1993:32).

According to De Lange (1990:5), literacy is also necessary for the development of a critical awareness of one's environment and the performance of many social activities in that environment not only can literacy be regarded as a basic human right, but also as a basic human need in so far that literacy can contribute to improve the development of large numbers of people who find themselves in poor socio-economic situations (De Lange, 1990:5). Literacy is a powerful force in the economic empowerment process, but it is of particular proportion of the disadvantaged communities in South Africa (Coetzee, 1990:13) Bhola (in Coetzee, 1990:89) indicated the importance of literacy by saying: “ ...while literacy would not change the world; it will make it more susceptible to change. “

2.2.2 Numeracy

Castle (In Tracy, 1996:33) stated that numeracy is an important but neglected aspect of basic education for adults and argues that numeracy education is much more than the third “R” of basic education. It needs to be an integral part of all ABET programmes. Numeracy is important because of the large number of South Africans who do not have the necessary numeracy skills needed for full participation in society. The term “numeracy” was first used by Crowther in the USA (Tuinjmman, 1996: 82). It was then viewed as the “mirror image of literacy”. This view of numeracy included broad mathematical ideas, and linked it to scientific reasoning and the appreciation of statistical concepts (Tuinjmman, 1996: 82). In 1977 the Education Department of Western Australia published a

policy document that stated that: "The term numeracy is understood to mean mathematical literacy. A person is considered to be literate and numerate when he/she has acquired the skills and concepts to function effectively in his/her group and community, and when his/her attainment in reading, writing and mathematics makes it possible for him/her to use these skills to further his/her own and his/her community's development".

Becker (2001:3) argues that although there is a literacy component to numeracy it is not an aspect of literacy. He refers to studies conducted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, that suggests that literacy and numeracy are based on two different types of cognitive skills. They are skills that may complement each other but are different, and therefore should not be bundled together. In the past, numeracy was used to refer only to an individual's competency with numbers – the ability to recognize number and number notation; the ability to use the four basic processes; and the ability to use number in daily situations to solve relevant problems. Recently the term "numeracy" suggests a more complex interpretation that involves the ability to use mathematical ideas, skills and understandings from other areas as well (Becker, 2001:1). This broader vision of numeracy perceives mathematics more than just a body of knowledge about facts, skills and concepts. It includes the processes of conjecturing, specializing, generalizing, convincing, describing and explaining (Mason et al., as quoted by Tuijnman, 1996:82).

The following definition of numeracy, given by the Department of Education of Queensland (Becker, 2001:1) supports this argument: "Numeracy involves abilities which include interpreting, applying and communicating mathematical information in commonly encountered situations to enable full, critical and effective participation in a wide range of life roles. Numeracy goes well beyond the concept of competence and confidence in computational skills. It incorporates the application of important concepts of number and space in the

fields of measurement, approximation, estimation, tables, graphs and statistics”. Castle (1992:236) identified the following approaches to numeracy:

- Traditional approach. Numeracy is perceived as a minimum competence in mathematics (Tracey, 1996: 34). Castle (1992:236) viewed mathematical facility as the product of schooling in a numerate discipline.
- Numeracy as an aptitude: According to this approach numeracy is an aptitude, a talent with which individuals may be born (Tracey, 1996:35). Castle (as quoted by Tracy 1996:35) who views numeracy as the development of personal aptitude or disposition also supports this approach.
- Functional Numeracy: The functional approach recognises that there are different kinds of numeracy, but there is some basic level of competence that is required for effective functioning in society – not only on the basis of individual survival, but also for overall community development (Clark, as quoted by Tracey, 1996:35). According to Castle (as quoted by Tracey, 1996:35) the criteria for ‘effective functioning’ are usually described in terms of competency, expressed either in mathematical terms (addition, subtraction, decimals and fractions) or as functional skills (budgeting household expenses, costing goods or measuring weights).
- Social approach to Numeracy: Castle (as quoted by Tracey, 1996:37) argues against prescriptive and decontextualised approaches to numeracy and advocates a “social approach”. According to this approach numeracy is related to personal and social experience. It is a communication and social skill, which can enable and empower learners to take control over their own lives. These programs are usually learner-centred and learner directed curricula. The concepts and process of numeracy activities are founded in learners’ personal circumstances, attitudes, ambitions and views of themselves (Tracey, 1996: 37).

2.2.3 Life-skills

Conger and Cameron (1989:173) indicate that life-skills training is dedicated to the development of appropriate self-management skills and the Department of Education (DoE, 1997:26) refers to “training in essential skills and education for better living”. The acquisition of effective life-skills would enable an individual to cope more effectively with a variety of life roles in the family, in society and for personal interest and development. The South African outcomes-based education and training system considers the process of learning as important as the content. Both the process and the content of education are emphasised by spelling out the outcomes to be achieved at the end of the process. In the Revised National Curriculum Statement learning outcomes and assessment standards were designed down from the critical and developmental outcomes.

The critical and developmental outcomes are a list of outcomes that are derived from the Constitution and are contained in the South African Qualifications Act (1995). They describe the kind of citizen the education and training system should aim to create. The critical outcomes aims at more general Life-skills and envisage learners who will be able to:

- 1) Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
- 2) Work effectively with others as members of team, group, organisation and community.
- 3) Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.
- 4) Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- 5) Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and / or language skills in various modes.
- 6) Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.
- 7) Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

The developmental outcomes envisage learners who are also able to:

- 8) Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
- 9) Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities.
- 10) Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.
- 11) Explore education and career opportunities.
- 12) Develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2000a:3) attempts to embody and uphold a democratic vision of the society and the citizens that should emerge from our school system. By means of the Learning Area Statements, the Revised National Curriculum Statement identifies the goals, expectations and outcomes to be achieved through related learning outcomes and assessment standards.

- The outcomes and assessment standards emphasise participatory, learner centred and activity-based education.
- They leave considerable room for creativity and innovation on the part of teachers in interpreting what and how to teach.
- The South African version of outcomes-based education is aimed at stimulating the minds of young people so that they are able to participate fully in economic and social life.
- It is intended to ensure that all learners are able to develop and achieve to their maximum ability and are equipped for lifelong learning (DoE, 2000a:5).

For Conger and Cameron (1989:173) many people, who engage in self-defeating behaviours in their personal, social, vocational, educational and community lives, do so because they lack the skills that characterize competence in these domains. Vermaak (1995:1) refers to the National Conference on Adult Basic Education that was held in November 1993. At the conference it was suggested that life-skills training should be induced in all ABET

programmes. (Roup, 1994a, 3). The following advantages of life skills are highlighted by Vermaak (1995: 3):

- development of the full potential;
- increased communication in the workplace and with family and friends;
- understanding of own feelings and emotions;
- effective decision making and sensitivity to their own as well as others needs;
- better understanding of the needs of the community in which they live;
- acceptance of responsibilities for their own lives.

In order to meet the full education and training needs in South Africa today, a greater awareness of the critical need for life-skills acquisition is required. One way to accommodate the diverse demands, needs and characteristics of the ABET learner, is by means of a life-skills orientated program where life-skills training is integrated with the rest (Literacy and Numeracy) of the ABET-programmes. Life-skills acquisition can be built into the existing training process by careful choice of methods and subject matter (Roup, 1994a:4).

Roup (1994a:2) define life-skills as those skills that enable individuals to function in a monaterised, and literate society and Rooth (1997:6 & 8 – 9) identified the following aspects of life-skills:

- Life-skills are essential skills that make life easier, and increase the possibility of learners realising their potential and becoming productively involved in the community.
- Life-skills are the competencies needed to enrich life.
- Life-skills are the skills for effective living, psychological health and a high level of human functioning.
- Life-skills are the skills that help us cope with life's problems.
- Life-skills are self-help skills as they enable people to help themselves.
- Life-skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable us to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

- Life-skills education is the process of allowing learners the opportunities to develop and practise all the necessary life-skills.

Roup (1994a:3) identified the following five critical life-skills that could empower adults in terms of their personal development and potential career/job advancement:

- Communications: Speaking, writing and listening
- Analytical: Sorting relevant facts, developing findings, drawing conclusions, making recommendations, i.e. logical thinking
- Production: From an idea stage to a product stage
- Teamwork: Working effectively as a member of a team, not necessarily as the leader
- Time management: Setting priorities and managing time, as a scarce resource

The acquisition of life-skills can and should go on throughout a person's lifelong learning experiences. The "life stages" can serve as an important indication of which life skills should be taught and at what stage. A 63-year old learner won't be interested in a topic on choosing a career but he will be very much interested in topics on preparation for retirement. Life-skills are not taught *per se* but serve as a vehicle for the transfer of literacy and numeracy skills. To demonstrate this approach the following serves as an example: If the topic money management is chosen, the literacy lesson can consist of a comprehension on banking (reading skills), debate on the importance of saving (oral skills) and the filling in of deposit and withdrawal forms (creative writing). In the numeracy part of the programme learners can calculate interest or even draw a graph on how they spend their money. Although literacy and numeracy are taught, the life-skills topic serves as a point of departure. By means of a life-skills orientated programme the following needs of the learners can be addressed:

- Their need for immediacy because the skills that the adult learns, can be applied immediately in his/her everyday life.
- Readiness to learn because life-skills are based on development tasks, the “readiness to learn” of the adult learner is utilized.
- Motivation to learn is enhanced because adults can see the usefulness of the learning content.

2.3 The need for ABET in South Africa

South Africa has a population of 40,1 million of which slightly more than a third (34%) is aged less than 15 years. A significant proportion (19,3%) of the population aged 20 years and above has never been to school (DoE, 1997:5). The Department of Education states that the South African governments of the past put in place policies designed to limit access to education for blacks and paid very little attention to literacy. “The consequence today is a legacy of some 9,4 million adults with less than 9 years of schooling, who express the desire and have the ability to (re) enter the education and training system”. The policies of former governments fragmented education and training into different ethnic and racial sub-systems with unequal allocation of resources. This resulted in poor quality education in black schools and the condemnation of millions of adults to illiteracy, effectively limiting the intellectual and cultural development of the country as a whole. In a statement on receipt of the report on the Global Campaign for Education, the Minister (Asmal, 2000c:2) states that 67% of South Africans aged 15 and 83% of those aged 15-24 have completed Grade 6 and are considered literate. These levels of literacy are the highest in Africa, and among the highest in developing nations”. In the Education for All (EFA) Report (DoE, 2000b:13-14) the Department of Education stated in 2002 that illiteracy is prevalent in South Africa, particularly among older persons who were marginalized from educational opportunities under the apartheid system. “Only 67% of persons aged 15 and above and 83% of those aged 15-24 have completed Grade 6 and are considered to be functionally literate (i.e. they have

acquired basic literacy skills)". The large numbers of out-of-school children as indicated by the relatively high percentages of non-school attendance among children eligible to enrol in primary school is an indication that adult illiteracy is increasing and not only a problem of the past. In 1996, about 16% of children 6-14 years were out-of-school. Disparities in proportions of out-of-school children are huge. (DoE, 2000b:19) The prevalence of non-schooling was found to be the highest:

- In rural areas (19,1%);
- Among black Africans (17,3%);
- Among boys (16,6%); and
- In the Eastern Cape (18,8%), Limpopo (18%) and North-West (17,8%).

The department (DoE, 2000b:6) also states that in the 1995/96 financial year a total of 335 481 adult learners were participating in ABET programmes throughout the country. In 2000 six years after the demise of apartheid Asmal (2000:4) mentioned that only 387 000 adults were enrolled for ABET courses and in 2004 Pandor (2004a:2) stated that the retention rates of ABET learners is still low.

The need for ABET in South Africa cannot be over-emphasised. It is estimated that over 33 percent of the adult-population are illiterate and have had little or no education (NEPI, 1997:5). There is an assumption that there was a lack of access to basic education, including literacy and numeracy due to several barriers. This problem was effective to consign millions of adults to silence and marginalisation from effective and meaningful participation in social and economic development (NEPI, 1997:5).

The following comparative table illustrates illiteracy levels of countries indicated

Region	Figures and percentage
Industrialised countries	17 million 2%
Africa	165 million 48%
Asia	659 million 32%
Latin America & Caribbeans	42 million 15%

It is clear from the above figures, that the vast majority of illiterate people live in the poorer Third World countries. In Africa, nearly half (48%) of the adult population is illiterate, whereas in Asia one third of the adult population is illiterate (Hutton, 1992:14). The overwhelming majority of illiterate adults throughout the world are those who are mostly excluded from power, information and wealth. Hence, in the typical case, the illiterate is not only unable to read and write but he/she, or more usually she, is also poor, hungry, vulnerable to illness, and uncertain that even his or her present miserable circumstances will not decline to the point where life itself becomes the issue (Gillette 1993 in Hutton, 1992:15).

In South Africa the pattern is the same: the majority of illiterate adults are poor and the highest rates of illiteracy are found in the rural areas. According to the Department of Education (DoE, 1997:12) between 36-53% of South Africans are below the poverty line. "Furthermore, poverty is overwhelmingly racial in character; 95% of the poor are African; 65% of Africans live in poverty. Roughly 33% of the coloured population live in poverty compared with 2,5% of Asians and 0,7% of whites". Poverty is a barrier in itself and as a result it affects other aspects of life like lack of money, education, malnutrition, poor health, underdevelopment and dependency (Hutton, 1992:17). Hutton (1992:17) says "learning has a tremendous power to bring about positive change, change in the way people think, the way that they organise themselves, act, and the way they work. The table below reflect high figure of possible ABET learners who have not achieved the General Education and Training Certificate (Grade 9).

Education level	Number of illiterates (15 and older)
Adults who have not attended school	1 024 870
Adults who have completed grade 1-6	4 117 525
Total adults with less than grade 7	5 142 395
Adults who have completed grade 7-8	4 490 464
Adults who have less than grade 9	9 632 859

McKay (1998:15) indicates that the group of adults who have had no schooling would be possible candidates requiring basic literacy skills and would fit into a Level 1 class and those adults who only attended school up to Grade 1-6 also requires ABET since they are only functionally literate in basic skills. DoE (DoE, 1997:1) regarded literacy as potent to:

- Empower individuals (that is, gives the voiceless a voice)
- Cement socialism;
- Promote rural/national self-reliance;
- Change thought processes;
- Accelerate economic development;
- Hasten modernisation;
- Make individuals more confident, able and assertive (Hutton, 1992:17)

There is therefore, no doubt that ABET has a key role to play in the reconstruction and development of the economy. Educational advancement of all illiterate adults is seen as a precondition for the full democratisation of the South African society in terms of knowing one's rights (NEPI, 1997:5). According to De Lange (1990:5), literacy is also necessary for the development of a critical awareness of one's environment and the performance of many social activities in that environment. Not only can ABET be regarded as a basic human right, but also a basic human need in so far that ABET can contribute to improving the development of large numbers of people who find themselves in poor socio-economic situations. ABET is a powerful force in the economic empowerment process, but it is of particular importance in efforts to alleviate poverty that prevails amongst the largest proportion of the disadvantaged communities in South Africa (Coetzee, 1990:13).

ABET has the potential to provide adult learners with the foundation for access to life-long learning, to enable them to adapt and contribute to the process of educational, social and economic develop in a rapidly changing democratic order. It is important for adult education institutions to take the responsibility to

work hard to develop the educational levels of adult's learners who are illiterate or who have basic literacy. There is a need for ABET in South Africa because of:

- Its potential to empower individuals to read and write;
- It opens the avenues of communication that would otherwise be closed;
- ABET expands personal choice and control over one's environment;
- ABET is important for the acquisition of skills;
- It provides individuals with access to information;
- It is important because it strengthens individuals with self-confidence and self-esteem to participate in community affairs;
- It is able to unlock the full range of talents and realises creative potential;
- ABET gives illiterate adults the tools they need to move from exclusion to full participation in their communities;
- ABET empowers the entire nation because educated citizens and workers have the skills to make democratic institutions function effectively;
- To meet the demands for a more sophisticated workforce;
- To work for a cleaner environment; and
- To meet their obligation as citizens (UNESCO, 1997:17).

2.4 The provision of ABET in South Africa

The national Department of Education created an ABET directorate in 1996 responsible for the development of an ABET policy framework and for planning and mobilizing resources in support of large-scale provision of ABET. In 1996, interim curricula were developed and an ABET campaign which reached 90 000 adult learners was launched. The National Multi-Year Implementation Plan (NMYIP) outlines the government's plan and commitment to ABET.

The first phase of the NMYIP challenges all players including NGO's, tertiary institutions, publishers, the private sector and trade unions, to set up mechanisms aimed at ensuring sustainable, large-scale delivery of adult education with ownership filtering down to the lowest denominator. Thus, the

main organizational principle of the national ABET programme is the building of partnerships between all constituencies with a vital interest in ABET provisioning, including organized labour and business, women's and youth organizations, civics, churches, NGOs, universities, learner associations, media and other stakeholders. The partners are involved in planning, arranging public advocacy, sponsoring research and development and mobilizing financial resources for all ABET programmes (DoE, 2000a:34).

2.4.1 Legal provisions for ABET in South Africa

The policy for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) in South Africa should be understood within the overarching goal of building a just and equitable system, which provides good quality education and training to adult learning in this country (DoE, 1997:7). The policy seeks to develop an enabling environment in which a high quality ABET programme can flourish. Policy formulation in ABET was shaped by the following legislative frameworks that emanated from the broad mandate of the National Education Ministry:

- The Constitution of The Republic of South Africa, (SA, 1996a).
- White Paper on Education (SA, 1995);
- The South African Qualifications Authority Act (SA, 1996c)
- South African Schools Act (SA, 1996b)
- The National Education Policy Act (SA, 1996);
- Gauteng Education Policy Act (SA, 1998);
- The South African Skills Development Act, Act no 97 of 1998 (SA1998);
- Adult Basic Education and Training Act, (SA, 2000).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa provides the overall framework for the delivery of education to the wider citizenry. In this respect the key provisions that impact on the service delivery component of provincial departments are contained in Section 29 of the Bill of Rights (SA, 1996a), which reflects on every one having the right to "a basic education, including adult

education; and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible". The Constitution does, in addition, empower the provincial education departments to determine their own legislative interventions in order to advance the cause of service delivery within the province. Thus the provision of basic and further education represents a concurrent function between the national and the provincial ministries of education. However, the statutes are clear in that, should any conflict emerge between any provincial policy and/or law then the national policy and/or the law would prevail (DoE, 2002a:5).

The broad mandate of the Department is to provide basic education with the additional obligation to ensure that reasonable measures are adopted to progressively provide access to ABET and further education. It has however been outlined that the South African School Act (SA, 1996b) fundamentally caters for the needs of those learners that are located in schools within the compulsory band. To ensure that, the needs of those learners are addressed who wish to continue their pursuit of ongoing teaching and learning activities; the National Ministry has passed the Further Education and Training Act (SA, 1998). However, the overall commitment of the National Education Ministry is also to cater for the needs of children before their formal entry into the basic schooling phase, the needs of those learners who have special needs and to promote lifelong learning through the provision of continuous learning activities for adults (DoE, 2002a:5). In this respect the department is bound to enforce the key provisions of Education White Paper 5 on early Child Education (May 2001), Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education-Building an inclusive Education and Training System (July 2001) and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (SA, 2000a; DoE, 2003c).

The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) provides the basic framework for the National Ministry to, amongst others determine national educational policies, to monitor the implementation of these policies and to evaluate the

general well being of the educational system. This act provides the national ministry with significant functions and responsibilities in terms of the overall oversight function of the education system nationally (DoE, 2002a:5). The Examination and Assessment Act (Act 7 of 1997) has also been passed as an intervention that has arisen out of the passage of the primary pieces of legislation to determine the department's operational framework within the sphere of schooling. It serves the purpose of ensuring that adults as learners also are assessed within the needs and the limits of the Examination and Assessment Act.

The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) was established through the South African Qualification Authority Act no 58 of 1995. Its purpose is to oversee the evolutionary and participatory development of the National Qualifications Framework through consensual and consultative decision-making (DoE, 1997:15). It will enable public and private sector education and training providers to assist in establishing appropriate national standards in their specialist fields through accrediting bodies. Providers will seek recognition for their programmes in terms of such defined standards to enable learners to earn credits towards national qualifications (DoE, 1997:15).

2.4.2 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The nucleus for the entire National Training Strategy is the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). It also provides the basis for achieving an integrated approach to education and training. For Clarke (2000:2): "The NQF is a mechanism for integrating education and training and increasing access to lifelong learning. Curriculum 2005 reflects the principles of the NQF at the school level."

Any discussion of ABET should use as a starting point the National Qualifications Framework as the fundamental structure within which all education

and training will be organised. In 1992 the new National Education and Training Forum (NETF) was established to address on a broad representative basis the problems in education and training in South Africa. Two years before the announcement of the Curriculum 2005 project the White Paper on Education and Training (SA, 1995:4) introduced the outcomes-based National Qualifications Framework (NQF). For Ashley and Mehl (1997:31) the new policy represented by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the White Paper on Skills Development have presented industry and educators with the greatest training and educational development challenge in the country's history and, interestingly, with the financial resources to meet the challenge.

The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA), which was established by the South African Qualification Authority Act no 58 of 1995, (Policy for ABET 1997:15), was given the responsibility for developing the NQF. The NQF was brought about through legislation. An NQF structure was developed by a large number of organised constituencies through: The National Training Board's National Training Strategy Initiative. Stakeholders like universities, FET colleges, technikons, representatives from organisations, specialist institutions and professional opinion within the formal education constituency were included so that the development of the NQF incorporates their advice and enjoyed their support and confidence.

For Mehl (1997:32) outcomes based education and training within the NQF structure should be the vehicle for a total transformation of the following well-known features of the old structure:

- A provider-led, instructor-centred system of learning.
- Rigid curricula with an equally rigid qualification structure.
- Rote learning and memorising as the primary cognitive capacity of schooling and even some tertiary education.

- Little articulation between academic and industry training with the latter regarded as an inferior, low-level intellectual activity.
- No structure within which the many excluded from the formal system can re-enter and reach the highest levels.

For (Ashley & Mehl (1997:32) the guiding principles and intentions of SAQA and the NQF appear to be:

- To establish a learning environment that enables people to realise their full social and economic potential in the modern world.
- To produce educated people who are independent problem-solvers and reflective learners and who have learned how to learn.
- To provide a learning environment with the proper integration of academic abilities and workplace skills, in order to produce qualifications that not only meet needs, but also have appropriate intellectual content - thus removing the artificial distinctions between academic and vocational training.
- To establish an enabling framework for the many who have been marginalized from formal education and/or workplace opportunities.
- To remove the existing artificial learning ceilings and to provide the pathways of continuous learning towards meaningful qualifications.
- In essence to establish the framework for a nation of life-long learners who are able to realise their full potential through flexible curricula and opportunity structures which enable movement between various levels of achievement.

As a mechanism to steer the integration between (general) education and (vocational) training the outcomes-based National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was developed (Mehl, 1997:32).

Table 2.3: The National Qualifications Framework (NQF): Proposed structure for an NQF (Government Gazette, No.18051).

NQF LEVELS	BAND	TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATES	
8	Higher Education and Training Band	Doctorates, Further Research Degrees	
7		Higher Degrees, Professional Qualifications	
6		First Degrees, Higher Diplomas	
5		Diplomas, Occupational Certificates	
FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATES (FETC)			
4	Further Education and Training Band	School/College/Training Certificates - Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
3		School/College/Training Certificates - Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
2		School/College/Training Certificates - Mix of units from all (NGOs)	
LEVEL 1 GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE (GETC)			
1	General Education and Training Band	Senior Phase	ABET Level 4
			ABET Level 3
		Intermediate Phase	ABET Level 2
		Foundation Phase	ABET Level 1
		Preschool	

There are eight levels on the NQF that are divided into three Bands and ABET is mostly involved with the GET Band. In the GET Band formal schooling consists of the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) and the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9) and the Adult Basic Education and Training consists of four benchmark ABET Levels 1-4. At the end of Grade 9 or ABET Level 4 a learner could obtain a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) on NQF Level 1. ABET comprises three benchmark levels below the General Education and Training Certificate - ABET Levels 1, 2 and 3 with Level

4 as equivalent to NQF Level 1. On completion of ABET Level 4 in the GET Band the adult learner obtains a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC). This exit point is considered as equivalent to the exit point from compulsory education namely Grade 9 (Van Niekerk, 1996:29).

The Further Education and Training Band (NQF Levels 2, 3, 4) refers in the school situation to Grades 10, 11 and 12. At the end of Grade 12 a learner obtains the Further Education and Training Certificate. Within the adult training sector a learner in possession of a GETC could on completion of Levels 2, 3 and 4 obtain vocational certificates at so-called FET institutions (Technical and Vocational Colleges or other training providers such as industrial and vocational training centres and NGOs. Learners enter FET after the completion of the compulsory phase of education, i.e. Level 1 or GETC. FET is not free and compulsory education. By definition it has no age limit. Its goal is to promote life-long learning and education on the job. The FET consists of all learning and training programmes from NQF Levels 2 to 4 (DoE, 1998:1.2). Responsibility for FET largely falls to the national and provincial departments of education, but the Department of Labour (DoL), other government departments and private providers including companies, are also important role players.

The ABET sector has been engaged in a consultative standard-setting process for several years. The National Interim Guidelines Document (Department of Education, ABET Directorate, 1995) put forward outcomes for Language and Numeracy at ABET Levels 1-4 in order to provide transitional guidance for the ABET field. SAQA has agreed that there should be Unit Standards for ABET below GETC level, although this is not the case for formal schooling. Unit Standards for Language and Numeracy are being written on the basis of the outcomes in the National Interim Guidelines, taking into account work done by the Department of Education's Learning Area Committees in these two areas. Processes for developing unit standards at ABET Levels 1-3 in other learning areas are under way. These unit standards will provide a pathway that will

enable adult learners to achieve a GETC. While unit standards from the eight learning areas at GETC level will be the same for the ABET sector, as for schooling, rules of combination for qualifications for adults need to be flexible. Adult learners may well make up a GETC with unit standards that are taken from fields of learning other than the eight learning areas for schools. Issues regarding rules of combination for qualifications on GETC and beyond, and the relationships between unit standards taken from the twelve fields put forward by SAQA, are still under debate (Ministry of Education DoE, 1997:10).

The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) at the appropriate level of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) will register in future all education and training qualifications. The ABET policy will be formulated within the eight levels outlined by the National Qualifications Framework and provision will include the seven critical and five developmental outcomes defined by the South African Qualification Authority.

The various industry groups who will decide what competencies should be measured will set up Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs). Measurable Assessment Criteria will be developed for each competency and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) will ratify the Unit Standards. Each industry will then train assessors who can determine whether an employee has reached the set standards by reference to the Assessment Criteria. Such assessment is carried out in the work place. Once a standard has been attained, a certificate is issued which will be recognised throughout that particular industry and may be recognised by a much wider community, depending on the type of skill attainment. In addition, it is envisaged that these qualification can also become stepping-stones to attaining a formal qualifications within the specific industry. The NQF thus is a very important step in ensuring that those who have the skills and competencies to perform in the work place are recognised even if they do not necessarily have academic qualifications.

Policy demands that the knowledge and skills base of the working and unemployed population be massively upgraded. Human resource development programmes must therefore expand the way in which people are able to acquire learning and qualifications of high quality. New curricula are needed that cut across traditional divisions of skills and knowledge in order to prepare people more effectively for life in a modern economy and democratic environment. An integrated approach to education and training will link one level of learning to another and enable learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point in the education and training system. Learning and skills that people have acquired through experience and informal training will formally be assessed and credited towards certificates.

The provision of Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa represents a crucial step in the reconstruction and development of the South African society. Policy indicates that the provision of ABET must be expanded by building a partnership of all employers, Labour, Local and Provincial government, Community and Funding agencies. Government through the Ministry of Education established a process to provide funding support to a national ABET programme, managed at provincial, sectorial, local, community and workplace levels. Where possible existing educational and training facilities when used, when not utilised or under-utilised, such as at night, over weekends and during holidays (ANC.1994:63). The need placed is that ABET must be centrally included in all reconstruction project, and particularly programmes for the unemployed. Micro enterprises must also be given assistance with respect to ABET provision. Such provision should assist learners to seek related employment on completion of the specific project.

2.5 The ABET learning and teaching situation

In the past Knowles (1978) and other authors made a clear distinction between Pedagogics (“peda” – child) and Andragogics (“aner” – man or adult) and “agogus” (meaning guide or to lead). For them Andragogy is the art and science

of helping adults learn and it referred primarily to more learner-centred or self-directed learning. Tertiary teaching institutions (universities, technikons, and technical, teacher, agricultural and nursing training colleges) are academic institutions established in the community so that science and technology can be practised formally in an educative teaching, research, and community service setting. In these institutions adults who have completed their formal schooling up to a certain level receive further teaching and training in enhanced scientific knowledge and skills in order that they may join the community as vocationally and/or professionally competent adults. Obviously, andragogic, and not pedagogic, didactic situations are the order of the day in these types of didactic environments.

The basic principles of Andragogy is also very relevant at Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres that cater for the basic (literacy, numeracy, life-skills) education of adults. Although research by Knowles (1978) and others has shown that adults and children learn in different ways new developments such as a more liberal education, experiential learning, constructivism and facilitation in the pedagogy as represented by the outcomes-based approach have narrowed the gap between the teaching and learning styles of adults and children (Vermeulen, 2002:104).

Historically, educators speculated that learning was a lifelong process, but few acknowledged that learning was accomplished in different ways at various stages in life. Until recently the same principles of learning were applied to all learning situations - irrespective of the basic differences between adult learners and children. The student revolt in Europe and America during the late 1960s served as a catalyst for the innovations that were introduced into the sphere of university and the post-school education. The relevance of both subject content and modes of teaching was questioned and came under close scrutiny. The outcome of the student revolts was the creation of research and staff

development programmes at many universities and colleges. Knowles (1978:37) identified the following basic principles of adult learning and teaching:

- Adults are motivated to learn if they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy;
- Adults' orientation to learning is life-centred;
- Experience is the richest source for adult learning
- Adults have a need to be self-directing;
- Individual differences among people increase with age.

All learning and teaching activities take place within a particular didactic situation. In this context, a situation can be defined as a coherent set of circumstances in which man finds himself at a particular time, in which he is in a specific relationship with other people or objects (aspects of reality) and which demand or suggest particular activities. The particular relationship in which the persons in the classroom situation find themselves is characterised by the learners' needs and expectations and the facilitator's willingness to supply educative teaching. To take part in the learning and teaching activities in the classroom is the reason why the adult learner go to an ABET centre (to learn) and why the facilitator is paid (to teach) by the state and/or other stakeholders. The teaching-learning situation indicates the activities that take place in the classrooms of the ABET centre. The facilitator and the learner communicate with each other by means of the learning content (subject matter). From this interaction between the learner and the learning content the learner constructs his own meaning by means of the integration of new knowledge into his existing cognitive structure (Vermeulen, 2002:7).

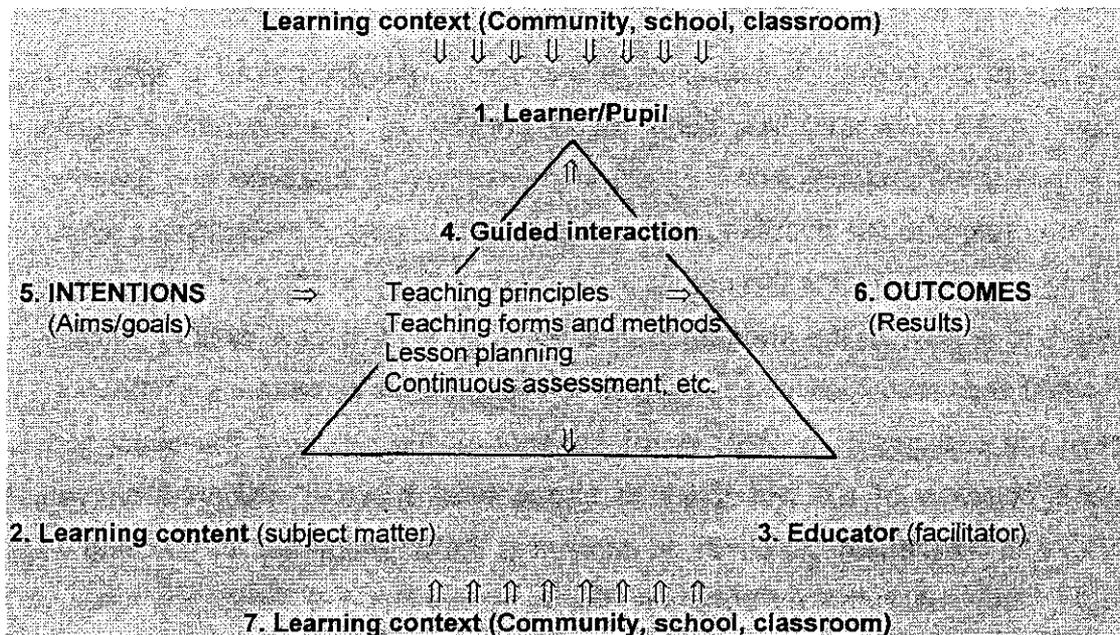
To the didactic triangle of Duminy & Söhnge (1987:6) with its basic three interactive elements: learner, teacher, content, Steyn (1988:160) adds two more aspects, Guided interaction and Goal/Intention, for his "Ontological-contextual model of the teaching situation" which takes place within a specific context/environment. "Traditionally the teaching or 'didactic situation' is treated in

terms of the so-called 'didactic triad'. The 'ontological-contextual' view of the teaching situation as advocated by Steyn (1988) and Nieuwoudt (1998), is both a criticism and an extension of the 'triad-view' of teaching" (Drinkwater & Nieuwoudt, 1998:13).

Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of existence (Cowie, 1989:864) and has been made popular by the Phenomenological Approach (from phenomenon - object of perception) to teaching and learning. Ontology refers to the doctrine of being (reality); that part of metaphysics, which investigates and explains the nature of all things or existences and in this sense it refers to a study of the phenomenon of teaching as it reveals itself in practice. "The first presupposition of pedagogical thinking is the acceptance of the ontic fact of the pedagogic. In other words negation of the reality of the pedagogic, means negation of the possibility of pedagogical thinking" (Kilian & Viljoen, 1974:23 in Vermeulen, 2002:13). In explaining the phenomenon of teaching we should study the authentic (fundamental, actual, ontic) and basic structures of teaching with the aim of systematising them in a scientifically accountable and coherent structure. The ontological-contextual view means a study of teaching (as a phenomenon) as it reveals itself in a specific context or situation. Steyn (1988:160) defines a teaching situation as follows: "A particular situation can only be conceptualised as teaching when the following characteristics appear simultaneously and in an interrelated way: A teaching aim/intention (outcome); curriculum/content; teacher; learner(s); and a live, guided interaction between teacher and learner."

Nieuwoudt (1998:iii) developed a constructivist-based post-positivist view of effective teaching as an integrated ontological-contextual view of teaching in terms of six identified ontological essential features, and their contextual coherence, namely: (1) intention, (2) teacher, (3) learner, (4) interaction, (5) content and (6) context and to these six components Vermeulen (2002:8) added the outcomes as learning results as a seventh component.

Figure 2.1: Structure of the teaching-learning situation adapted from Duminy & Söhnge (1977:6); Steyn (1988:160); Fraser *et al.* (1993:100); Drinkwater & Nieuwoudt (1998:21), Nieuwoudt (1998:3), and Vermeulen (2003:8)



The three main components (didactic triad) of the teaching-learning situation are the learner, the teacher (facilitator), and the learning content (subject content). The sides of the triangle represent the interactive and unique relationships (guided interaction, intentions, results, outcomes) that exist between the constituent components of the didactic situation. The other components of the didactic situation, which are related to these constituent components, operate in a particular way within the framework of this triangle. They include educational aims, teaching methods and evaluation (Fraser *et al.*, 1990:10). Figure 2.8 is a representation of the seven different components involved in the teaching-learning situation as derived from the models of the above-mentioned authors. Please note that it is only a representation of the situational structure and not a teaching-learning model.

The following is a comparison of some key concepts of andragogy and pedagogy as it is revealed in the adult learning and teaching situation with regard to the main components as identified above. This is not a comparison of good/bad or child/adult concepts and processes. Rather they are simple approaches at two ends of a continuum. Each is appropriate for particular learners and subjects in certain situations. More often, some combination of both is most appropriate. For example, if an adult learner is learning completely new information, a more pedagogical approach often works best. The more experience the learner has with the content, the better andragogical approaches will work.

2.5.1 The context of the andragogic (post-school) didactic situation

The policy of Adult Basic Education and Training in South Africa is centered on the aim of building a just, fair and equal provision of education and training to adult learners irrespective of race, colour, religion and creed (DoE, 1997:7; DoE, 2002a:48). What these documents on the new system of education agree upon is to restore the basic human rights, the rights of individuals to basic education, access to educational institutions, recognition of different language group's instruction (DoE, 1997:7).

ABET has an important role to play in the development of illiterate adults learners in South Africa. In South Africa Adult Basic Education and Training programmes are equivalent to the exit level (Grade 9, GETC) in the General Education and Training Band of the formal school system, with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. This represents a crucial step in the reconstruction and development of the South African society.

ABET aims to empower individuals for a better life and for enabling individuals to participate effectively in social and economic activities. ABET for example has the potential to uplift illiterate adults to a level that restores their dignity. It can

develop their full potential. It enables participation in life-long learning and training. It allows for active participation in the economy. It has the ability to develop a critical thinking and understanding of the society in which they live and how it impacts upon their lives. ABET develops communication skills and numeracy skills. Finally, ABET can develop an understanding of the world of science and technology (Spies, 1995:33). It assists individuals to depend less on other people.

In adult learning and teaching situations, facilitators (lecturers and trainers), function as tutors who teach and guide students, apprentices, and other adult persons by means of specialized learning content to become more mature and career competent. Where different persons and aspects are the constituent components of the didactic situation, there will also be differences in the ways in which the didactic principles and the aims, methods and evaluation of teaching operate within each particular situation. Researchers like Knowles (1978), Behr (1980), Cross (1981), Ward (1989:12) gave the following general principles of the adult learning and teaching situation (andragogy). Please note that they are often a very simplified comparison of pedagogy and andragogy - most of the characteristics assigned by them to the andragogy are also part of modern pedagogy, and especially of the more modern approaches, such as the outcomes-based education approach.

2.5.2 The ABET learner

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) caters for learners that are adults and adulthood distinguishes ABET learners from the learners in the formal schooling system. The learner is not in a pedagogical didactic environment of his family-home and school to learn but is in an andragogical didactic environment, where he learns in the company of other adults. The adult's obligation is not towards school but towards society in general. An adult is independent,

autonomous and responsible. He has to make informed choices and decisions about his philosophy of life, and his vocation (Vermeulen 1998:106).

The concept adult is multifaceted in nature and can be interpreted in various ways. The meaning attached to this concept differs from society to society. For organisational purposes the criterion that is most often used is the one of age. According to the UNESCO document (1997:47) people, who are 15 years or older can participate in "Adult Basic Education and Training." They are therefore presumably recognised as 'adults'. Many South African statistics tend to use sixteen years and older as the criterion for 'adult,' whilst other educational related statistics use eighteen years as the starting point for adulthood (Harley, et al., 1996:17). According to The Adult Basic Education and Training Bill (2004:4) an "adult" means a person who is sixteen years or older. Using age as a criterion for adulthood is a controversial statement. It is difficult to pinpoint a moment at which a person becomes an adult. Although the legal age of adulthood in SA is 18 years, society does not necessarily view an 18-year-old as an adult.

2.5.2.1 General characteristics of adult learners

With the ABET programme the Department of Education (2004:1) wishes to serve the needs of a diverse range of learning constituencies, including organized labour in the formal economy, self-employed, under-employed and unemployed people, under-educated women (especially those from rural areas), out of school youth, prisoners and ex-prisoners, and those whose disabilities prevented them from gaining a basic education.

Galbraith (1991:18) highlights the fact that adult learners are diverse in nature. Their diversity is made of "the multifaceted physiological, psychological, sociological, and developmental aspect". This diversity observed in these learners makes the educational encounter challenging and enriching. Experience

has shown that adult learners have the following shared characteristics, which can be useful in arriving at better strategies to accommodate their educational needs. For effective learning to take place the following is essential:

- Learning must be relevant to the learners;
- Learners must be motivated to learn;
- Instruction must incorporate varied strategies that tap into the learners experience base;
- Learners must feel a sense of control over their own learning; and
- Instructional strategies must accommodate the cognitive and/or physiological needs of the learners.

Galbraith (1991:18), Frazer et al., (1992:32) in Vermeulen, (1998:106) state the following characteristics of an adult that may be relevant also to adults in ABET centres:

- Adult learners desire concrete, hands on practical information; however, they also need the philosophical and theoretical bases of knowledge;
- due to their vast experience and established frame of reference, they experience their life world totally different from their younger counterparts;
- their motivation to perform and to achieve success is normally higher than that of younger students, with the result that older students often set themselves unrealistically high standards;
- the adult learner has a wide range of experience, which influences learning. Learning will therefore be determined by what the person has already internalised about similar material and past experiences;
- the majority of adult-learners are full-time employees working in various settings and sectors;
- their age ranges from sixteen to those who are over the age of sixty years;
- many of the learners sponsor themselves to undertake the programme;

Boshier and Collins in (Galbraith, 1991:18) says facilitators seek to develop collaborative, challenging, critically reflective, and transforming encounters where the adult learner is the user of education instead of just the recipient. Information on why adults participate becomes an important tool for the facilitator in developing responsive educational encounters. Facilitators use that opportunity to create appropriate learning opportunities, material, techniques, and strategies that encourage learners to search for a higher level of understanding as well as alternative ways of thinking and acting. According to (Galbraith, 1991:19) Adult learners are varied in their physical, social, psychological, ego, moral, and learning developmental directions also acknowledges the fact that each learner who enters the educational encounter has experienced different marker events, transitional, roles, and crisis. Such experiences provide fertile opportunities for reappraisal and exploration of ideas and actions.

There are various theories that underpin the provision of ABET. This debate focuses mainly on simple communities living in oral communities and those in literate communities. The great divide theories argue that there is an enormous difference between modes of thought in oral and literate cultures. People from primary oral cultures are unable to think abstractly, logically, rationally or critically. Their intellectual thought processes are inferior to literate cultures. Many empirical studies have been carried out comparing the cognitive performance of illiterate and literate adults. Ong in Lyster, (1992:22) refers to the work done by Vygotsky and Luvia who compared illiterate and literate people on a series of syllogistic and conceptual classification tasks. They discovered considerable differences in their performances. Ong reinforces the notion of a great divide between literate and illiterates with the following statement: " Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally even when it is composing its thoughts in oral form. More than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness (Lyster, 1992:23).

It is the responsibility of facilitators to assist learners to develop learning strategies and activities that fit their diverse background and interests. Seeing that their interests are taken into account would help learners to assume responsibility for their own learning as well as bolster their capabilities to be independent in other facets of their personal, professional, social, and recreational lives. "Understanding an adult development also provides to the transactional process the characterisation that each individual is unique, separate, and deserving of respect" (Brookfield, 1990 in Galbraith, 1991: 19). Each individual learner brings to the educational encounter his/her learning style. Learning styles are the ways that individuals prefer to engage and process information in learning activities.

Fraser (1992:32) states the following characteristics of the older student:

- Adult learners desire concrete, hands-on practical information; however, they also need the philosophical and theoretical bases of knowledge.
- Due to their vast experience and established frames of reference, these learners experience their life world totally different from their younger counterparts.
- Their motivation to perform and to achieve success is normally higher than that of younger students, with the result that older students often set themselves unrealistically high standards. As a result the teaching situation may place unnecessary strain upon them and they may feel threatened.
- The adult learner has a wide range of experience which influences learning. Learning will therefore be determined by what the person has already internalised about similar material and past experiences.
- Learning success will *inter alia* be determined by the learner's ability to form associations between new information or content, and information learned previously.
- The older student's past experience could cause his rate of learning to slow down, because he is more reflective on new content. However, learning in

older students is very often more efficient than is the case in younger students.

- As expected, a person's reaction time increases with age. Memorisation and the recall of information could take longer, which could result in decreased self-confidence.

2.5.2.2 Motivation of the ABET learner

The various dimensions or characteristics of the adult learners are interrelated, thus every other dimension affects one dimension of the individual. Learners normally have diverse reasons for participating. They are also at various stages in their adult development. Many learners learn because they are driven by the urge to learn, acquiring new skills, and the main aim is to improve in order to function well in the work place, and to assist community members. This factor of attending voluntarily is important for facilitators to have the challenge of using such information for building more rewarding and persistent learning situations. Krupp (as quoted by Galbraith, 1991:18) suggests that understanding this multifaceted characterisation is to understand the adult learner from a holistic perspective. Boshier and Collins (in Galbraith, 1991:18) identified multiple reasons for participating in educational activities and cluster them into six categories:

- Cognitive interest;
- Social stimulation;
- Social contact;
- External expectations;
- Community service; and
- Professional advancement.

What is more interesting is that adult participation is voluntary. Adults in ABET programmes tend to be self-directing; they have a rich reservoir of experience that can serve as a resource for learning. Knowles (1984) in Biswalo, Pales and

Convergence, 2001:2) state that since adults' readiness to learn is frequently affected by their need to know or do something, they tend to have a life, task, or problem-centered orientation to learning as opposed to a subject-matter orientation. Adults are motivated to learn by both internal and intrinsic factors such as helping their child with homework or because of external or extrinsic factors such as a raise in salary.

- Whereas children learn because others (parents, teachers, laws and other forces) say it is important to attend school adults perceive an internal need to learn and have personal goals that learning will help them reach.
- It is assumed that children of the same age are ready to learn the same things at the same time. Learners are grouped by age, not by interest, maturity, or readiness to learn. Adult learners can be grouped based on occupation, job title, interest level, sex, ability, etc. They are ready to learn when they need better ways to cope with real-life tasks or problems.

2.5.3 The ABET facilitator

For Klinedinst (1983:5) the success of ABET programmes depends to a large measure on the professional characteristics and competencies of the facilitators of adults. Klinedinst (1983:12) defines a competency as "a knowledge, skill, behaviour, or attitude a facilitator should possess that would bring about a positive change in a learner." Presently there are no universal criteria for the employment of ABET facilitators in South Africa. Different criteria are applied by different sectors, especially in the non-formal education sector. Most of the facilitators who are working in the field of ABET have no formal qualification in ABET and only some of them have a formal qualification in education. If ABET is properly managed, it can contribute towards improvement of communication, decision making and problem-solving skills, leadership development and the empowerment of individuals in order to participate more meaningful in social and working contexts (Van Niekerk, 1996:30).

Facilitators should be trained to manage adult learners in a respectful but relaxed way as equals. Facilitators need to learn to make use of experiences of learners. Not only do ABET-facilitators have to understand the cognitive approaches by which people become literate, but they need to have a variety of skills-expertise in teaching, training, material production, planning, programme evaluation, organisation and supervision (Motala, 1992:2). Rivera and Gschwender (as quoted by Klinedinst, 1983:5) made the following statement: "The success or failure of adult education programmes depend in large measure on the professional characteristics and competencies of educators of adults." They have identified the following categories of competencies necessary in a professional adult educator: the right attitude, content knowledge, programme skills, and general awareness of learner needs.

It is the responsibility of the facilitator to make the following contributions for a successful training-learning transaction:

- Be proficient in skills that are required.
- Know the subject or learning area involved.
- Have knowledge of learning process and especially how learning occurs.
- Know the characteristics of the adult as a learner.
- Be skilled in providing learning experiences suitable for adults.
- Be aware of the intersection involved in the training-learning situation.
- The facilitator should assist the learner if the learner does not know what part he or she has to play or how to participate.
- A facilitator should not assume that all his learners know how to study; it is imperative that before the beginning of any course learners should be instructed on how to act in the learning situation.
- The facilitators must be aware of the part the learners ought to play in the learning situation.
- Understand that learning means that both the facilitator and the learner must be active in the learning and teaching process.

- Know that he/she should be aware of the vast experience and prior knowledge that an adult brings to the teaching and learning situation.
- Knows that facilitation means to direct learning in such a way that it becomes constructive.
- Facilitation also means making the learning process easy, to help learners to go forward with the process of learning.
- Knows that the adult learner approaches each learning task with a set of personal beliefs, motivations, and conceptions about the subject area and about knowledge itself.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:17) state that a teacher of adults, like the one of children is concerned with transmitting or evoking knowledge, attitudes, values or skills in a systematic way. In less formal settings, where the emphasis is on problem solving, or where self-direction is otherwise necessary or appropriate, or where the expectations are that the adult learners will learn from each other, the tendency is for facilitators to arrange conditions to facilitate learning, rather than to transmit knowledge and skills themselves. But, to facilitate, one must trust students to assume responsibility for their training.

Wittmer and Myrick (1989:40) and Galbraith (1991:7) mentioned the following characteristics of a good facilitator:

- **Attentive:** A facilitator must be an attentive person. People who take interest in listening to the learner's problems, request, and comments and if possible should give responsible advise or appropriate guidance and/or solutions. A facilitator needs to know the dimensions of how his or her learners think. The facilitator needs to stay focused and respond appropriately and not come to conclusions that will discourage communication in class
- **Understanding:** The facilitator must be able to listen and understand his learners. He should be empathetic at all times. He should understand a learner at cognitive and emotional level. The facilitator needs to respect

learners and regard them as adults at all times. The facilitator must be open, accessible and non-threatening.

- **Genuine:** Genuine interest and understanding are intertwined. A facilitator must be consistent at all times. Learners need not be suspicious of the facilitator's actions.
- **Respectful:** It is important for the facilitator to respect himself and to respect the learners. Respect will make learners to realise that they are important. They will also learn to respect other people in their environment. This relationship will help learners to develop trust and confidence to express themselves openly without a feeling of being threatened. True respect indicates a concern for the learners as a special person with unique feelings and experiences. The degree to which a facilitator communicates respect for learners helps to define facilitator-learner relationships. Mutual respect opens the door to true learning. A facilitator's positive regard, warmth and respect can break down barriers to learning and pave the way for self-esteem.
- **Knowledgeable:** Facilitators need to be more knowledgeable than their learners. They should read widely and be more informative if they want to help adults learn. Facilitators need to be thoroughly familiar with their subject matter and help learners to become more knowledgeable through their own experiences and serve as catalyst in the learning process.
- **Communication:** The facilitator must be able to communicate. It is important for a facilitator to be attentive so as to respond effectively. The facilitator must have inter and personal skills. These skills do not happen by chance but they need to be learned. It needs a lot of practise to accomplish these skills.
- **Cultural sensitive:** It is essential for facilitators to understand the cultural differences. Facilitators must accept learners as they are. In working with different culturally orientated learners it is important to preserve the self-respect and dignity of learners. Facilitative facilitators know that culture can be a predisposition to learning, especially in this country where learners come from different cultural settings.

- Proficiency: The facilitator must be proficient in the content area. He should have an understanding of adult learners, and adult learning methodologies as well as possess personal characteristics and interpersonal skills that engender an image of caring, trust, and encouragement
- Personality: The personality of the facilitator should suggest a sense of self-confidence, informality, enthusiasm, responsiveness, and creativity. Galbraith (1991: 8) suggests that ideal helpers are warm, loving, caring, and accepting of learners, have a high regard for the learner's self-planning abilities, view themselves as participating in a dialogue between equals with learners and are open to change and new experiences.
- Interest: The facilitator must show an interest in the learner, possess a good personality, show interest in the subject matter and demonstrate objectivity in presenting the subject matter and in dealing with learners (Galbraith, 1991: 8)
- Positivity: Facilitators need to create a positive psychological learning environment and show understanding, flexibility, patience, humour, practicality, creativity and preparation (Galbraith (1991: 8).

The facilitator must be able to guide adult learners on how to explore in search of knowledge. There is a link between ABET and community education. In community education a facilitator must be seen as facilitator of community development. The facilitator becomes an all rounder as a class facilitator, an instructor, a co-ordinator of projects and a facilitator of various education projects. Without appropriate training that is simply not possible. According to Cyril Houle in (Jarvis, 1987:159). to be fully successful, therefore, the professional educator of adults must be deeply conversant with the goals and methods of learning. Gaining such knowledge from the strategies on how other organisations operate in teaching adults, training efforts, from self-directed programs of study and from the contemplative examination of his or her own experience. If theories based on ABET provision are to play an important role in the future, it should be a prerequisite for facilitators to be trained in andragogy.

The high dropout rate at ABET centres may be partly ascribed to the fact that facilitators are not equipped to facilitate adults.

2.5.3.1 The training of ABET facilitators

In the White Paper on Education (DoE, 1995b) the Department regards the training of trainers and facilitators as “one of the central pillars of a national human resource strategy and the growth of professional expertise and self-confidence as the key to teacher development”. The training and orientation of ABET practitioners is seen as vitally important by the Department of Education, as it plays a key role in “imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for understanding the context, occupational areas and roles of ABET within the overall education and training context of the country” (DoE, 1997:32).

Although training models for the training of teachers for the formal education sector are readily available and may have some relevance for the training of ABET facilitators, these models cannot directly be applied in the training of ABET-facilitators. The teaching of illiterate adults demands specific teaching skills and personality attributes from the teachers to enable them to meet the needs of the adult learner (Snyman, 1985: 4). These teachers have a problem of paradigm shift from talk and chalk method of facilitation. They find it difficult to shift from the teacher as a source of knowledge to the facilitator as facilitator of learning experiences. Without appropriate training, they cannot make this changeover.

Researchers (Motala, 1992: 18; Snyman, 1987:117; Harley et al, 1996:445; Wydeman, 1993:4) claim that the training of South African ABET facilitators has been neglected. Motala (1992: 11) states that more often facilitators receive short crash courses that do not make a difference in their effort to work with adult learners. According to Motala (1992:11) insufficient attention is paid to the training of ABET-practitioners at grassroots levels. Their training is often

described as “ad hoc, sketchy, haphazard and narrow”. The in-service training of ABET-facilitators is also neglected and doesn’t form an integral part of the planning for large scale ABET provision. Several studies (Harley, et al. 1996; Motala, 1992; NEPI, 1992) indicated that the current length of training varies from 5 days to 3 weeks and is normally very basic or restricted to a specific program rather than improving general teaching skills (NEPI, 1992: 21). After this training they are left to their own devices with no follow-up training and very little back up from their trainers. This is in sharp contrast with the systematic training approach, which has the notion of seeing training as a continuous process and not just a “once-off” event (Motala, 1992:27).

Most ABET facilitators in the Department of Education are part-time facilitators who were primarily trained as primary and/or secondary schools educators (Jorgenson, 1988:8) with the result that they often use in their ABET classes the principles and techniques applicable for the teaching of school children. The concern is that if a facilitator is not familiar with appropriate techniques for facilitating adult learning and uses techniques more applicable for children then adult-learners tend to drop out from the classes. Snyman (1987:117) confirms the importance of an efficient facilitator and argues that the quality of the facilitator far outweighs the quality of the materials as a factor in the success of training.

2.5.4 The ABET curriculum

The advent of democracy in South Africa has made it both possible and imperative to undertake an overhaul of learning programmes in learning institutions. Norms and standards for the education system have been set by education Ministry that involved the development of curriculum frameworks and core curriculum. The new education and training system is based on an outcome-based framework and the Curriculum 2005 that was first implemented in 1998 has since 2004 been replaced by the RNCS. This has as its starting

point the intended outputs of learning as opposed to the input driven approaches of traditional education and training curricula. The ABET curriculum framework sets out a philosophical and organisational framework that includes all aspects of teaching and learning (DoE, 1997:18).

According to the Department of Education (DoE, 2004b:1) the Directorate: Adult Education and Training is accountable for the promotion of appropriate integrated, outcomes-based programmes in line with the NQF. As it was the case with the original school-based Curriculum 2005 the Department of Education (DoE, 2000a:27) states that no core curriculum or syllabus will be provided by the national Department of Education for the ABET learning areas specifically or the broader organising fields. ABET sub-level qualifications will not be decided upon by SAQA at this stage as it will be focusing on the qualification at the GETC and FETC levels. Thus the rules of combination and the level descriptors, which SAQA ultimately decides upon, will prescribe what fundamental, core/contextual and specialization/elective categories will lead to the attainment of GETC and FETC qualifications. "While the department of Education accept that these decisions falls outside of its jurisdiction it intends to participate fully in shaping these developments." As with the implementation of the original Curriculum 2005 the actual curriculum or learning programmes for ABET that the learner should follow to attain the outcomes was left to the initiative and creativity of curriculum developers, materials developers, provider institutions and learner choice.

Apart from the dual control over ABET by the Departments of Education and Labour the ABET policymakers did not yet realize that the ABET centres need more specific guidelines with regard to the core-curriculum. The same problem forced the school sector to revise Curriculum 2005 and by means of more prescriptive assessment standards provide teachers with a more structured curriculum. With the launch of the process to streamline and strengthen C2005 the Minister (Asmal: 2000:3) stated that "...there is a fear that unless there is

greater guidance for educators as to what they should do and how they should do it, we as South Africans will continue having results such as those manifested in the TIMMS Survey. This survey reinforced the view that our teachers lack basic subject knowledge in its finding that there is a major lack of emphasis in science on knowing basic science facts and understanding science concepts.” The Chisholm Report (2000:66) indicated “most teachers do not have the time, the resources or often the skill to be involved in the development of high quality, educationally appropriate learning programmes and materials. ”Furthermore, the idea was created that the old textbooks had no value in an OBE classroom. This has led to a shortage of reading materials in most Foundation Phase classrooms, which has serious implications for the teaching of reading. In the Chisholm Report (2000:58) high quality textbooks are described as “an invaluable safety-net” and as “the most cost-effective way to improve classroom practice”. The Minister of Education (Asmal, 2000b:17) is of the opinion that teachers “are ill-prepared, for example, for the massive pedagogic and curriculum changes that flow from Curriculum 2005, the changes in organisation that flow from the SA Schools Act and the changes in conditions of service that flow from the Employment of Educators Act.” The Chisholm Report (2000:43) described C2005 as a curriculum that is “technically over-designed yet (the content) remains under-specified”. In March 2001 the Department of Education (DoE, 2000a:3) reported: “What South African education needs to do is go forward by improving the alternative modes of teaching and learning that have started to be put in place. In the process the ‘what’ of learning needs to be integrated with the ‘how’ and the ‘when’ with the ‘whether’. ‘Basics’ cannot be polarised from ‘outcomes’; this is as much a false opposition as those polarisations set up in some formulations of outcomes-based education”.

Nevertheless, the Department of Educations (DoE, 1997:27) states that the policy on ABET argues that well designed learning programs and materials are essential if the goals for ABET are to be met. Learning and support materials (LASM) are seen as vital tools that inform learning and enrich the

teaching/learning encounter. There is a move away from the primacy of the specific content driven textbook towards the idea of a range of materials that can help learners to attain the required outcomes. It is believed that an integrated and open approach will also allow material developers to tailor learning and support materials to the various institutional contexts and learners' needs. The Department of Education (1997:27) states:

- It is envisaged that ABET materials will increasingly be modularised rather than presented as a full course.
- Material developed to support a learning programme will need to effectively contextualise the learning outcomes, based upon an accurate analysis of the learner's needs and an assessment of their capabilities and prior knowledge.
- When materials are developed developers need to be aware that face-to-face instruction cannot exceed a contact time of 250 hours per year. It is recommended that all ABET materials should have a strong self-instructional component built into them.
- The department of education will establish a collaborative partnership to write and pilot material.
- Curriculum and materials development training programs for educators will be encouraged in order building material writing capacity in all the official languages.
- An audit of material will be carried out to confirm the levels of materials. The department of education will evaluate material against the critical cross-field and specific learning area outcomes. To provide guidance and criteria for the assembling of learning materials for full learning programs.
- Effective use of the print and electronic media, including public broadcasting will be encouraged.

The culturally mature and competent adult finds himself in an increasingly changing learning environment. He is continually faced with new responsibilities, new tasks, new technology, new regulations, new people with whom he has to interact on a daily basis. These changes influence not only the provision of

employment, but also a variety of learning content such as the ethical, aesthetic, moral, political, judicial and religious aspects of reality. New possibilities and challenges are constantly being developed that are particularly advantageous to the skilled worker who can make a productive input. Gagné & Briggs (in Fraser, 1992:33) emphasised the following aspects of the post school didactic situation:

- The objectives (outcomes) of the course should be specific and to the point, and should be drawn to the learner's attention. The older student wants to know what has to be done, and how it should be done.
- Instruction to the older student should be more individualized, guidelines such as references, laboratory techniques, procedures and prescribed methods are usually enough to motivate the adult learner to find his own solution to a problem.
- Assessment (evaluation) should be purposeful and specific. Learners are usually assessed to determine whether they are capable of executing higher or complex cognitive functions such as interpreting data, reporting their findings, summarising data and making recommendations. A more pragmatic approach can be followed to determine whether the learner is capable of successfully executing the tasks assigned to him.
- Adult learners demand more of their instructors. They are more critical in the sense of wanting to know how some theoretical principles apply to a given situation.
- To the adult learner, learning content has to be relevant. In other words the outcome of instruction has to be worth the effort.
- Relevancy of material: Adults want to be able to apply tomorrow what they learn today. They want to see immediate use or application for what they learn.

2.5.4.1 The assessment policy for ABET learners

In terms of Section 3 (4) (l) of the National Education Policy Act (SA, 1996d) the Minister of Education determined a national "Assessment Policy in the General

Education and Training Band, Grades R to 9 and ABET” (SA, 1998b:15) Government Notice, No.R.1718, Government Gazette No 6397 dated 23 December 1998). With regard to “Assessment and adult learners” the Minister determined that:

- ABET comprises three benchmark levels below the GETC with Level 4 being equivalent to NQF Level 1 - the GETC-Level or Grade 9 in the school sector.
- ABET unit standards will cover the following learning categories: fundamental, core/contextual, and elective, which will be organized into integrated learning programmes. Assessment will be conducted against these unit standards.
- At ABET Levels 1-3 assessment will be conducted internally and moderation of the results will be done by the provincial ABET specialists. A record of learning will be kept for each learner.
- At ABET Level 4 (GETC) there will be summative assessment which will be externally moderated.
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is an important application of assessment in ABET. It is intended to provide learners with recognition of existing competency regardless of where, how and when it was acquired. Evidence may come from any source, including life experience and unstructured learning. This will assist with appropriate placement on training courses and learning programmes, giving mobility in career and learning pathways.

2.5.5 The ABET centres

Centres are institutions where adults enrol and receive education. These institutions are normally known as ABET centres. These ABET centres are established at both primary and secondary schools mostly in the townships and rural areas. Historically many adults who are in need of receiving ABET live in townships. These centres are mostly operated by the provincial departments of education. However there are independent centres that provide ABET that are privately operated from the Department of Education. The head of a centre is a

principal and a centre could have one or more satellites. A supervising teacher manages a satellite. Each satellite has a group of facilitators who are in charge of tuition. Classes normally operate from Monday to Thursday in the afternoon and evening. The ABET facilitator in the District Office is directly responsible for managing and monitoring the activities of the ABET centres. The provincial department of education is responsible for the paying of claims of facilitators. It is also responsible for supplying unit standards, specific-outcomes and assessment standards that facilitators work with within the outcomes-based Curriculum 2005. It is also responsible for the external assessment especially for level 4 learners.

Apart from the centres managed by the provincial departments of education ABET is also offered by the private sector, non-governmental institutions and the departments of Population Development, Correctional Services, the Departments of Defence, Communication, the Urban Foundation, the Rural Foundation, Readright, ProLit, the Salvation Army, Women for South Africa, and several church institutions, universities, industrial sites and many other institutions were active in offering adult education.

2.6 The objectives of ABET

There are various theories that underpin the provision of ABET. For Levine (as quoted by Lyster, 1992:20) literacy (or ABET) is not just learning how to read and write but also important for social development. It is basically a social practice and as a result it is ideologically bound. Levine (in Lyster, 1992:25) has come up with two theories in which he draws some contrast. He refers to the autonomous ABET-practice and the ideological ABET-practice:

- The autonomous ABET-practice says ABET or Literacy is viewed as a technical, homogeneous, uniformly used skill associated with progress, civilisation, individual liberty and social mobility. Its consequences are seen as developmental in nature. It develops individuals cognitively and

economically. The assumption made is that literacy per se has the ability to change the way in which people think.

- The ideological ABET-practice says people who operate from this point assume that the meaning of literacy depends on the social institution in which it is embedded (Street in Lyster, 1992:20). In this instance what is taught and how it is taught reflect the social structure and relation of power within a society. Education is a form of control and it can never be neutral.

Another assumption made is that Literacy causes economic development. There are two important theories that are linked to development. These are the Modernisation and Dependency Theories:

2.6.1 The Modernisation Theory

The Modernisation Theory tries to explain the different development levels of countries and why some countries are rich while others are poor. The theory contributes the lack of development to the absence of certain essential ingredients that could enable them to catch up. The failure to develop is attributed to internal deficiencies (Lyster, 1992: 25). Development is defined as organic, immanent, directional, cumulative, irreversible and purposive and is associated with progress and growth.

The basic assumption is more evolutionary than revolutionary in that all undeveloped countries need to go through the same stages of growth as industrialised countries did. If a country's internal deficiencies are remedied, the same state of grace will be achieved as advanced countries. Literacy and education is linked with modernisation through the investment in human resource. Lyster (1992: 25) says 40% literacy is necessary for economic "take off" to take place. A high literacy rate correlates positively with development. To speed up the economic development the literacy rate must be improved.

The missionary and functional approaches understand development in terms of the modernisation theory. Illiterate people are seen as unfortunate handicapped beings that need literacy to assist them to advance on an individual level and this will enable them to contribute to economic development. This theory gained wide acceptance in the first decade of postcolonial African independence but later it appeared to be a fallacy. Despite this, it still drives the thinking behind ABET policies. Towards the eighties the modernisation theory was increasingly rejected in favour of the dependency theory” (Lyster, 1992:26).

2.6.2 The Dependency Theory

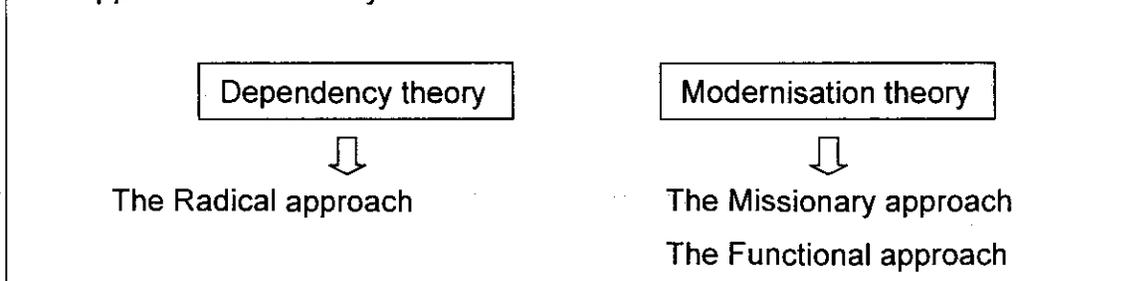
The Dependency Theory emerged in the heist of criticism of the Modernisation Theory. The dependency theorist claims that the obstacles to development are external and that countries are not poor because of internal deficiencies (Hutton, 1992:27). The dynamics of the development process are defined in terms of active exploitation of underdeveloped regions by the more developed capitalist powers. The dependency theory has been criticised because it is based on a negative critique of modernisation theory rather than on a positive conception of development according to (Lyster, 1992:27).

The fundamental principle of this theory, that the poor cannot be held responsible for their poor condition, fits in very well with literacy endeavours. Literacy initiative is used as a tool to organise and empower people to understand the causes of their oppression and to act to change their situations. Many literacy programs in South Africa understand development and underdevelopment in terms of the dependency theory. Illiterate people are regarded as dignified, competent, and oppressed beings for which literacy becomes a tool to overcome their oppression on an individual as well as political level (Lyster, 1992:29). The radical approach was influenced by the dependency theory and rejects the notion that illiterate people are cognitively inferior.

The South African Department of Education (DoE, 2004a:10) states in their principles for ABET provision arguments from both the Modernisation and Dependency Theories:

- In the Modernisation Theory the emphasis is on development and reconstruction and the large-scale delivery of ABET is an important tool in the process of social transformation and a foundation for economic growth.
- In the Dependency Theory the emphasis is on equity and redress: The development of a comprehensive national ABET system should redress the inequalities created by apartheid. In the Education for All (EFA) Report (DoE, 2000b:13-14) the Department of Education stated in 2002 that illiteracy is prevalent in South Africa, particularly among older persons who were marginalized from educational opportunities under the apartheid system. Basic education for youth and adults is a prerequisite for a truly democratic society because it prepares people for full and active participation in society.

Figure 2.2: Schematic representation of the relationship between the theories and approaches of literacy:



Lyster (1992:29) also refers to Scribner's three metaphors. Each metaphor describes the meaning of literacy for the different approaches:

- Literacy as adaptation with the emphasis on the survival or pragmatic value, exemplified by the functional literacy approach.
- Literacy as a state of grace where the emphasis is on the self-enhancing aspects of literacy, exemplified by the missionary approach.
- Literacy as power where the emphasis is on the capacity of literacy to convey power to individuals or communities exemplified by the radical approach.

The above-mentioned classifications are to some extent unsatisfactory and in reality these theories and approaches seldom exist in a pure form. In the South African and most other approaches they are often used in combination with each other.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter focus was on various concepts that are considered important in ABET. The importance of ABET has been highlighted and it was determined that the South African policies emphasise an integrated ABET approach consisting of Literacy, Numeracy and Life-skills training. This chapter supports the fact that ABET is an essential component of the reconstruction, development and an important vehicle for the transformation of South African society. The following chapter will deal more with barriers to learning and how they can be eradicated so as to empower learners.

CHAPTER 3 BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING (ABET)

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to identify and discuss possible barriers to ABET as it is reflected in the literature. Cross (in Rogers, 1999:205) refers to barriers to participation in ABET rather than barriers to learning. These barriers do not refer to individuals' inabilities to learn but rather to barriers that impede their participation in ABET. As stated in the first chapter the factors that prevent adults from participating in learning are sometimes also referred to as blockages, constraints, deterrents, impediments or obstacles (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Sutcliffe, 1991; Galbraith, 1991; Titmus *et al.*, 1989).

For the Department of Education (DoE, 2000b:5) "Education (including ABET) is an essential component of the reconstruction, development and transformation of South African society". The department further states that the governments of the past put in place policies designed to limit access to education for blacks and paid very little attention to literacy. The poor quality of education in black schools and the condemnation of millions of adults to illiteracy limited the intellectual and cultural development of the country as a whole. "The consequence today is a legacy of some 9,4 million adults with less than 9 years of schooling" (DoE, 2000b:33). In the Education for All Report (DoE, 2000b:33) the department states that the historic inadequacy of learning facilities and opportunities, especially for black communities, has ensured that a majority of the adult population both in and out of formal employment has had no schooling or only inadequate schooling.

Since 1994 the new democratic government put in place a new framework and policy to "treat ABET as a coherent system of teaching and learning". In 1995/6 a total of 335 481 adults learners were participating in ABET programmes

throughout the country (DoE, 2000b:7). In the EFA Report (DoE, 2000b:33) the department reported that in 1996, interim curricula were developed and “an ABET campaign which reached 90 000 adult learners were launched”. This report also states: “More than 2 000 centres and nearly 300 000 learners were involved in 1999 in the ABET programme” and the report indicates a decrease in numbers since 1995/6. In 2000 six years after the demise of apartheid Asmal (2000:4) mentioned that only 387 000 adults were enrolled for ABET courses and in 2004 Pandor (2004a:2) stated that the retention rates of ABET learners is still notoriously problematic. According to the current Minister of Education (Pandor, 2004b:2) the number of illiterate adults in South Africa is still too large. “Even though significant strides have been made in reducing the absolute number of adults with no education at all, there are still too many adults with no education at all, there are still too many adults who only have a primary school education. This creates a huge participation barrier in social and economic development, as well as in strengthening the democratic processes of governance in this country”.

It is clear that apart from blaming the high rate of illiteracy on the previous “Apartheid Education” system there are still other contextual factors that prevent adults to participate in ABET practices. According to the department (DoE, 2000b:7) a major indicator of governments’ commitment to adult education is the ratio of expenditure on adult education as compared with overall education expenditure. The Minister of Education (Asmal, 2000c:2) stated: “State spending on Adult Education increased from R248 million last year to R822 million for the current year. By 2004 this is planned to grow to R1.2 billion – a five-fold increase since 1998”.

In the 1995/6 financial year only two (Mpumalanga 2,2% and Gauteng 1,1%) of the nine provinces spent more than 1% of their overall education budget on adult education. In the Education for All Report (DoE, 2000b:48) the department reports that based on the 1996 Census data 83% of persons aged 15 and more

are considered literate. The Western Cape (76,4%) and Gauteng (75,6) have the highest levels of literacy and the Northern Province (58,9%) has the lowest functional literacy rate. The commitment to ABET needs to be translated into sustainable mechanisms to attract illiterate adults and for the delivery of effective teaching and learning. It is the intention with this chapter to investigate the possible barriers to ABET participation in South Africa.

There is no country in the world where all its citizens find themselves at a given moment on the same educational and economic level (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:13). This situation is influenced by a lack of opportunities or by a variety of barriers that attribute to the need for adult education. Evidence of the impact of barriers normally experienced is exhibited by a large number of South Africans who are illiterate and those who have a low educational level (McKay.1996: 64). Illiterate or low level educated adults normally find themselves at a lower level of the educational, social, political and economic ladder. There is a clear correlation between illiteracy and poverty and underdevelopment. Hutton (1992:16) argues: "However, the fact that illiteracy correlates highly with poverty does not mean illiteracy causes poverty. Illiteracy is a feature of poverty and not its cause". People are illiterate because they are poor; they are not poor because they are illiterate. Nevertheless the argument that illiteracy causes poverty and underdevelopment is a very compelling and seductive one because it provides an apparent elegant and simple solution to problems (barriers), which in fact have little to do with reading and writing. It is much easier to think about mounting a large-scale literacy programme to promote economic development than it is to think about remedying those structural inequalities (barriers), which created the illiteracy in the first place (Hutton, 1992:16). In this regard the Department of Education (2000a:7) states in the Policy Document on ABET: "ABET is seen as both a right (as expressed in the Constitution) and as a functional economic necessity in a changing society which requires a citizenry engaged in a lifelong process of learning". The department also recognizes the

need for social mobilization around the vision of a society with universal basic education.

To erase the inequalities of the past that are often blamed for the high rate of illiteracy in South Africa the ABET provision is based upon principles and practices of among others equity, redress, reconstruction, access and integration (DoE, 2000a:2). In this regard the department (DoE, 2000a:7) also states that the current socio-economic context for potential and existing learners (especially for ABET) reflects extreme inequalities in levels of income, high unemployment and overwhelming poverty. Between 36% and 53% of South Africans fall below the poverty line and poverty is overwhelmingly racial in character: 95% of the poor are African and 65% of all Africans live in poverty.

To address these disparities indicated above a form of education intervention (ABET) is essential, to uplift the conditions that these adults find themselves in. It is assumed that ABET can assist in addressing some of the barriers to enhance literacy and with that also economic development. This chapter deals with possible barriers (deterrents) to participation in ABET programmes.

3.1.1 Non-participation in ABET

As indicated in Chapter 1, Cross (in Rogers, 1999:205) refers to barriers to participation in ABET rather than barriers to learning. These barriers do not refer to individuals' inability to learn but rather to barriers that impede their participation in ABET. The factors that prevent adults from participating in learning are sometimes also referred to as blockages, constraints, deterrents, impediments or obstacles (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Sutcliffe, 1991; Galbraith, 1991; Titmus et al., 1989; DoE, 2002 and NEPI 1993). The reasons for non-participation in ABET are complex and multi-dimensional and often not reducible to a single obstacle. Most explanations of non-participation involve the interaction of external (environmental, social, cultural, financial, situational,

institutional) and internal (personal and dispositional) factors. The following theories have been developed to try and explain why adults participate or do not-participate in ABET:

The biggest mystery is why more adults, especially those who might benefit the most, are not involved in ABET (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991:35). This question has prompted research into why adults do not participate in ABET. Secondly, we need to understand what barriers prevent adults from engaging in ABET. Knowing and understanding why adults do participate in ABET does not tell us why others do not participate in ABET programmes. Knowing what motivates one adult to enrol in ABET programmes (improving knowledge, skills and competence) does not tell us what does not motivate others from participating (Aspin, Chapmen, Hatton & Sawano, 2001:379). We cannot assume that those who are not participating are happily satisfied with their lives, families, communities and leisure activities (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991:35).

3.1.2 The hierarchy of needs theory

According to Miller (in Edwards, 1993:24), non-participation depend on whether an individual has been able to meet a range of primary and secondary needs and the influence of positive and negative forces. As one's socio-economic status improve, basic primary needs are met, the higher level needs are activated, and the ratio of negative to positive forces declines. Maslow (1970; in Quinn, 1990:200) classified human needs or motivations in a pyramid-like hierarchy and in order to progress upward to the top of the pyramid, an individual first need to satisfy the more basic needs.

Table 3.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Quinn, 1990:200)
6. Self-actualisation – to carry out your total potential
5. Self-esteem needs – need to be respected by others
4. Love and belongingness needs – friendship, love, marriage
3. Safety and security needs – life-threatening aspects
2. Stimulation needs – escape from boredom, explore and satisfy curiosity
1. Physiological needs – food, water, rest

Maslow's hierarchy has met criticism. Some argue that people often experience several needs at the same time and it does not explain why people will starve or be tortured rather than give up their personal beliefs (Quinn, 1990:201). In reality this means that the basic survival needs of potential adult learners must first be met before they can give attention to needs higher in the hierarchy.

3.1.3 The congruence theory

Theorist have suggested that non-participation tends to occur if there is no congruence between the learner's needs and self-concept and the objectives and nature of the ABET programmes and the educational environment (Bushier in Edwards, et al., 1993:25). The objectives (outcomes) of the ABET programme should be congruent with the actual needs that the adult learner wishes to satisfy. Quinn (1990:203) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The adult learner who is intrinsically motivated learns because it is rewarding and enjoyable in itself. The adult learner who is extrinsically motivated studies to earn credit and eventually a qualification and maybe a well-paid job.

3.1.4 The force-field theory

According to this theory, adult learners who participate in ABET believe they are capable of learning and value the outcomes of learning which they see as relevant to their personal needs. Rubenson (in Edwards et al., 1993: 25) proposes that motivation results from an interaction of "expectancy" and "valence". Expectancy refers to expectations of success in learning and its positive consequences and valence refers to the total sum of positive or negative values an individual assigns to learning activities. Both expectancy and valence are determined by an individual's previous experiences, social environment and personal needs.

3.1.5 The life-transition theory

A number of studies find that decision to participate frequently coincides with changes in the adult's life-circumstances. Aslanian and Bricknell (in Edwards et al., 1993:25) found that 80% of Americans were learning because their lives were changing in some way. In Britain studies have also often found that the proportion of participants in ABET who have experienced life-changes, such as divorce or bereavement, is high in relation to their numbers in the general population. In this case it means normal life which is not in a process of change becomes a barrier for adults to participate in ABET programmes.

3.1.6 The reference group theory

This theory according to Edwards et al., (1993:25) maintains that individuals identify with the social and cultural groups to which they belong (normative-reference group, NRG) or with another group to which they aspire to belong (comparative-reference group, CRG). Habitual participants usually belong to an NRG that is positively oriented towards ABET. A comparative reference group presents a contrast to an individual's personal situation, creating what Goodern (in Edwards et al., 1993: 26) refers to as "sense of relative deprivation". People participate or do not participate in ABET in order to achieve the perceived advantages of a group to which they belong or with a group with which they identify.

3.1.7 The psychosocial interaction model

Darkenwald and Merriam (in Edwards et al., 1993: 26) identified a sequence of interacting variables which influences participation or non-participation:

- Early individual and family characteristics;
- Preparatory education and socialization;
- Socio-economic status;

- Learning pressure (the extent to which current social or working environment requires or encourages further learning);
- Perceived values/utility of ABET;
- Readiness to participate;
- Specific stimuli;
- Barriers to participation.

3.1.8 The combination of favourable circumstance theory

French researchers have come to the conclusion that participation is most likely when there is a combination and interaction of specifically favourable circumstances and conditions. De Montlibert (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993: 26) contends that only people with a long initial schooling, advantageous professional status, and an entourage with positive orientation towards ABET manage to break the logic which leads to disparities in access to ABET. Hedoux (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993: 26) adds the following favourable conditions:

- a dynamic of upwards social mobility offering future change; and
- an involvement in a range of social and community activities.
- Individuals perceives a need for ABET in their social, professional or non-professional domains;
- Know that courses are provided which will respond to that need;
- Are ready and prepared to formulate a future learning project
- Posses enough social and spatial autonomy and free time to participate;
- Posses sufficient basic skills in the area of ABET chosen to face a group learning situation;

Hedoux (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993: 26) contends that the number of people likely to enrol diminishes with the absence of each one of these conditions, with the consequences that a relatively few non-participants are potential participants.

3.2 Types of barriers

Barriers to participation in ABET refer to impediments blockages, constrains, deterrents, impediments or obstacles that are normally found among people of all ages. The reasons for non-participation are numerous, complex and much debated. For Edwards, Sieminski and Zeldin (1993:14) there are substantial numbers of illiterate adults who remain outside the world of ABET and the lower you go down the social hierarchy, the more there are. The barriers or factors, that hinder participation to learning can and do occur at all levels of the educational system. Barriers can be located within an individual or a learner, within the centre of learning, within the education system and within the broader social, economic and political context. These barriers manifest them in various ways and only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs, when learners drop out of the system or when they fail to enrol. There are sometimes permanent barriers in the learner or the system, which can be addressed through enabling mechanisms and processes (DoE, 2002a:131). Barriers may arise during the learning process and are seen as transitory in nature. These may require different interventions or strategies to prevent them from causing learning breakdown or excluding learners from the system. These factors include the following barriers:

- Factors relating to specific individuals in the education system that refers specifically to the learners and facilitators such as personal factors as well as facilitating styles or approaches and attitudes.
- Various aspects of the curriculum such as the curriculum content, language of learning and teaching, organizational structure, classroom management, facilitation methods and techniques, the pace of facilitating, available time, learning materials and other resources and assessment procedures.
- The physical and psychosocial environment within which facilitation and learning occurs.
- Dynamics and conditions relating to the learner's home environment, including issues such as family dynamics, cultural and socio-economic background and socio-economic status.

- Community and social dynamics, which either support or hinders the facilitation and learning process (DoE, 2002a:94).

In her synthesis of American research Cross (in Edwards et al., 1993:17) classified the barriers to participation into three categories: situational, institutional, and dispositional. Although the classification has been described as oversimplified, they provide a useful starting point for considering the problem of non-participation.

- Situational barriers

These are barriers that are found in an individual's situation for example lack of transport, childcare giver, lack of family support, and a lack of money.

- Institutional barriers

These are barriers that are found in an institution or ABET centre and she refers to high fees, lack of skilled facilitators, difficult language of instruction, and awkward times of instruction.

- Dispositional barriers

These are barriers within the learner self for example the attitude the learner has about learning, about the institution, about peer-learners or facilitators. This category is also related to the learner's health, living conditions, and lack of confidence.

3.3 Classification of barriers

Basic education is a fundamental right and this responsibility involves ensuring that the education system creates equal opportunities for all learners (DoE, 2002a:130). A complex and dynamic relationship exists between the learner, the centre of learning, the broader education system and the social, political and economic context in which it is situated. When a problem arises in one of these areas it impacts on the learning process and can cause learning breakdown or exclusion. Thus if the system fails to meet the different needs of a wide range of

learners or if problems arise in any of these components, the learner or the system may be prevented from being able to engage in or sustain the process of learning. The factors that lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity and lead to learning breakdown or that prevent learners from accessing educational provision have been conceptualised as barriers to learning (DoE, 2002a: 131). Cross (in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:88) classified twenty-four reasons for non-participation into the following three categories: dispositional barriers, situational barriers and institutional barriers.

In the next paragraphs the following main classification of barriers will be employed:

- Personal and dispositional barriers
- Situational barriers
- Institutional barriers

3.4 Personal and dispositional barriers

Dao (in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:86) conducted an investigation with 278 employees of seventeen profit making organizations. They were given a list of reasons for non-participation and were asked: "How often do you believe each reason influences people not to participate in ABET activities?" Their responses yielded nine clusters of reasons for non-participation:

- Not enough time to participate in ABET activities
- Individual and personal problems
- Too difficult to succeed in educational activities
- Negative feeling towards the institution offering instruction
- Negative experience with educational activities
- Results of educational activities not valued
- Indifference to educational activities
- Unawareness of educational activities available.

3.4.1 Personal barriers

Darkenwald and Valentine (in Edwards et al., 1993:22) say there are multiple obstacles which prevent large sections of the public from seeking or taking up ABET opportunities. They state that there is strong consensus that non-participation results from the combination and interaction of diverse personal and dispositional factors, rather than one or two obstacles that would be relatively easy to overcome. Edwards et al., (1993:14) established that the major characteristics that distinguish non-participation are age, educational background and socio-economic status.

- Age

Older adults are less likely to participate in ABET programmes than younger ones and most available research shows a fall-off at retirement age, particularly among men (Edwards et al., 1993:14).

- Physical health

Changes in health affect people's ability to learn at any age, the greatest effect is felt in older adulthood (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:102). Health impairments may affect the learning process, adults may feel that they are not well and that tend to make them think that they cannot participate in learning. Physical conditions such as poor hearing lack of vision and forgetfulness, these are barriers that especially older learners usually experience when they want to learn. Problems such as natural disasters or epidemics, which arise in many societies, have a significant impact on learners. Over the last decade more adults in South Africa have been affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Many learners have not only had to deal with chronic illness resulting from the disease, but have also had to deal with the loss of family members, particularly breadwinners (DoE, 2002a:134).

Especially with older learners visual impairment is a barrier to learning. Older learners may experience difficulties in reading words as well as pictures (DoE, 2002a:34). Hard of hearing refers to a barrier related to hearing that can be

measured on a continuum of intensity (DoE, 2002a:154). Hearing loss is a progressive but gradual process throughout adulthood (Cross in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:100). This condition tend to be a barrier to many adults who enrol at ABET centres. A learner who does not hear properly and thus does not respond to verbal instructions and questions may have problems with the listening, responding, speaking and to participate and act appropriately. One other factor is that medication and treatment may affect an individual in various ways. It may financially drain on resources particularly in coping with chronic illness, leaving little support for learning activities of any kind especially funds to pay for learning or to buy learning support material (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:103). Disease processes indirectly influences adult's ability to learn. Pain and fatigue often accompany both acute and chronic illness, leaving one with little energy or motivation to engage in learning activities (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:102). Health impairments can deter adults from full participation in the ABET process (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:102).

- Family and home responsibilities

Other obstacles that have been found to be preventing adults from participating in ABET are lack of time, money, transport, daytime facilities and childcare. The learning environment is often not secure and safe to enable adult learners to learn without any problems (DoE, 2002a:209). Other forms of barriers that learners usually experience when they want to learn are e.g. a lack of someone who could provide childcare, transport and lack of support from a spouse. These challenges contribute to non-participation of illiterate adults in ABET programmes. On the gender issue Asmal (2000c:2) stated that: "South Africa has one of the highest participation rates for girls in education, at all levels. Only 44% of Grade 12 pupils were boys".

- Lack of time

According to Merriam and Caffarella (1991:87) one of the two most often cited reasons for non-participation are lack of time (the other one is money) and they

regard these two as socially acceptable reasons for not doing something and probably very legitimate reasons for adults who are busy people trying to become or stay economically solvent. Many adults want to participate in ABET programmes but time constraints are a serious problem. Time constraints are due to work commitments, family commitments, religious activities and many other aspects that need attention.

- Cost

Johnson and Rivera (1987), (in Merriam and Caffarella, 1991:87) found that 43% of the participants in the research cited cost as a reason for not attending ABET classes and 39% said they were too busy. Carp, Peterson and Roelfs (in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:87) found that 53% indicated that they did not have money. Houle, Merriam & Caffarella, (1991:88) also indicated that cost had a moderate degree of influence whilst in other research work done, an indication of cost did not even affect women who are normally perceived to have financial problems. Merriam and Caffarella (1991:87) noted that the cost barrier has not consistently emerged as the major obstacle in other studies (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991:87).

3.4.2 Dispositional barriers

For both Edwards and Cross (in Edwards et al., 1993:19-21) found that a reluctance to engage in ABET may have more to do with dispositional barriers such as attitudes, perceptions and expectations than with any of the more practical barriers. Merriam and Caffarella (1991:88) stated that dispositional barriers are the result of a person's attitude towards the self and learning. Cross (in Edwards et el., 1993:19-21) identified the following perceptions that negatively affect ABET participation:

- The inappropriateness and lack of relevance of ABET
- A lack of awareness of learning needs
- Hostility towards the ABET system

- A belief that one is too old to learn
- Lack of confidence in one's ability to learn.

These perceptions have all been repeatedly identified as major reasons for non-participation, particularly among older adults, people of low educational attainment and those on low income.

- Educational background

Non-participation in ABET is closely linked with initial educational experience. Edwards et al. (1993:15) stated that a national survey in Great Britain has indicated that people who do not participate in any form of continuing education or training tend to be those with the least initial education. The survey revealed that the majority of non-participants had left school at the minimum school leaving age. The 1998 Scottish survey found that 80% of non-participants had left school at age 16 or under. Non-participation in education in adult life is closely linked with initial educational experience.

- Irrelevance of ABET practices

McDonald (in Edwards et al., 1993:21) allude to the fact that in Britain it is indisputable that a large proportion of the adult population considers ABET as totally irrelevant and he states that: "For those who believe that education ends with school and real life begins with work the whole concept of ABET is novel". The public has a stereotyped view of learning dating from school experience. Many believe that all forms of post compulsory education are formal, inflexible and examination-oriented and that participants will be judged on their ability to meet certain standards. This perception has a powerful deterrent effect.

- Lack of a future perspective

Hedoux (in Edwards et al., 1993:21) has identified a perception of powerlessness linked with a lack of a future perspective as another powerful psychological barrier. Hedoux (in Edwards et al., 1993:21) argues that decisions to participate in ABET are intimately connected with a persons ability to control his/her own life and to anticipate the future. Among the groups identified are

“radical non-participants”, this ability is blocked, particularly in the case of elderly people and married women whose autonomy and freedom of movement are severely constrained by their partners.

- Unawareness of the availability of ABET opportunities

Dao in Merriam & Caffarella, (1991:88) found that apart from the time factor the unawareness of available ABET activities was one of the main reasons for not participating. Osborn (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:17) indicated that a British review of research into disadvantaged adult group estimated that up to two thirds of non-participants simply did not know what learning opportunities exist. For Hedoux (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:17) the most striking feature of the non-participants was their general lack of involvement in communal life. This led him to infer a probable link between social and communal involvement and people’s knowledge of educational opportunities. He claims that people involved in social and cultural activities are part of the information network, and are therefore more likely to be aware of existing educational opportunities. However, there is little evidence that simply knowing what is on offer leads to participation. In a follow-up research project Hedoux (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:17) used a different group of non-participants. Although they knew about the targeted learning scheme and were favourably disposed towards it they still failed to participate. It is clear then that while a positive image of a learning programme and all the necessary information to enrol are essential prerequisites of participation, by themselves they are not sufficient to bring about enrolment.

- Psycho-social barriers

It is necessary for the ABET system and facilitators and those who have a relationship with the adult learner to assist the learner by creating a positive psychosocial climate which would enable the learner to participate in learning activities. Galbraith (1991:20) states that the psychosocial climate is concerned with the psychological aspects as well as the cultural dimensions of the

educational encounter. For Galbraith the psychosocial climate include the relationship among the learners, rapport, communication, opportunity for participation, values, belief-systems that hold meaning for learners, expectations and clarity of goals. Galbraith (1991:20) argues that if a transactional process is to occur, a climate that suggests mutual respect, collaborativeness, mutual trust, supportiveness, openness to challenge and criticism, risk-taking, pleasure, and friendliness must be present. To create a conducive climate for learning attention should be given to aspects such as the arrangement of classroom seating, as light, ventilation, colourful decors, appropriate temperature settings and refreshment areas (Ennis, Knowles, Lean & Vosco in Galbraith, 1991:20).

The evidence as a whole, therefore, suggests that dispositional factors e.g. attitudes, perceptions, expectations-constitute are the most powerful deterrents to participation. Adult learners have social, psychological, socio-economic problems and as a result they need guidance and counselling services (DoE, 2002a:208).

3.4.3 Social and cultural barriers

Edwards et al., (1993:15) states that cumulatively evidence implies that irrespective of location or education settings, certain sections of the community tend not to engage in any form of educational activity including ABET after leaving school. The people who need ABET and who ought to participate are older adults, less well educated, the lower social, economic and occupational strata, women with dependent children, ethnic minority groups and people living in rural areas. These groups that were singled out in the large American survey in the 1960s, have remained virtually unchanged in two succeeding decades (Johnstone & Rivera in Edwards et al., 1993:15). The following non-participant typologies were identified:

- Unemployed young adults
- Poor people from rural and urban areas

- Immigrants
- Unemployed and under-employed workers with little or no education
- Unskilled or semi-skilled workers
- House-bound mothers from lower socio-economic groups
- People with linguistic problems.

There is a certain amount of crossover between these groups: the least educated are often unemployed or in unskilled occupations and have low income; people with low income are likely to be found among the elderly, immigrant-groups and women. However, each of the categories listed is a large and heterogeneous section of society and each contain many sub-groups, some of which are more likely than others to engage in voluntary learning (Edwards *et al.*, 1993:16). Non-participant category varies according to different geographical, demographical and cultural situations. Hedoux (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:16) found that in the USA women, especially young mothers, are particularly educationally disadvantaged. In France, a survey of participation in specially targeted programmes in mining communities revealed two sets of non-participants:

- a group mixed in age and gender who knew about the programmes and were favourably disposed to them but still chose not to participate, and
- a hard core of non-participants made up of unwaged married women, older adults, non-qualified manual workers and people on the lowest income who claimed to have absolutely no knowledge of the programmes, even after ten years of intensive and widespread publicity.

In the Republic of Ireland rural dwellers are likely to be non-participants, while in England and Wales the following groups have been identified as persistently under-represented in post-school education:

- ethnic minorities;
- women;
- physically and mentally handicapped adults;
- manual workers, and
- the elderly.

For Johnstone and Rivera (in Edwards *et al.*, 1998:15) socio-economic status contributes significantly to non-participation: "One of the most persistent findings of a large-scale survey in the USA was the great disparity in involvement in continuing education of segments of the population situated at different levels of the social hierarchy". A study of post-initial education in the North-West of England found that only 18% of participants were working class, and a wider national survey concluded that working-class people, particularly women, are massively under-represented throughout post school education (Edwards *et al.*, 1993:15).

3.4.4 Psychological barriers

Rodgers (1998:205) claims that there are various barriers to learning that exist and there are many reasons for them, the most important of which are personality factors. Personality factors ranges from emotional variables at one extreme to conceptual difficulties at the other extreme. On the one hand, psychological factors prevent the acquisition of new skills or the assimilation of new knowledge. On the other hand increased provision does not always lead to greatly increased participation.

Human memory and learning are inextricably linked. Without learning, there is nothing to remember, and without memory, there is no evidence of learning (Flannery, 1993: 35). Memory is the mechanism by which information is stored and retrieved. Potter (in Flannery, 1993: 36) says memory decay over time. Memory strength is reduced as time passes. Forgetting is a characteristic of aging and as a result that becomes a barrier for an older adult learner to learn if he or she forgets consistently. The aging process has almost always been accompanied by a perceived decline in the ability to acquire and remember information. Furthermore to support the fact that long-term memory decline with aging Flannery (1993:37) states that: "the feeling that one's ability to remember

and retrieve information is not as good as it used to be is a universal complaint among middle-aged and elderly persons”.

3.5 Situational barriers

Situational barriers are barriers that are found in an individual's home, work and community situation for example lack of transport, child-care, lack of family support, and a lack of money. Various forms of barriers normally inconvenience learners. Bhola (in Titmus, 1989:528) cites the following: Competing occupational obligations and work schedules, family and religious obligations, illness and fatigue, economic hardships, attitudes towards learning, unreasonable expectations from the learning process, in conducive learning environment, facilitator absence or misbehaviour, change of residence, distance from classes and transportation problems, weather conditions, and unsuitable curricula (Bhola in Titmus 1989:528)

- Child-care and other home responsibilities

Family responsibility block adult learners to participate especially women, elderly people and married people whose autonomy and freedom of movement is severely constrained by their partners and children (Edwards *et al.*, 1993:19). Having no childcare assistant is a serious problem for adult women who want to attend ABET classes. If a mother wants to attend classes in the evening it becomes a problem as at times there wouldn't be any one to look after the children. It is worse if she is a single parent or if her husband is a shift-worker. A married woman has a serious barrier if she is married to a jealous husband who wouldn't allow her to attend classes in the evening. Lack of support from a husband or a spouse creates problems as love matters interfere with the learning programme of the spouse. Family chores often do not give women a chance to learn. In rural places a women has to fetch water, wood and cook for the family that does not give her sufficient chance to study.

Rubenson (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:18) found that many learners are faced with serious family problems. It is imperative that learners are given adequate support to cope with abusive and traumatic conditions under which they live or they will be lost. The obstacles most frequently mentioned by adults in an American and Britain survey are a lack of time for participation in education and a constraint arising from family responsibility and work schedules. Rubenson (in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:18) found that an increase in leisure-time does not necessarily lead to a boom for ABET. A time budget study in the US revealed that a general increase in leisure-hours was almost entirely absorbed by increased television viewing, mostly for non-educational purpose

- Transport and access to facilities

One important barrier to learning remains the inability of learners to access the educational provision that does exist and their inability to access other services that contribute to the learning process. The inability to access education provision results from inadequate or non-existent services and facilities, which are key to participation in the learning process. Transport is a barrier that prevents accessibility to learning facilities. In many poor communities, particularly in South Africa's townships and rural areas, ABET learners are unable to reach centres of learning because there are no public transport facilities available to learners or the road are so poorly developed and maintained that centres cannot be reached. Such barriers affect all learners in poorly serviced communities (DoE, 2002a:132). It is important to recognize that these learners are severely affected by these barriers. Sutcliffe (1998:176) says transport is a barrier for adults with learning difficulties. Therefore, she recommends that transport require a substantial investment of resources to ensure that people with learning difficulties are able to participate in adult learning. In general the public transport system is inaccessible to learners with disabilities, particularly learners who use wheelchairs (DoE, 2002a:132).

- Violence and crime

The high levels of violence and crime in townships and rural areas have a disrupting effect on ABET activities. When the safety of facilitators and learners cannot be guaranteed, learners may be prevented from participating in effective teaching and learning. Lack of safety in the learning environment is a barrier to learning and development (Doe, 2002a:134).

- Job related barriers time

For Edwards, Sieminski and Zeldin (1993:17) time is often mentioned as a situational barrier. The barrier most frequently mentioned by adults in the research conducted by (Edwards, et al 1993:17) American and British adults are lack of time for participation in education. Time as a barrier often refers to family responsibilities and work schedules. People working part-time or shifts at unsociable hours indicated great difficulty in attending or participating in learning. Research findings conducted by Edwards et al., (1993:17) show that the majority of participants in shift work and part-time work cannot participate in part-time education programmes as they have a problem with time to attend. They can attend only if their ABET activities do not clash with their shift-work schedules. Those working part-time are less likely to take advantage of learning opportunities because of a lack of money or unsuitable time to attend classes. Those who have sufficient time to study do not attend but preferred to watch television during their leisure time (Edwards et al., 1993:17).

3.6 Institutional barriers

For Cross (in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:88) institutional barriers consist of all those practices and procedures that excludes or discourage working adults from participating in ABET activities. One of the major reasons for the non-participation of adults in ABET is the education system itself. He defines institutional barriers, which are structural in nature, as those barriers erected by organizations that provide learning opportunities for adults. According to Merriam

and Caffarella, (1991:35), Cross indicated that these barriers can generally be grouped into five areas:

- scheduling problems;
- problems with location or transportation;
- lack of courses that are interesting, practical, or relevant;
- procedural problems and time requirements; and
- lack of information about programmes and procedures.

Although Cross conceives of the institutional barriers as primarily affecting full-time learners in colleges and universities, these barriers have also been applied to other educational settings, for example ABET centres. Darkenwald and Merriam have subdivided the institutional category into institutional and information barriers (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:35). They expanded her notion of informational barriers to include both the institutional failure in communicating information on learning opportunities to adults, as well as the failure of many adults, particularly the least educated and poorest, to seek out or use the information that is available thus adding the people factor to the equation. Long (in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:35) divides the institutional barriers into two major types: administration and instructional. Long's administrative variables are somewhat similar to Cross's five areas: the time of day and year when the course was offered and the type of courses (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991:35). Instruction as his second institutional factor includes areas such as: facilitator experience, rating, and performance that introduce the people factor.

Darkenwald and Valentine (in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:35) conducted a research where they sought to identify the factors that deter the general public from participation in adult learning. They identified the following possible barriers:

- Lack of course relevance, (courses available did not seem interesting)
- The available courses were of a poor quality"
- Time constraints (the course was scheduled at an inconvenient time)"
- The course was offered at an inconvenient location.

For Aspin, Chapman, Hatton and Sawano (2001:768) the non-participation of learners could for example stem from problems in the organisational form and workflow process and therefore institutions that provide ABET must re-evaluate their fundamental assumptions about the effective organisational design and value of ABET learning. To eradicate possible barriers Aspin *et al.*, (2001:768) suggest that training institutions must progressively and aggressively embrace concepts that promote reflection, staff empowerment, delegation, and active learning (Aspin, *et al.*, 2001:768), in order to attract and retain learners at ABET centres. It is essential to understand which barriers determine the participation or non-participation of adult learners.

Edwards *et al.* (1993:18) argues that it is a well-documented phenomenon internationally that ABET is sidelined and it is not given the necessary financial support by education institutions. O'Shea and Corrigan (in Edwards, 1993:19) maintain that other groups of learners hold back not because of low motivation, but because of powerful constraints arising from cultural and social class divisions. Imposed standards and the selection of learners into the education system reject or exclude large numbers of potential learners. Many subsequently consider themselves as educational failures. The other problem identified is that the education system perpetuates the values and status patterns embedded in the school system. Edwards *et al.* (1993:19) claims that the ABET system still retain the ethos and procedures of the compulsory school system, with people being ranked or excluded according to their ability to reach imposed sets of standards. People who have ostensibly failed in the school system do not wish to repeat that failure. Many are consequently suspicious of education in any form, even informal learning opportunities specifically designed for them.

3.6.1 Policy aspects

For Hutton (1992:82) the underlying reason for the problems and limitations of ABET is the lack of a political will and the lack of a unified ABET policy that

would provide a sound foundation for the distribution of ABET resources. The commitment of political leadership to ABET has been identified as one of the keys to success of national action in other countries. A lack of commitment leads to the reluctant funding of projects and a lack of effective mobilization.

ABET provides the adult learner with a second chance to obtain the kind of education that is relevant to the learner's needs (Titmus et al., 1989:76). Adults supplement their initial education by continuing the studies they have begun and undertaking ones, which, for one reason or another, were not available to them in school. It is argued that it is the purpose of abet and the right and duty of the adult to continue throughout life his or her individual development. There are needs that might have not been foreseen but must be met in adulthood. Adults have a need for a particular knowledge at a particular time. Once these needs are met they will motivate the learner to continue learning. It is therefore peculiarly appropriate purpose of abet to provide for this (Titmus et al., 1989:76). Adults need knowledge content that is relevant and appropriate for their needs. Failure for content to meet adult's expectations, then adults would drop out of the system, as they will have no reason to attend.

ABET's objectives need to be related to the needs of the learner. It has also to cater for learner's new needs as they may arise from time to time (Titmus et al., 1989: 76). The objective of ABET is to provide a new form of education so as to give ABET close ties with work. It has to be based on work and with work in mind. It should break down the barriers of prejudice which exist between manual and intellectual work, between theory and practice and between town and countryside" (Van der Stoep, 1984:140).

The research conducted by O'Shea and Corrigan (in Edward et al., 1993:19) gave a graphic description of the cultural conflict experienced by adults from working class background who enrolled in education where they felt alienated by the white middle-class learning environment where the curriculum, in some

subject areas, was essentially ethnocentric. Edwards *et al.*, 1993:19 identified the following barriers that are seen to be affecting learners in relation to the educational curriculum:

- The curriculum perpetuates the values and status patterns embedded in the educational system.
- The curriculum is alien and irrelevant to learners who are participating in learning.
- The curriculum planners do not plan activities that pique the learner's interest.
- Learners are not invited to discuss what they would like to learn.
- Learners are not given the opportunity to share their stories, facilitators do not want to learn how, when and why learners have a problem learning and why they learn as they do.
- There is a problem of decoding what is new by showing the big picture, then the pieces, and ground the new in the known.
- There is a problem of using sensory learning strategies to tie the new information in with what is already known.
- The facilitators do not want to move from telling to showing.
- They do not allow the learners the opportunity to reflect on their new experiences and to develop their own internal story.
- They do not transfer learning to real-life situations
- They do not make the learning a natural part of each learner's daily life.

Hutton (1992:80) observed the following aspects as barriers to successful ABET provision:

- The teachers and learners arrive late and irregularly even when there are no adequate reasons for this. Any sense of direction and commitment is undermined;
- The teachers talk most of the time, with rote and repetitive responses from the learners. This process can go on for weeks and can continue until the learners grow bored and wander away;

- There may be concern for the learners on the part of those who run the project, but unfortunately this is often expressed in a paternalistic fashion;
- Systematic management, like keeping records of lesson plans and work completed, of learners' performance and needs, is not carried out unless fairly tough central authority enforces it. Inexperienced voluntary teachers probably do not know of these things.
- Sophisticated teachers abuse progressive rhetoric to justify the neglect. Where teachers have formal qualifications, they often use these as an excuse for their complacent attitudes towards their task;
- Where critical dialogue is used, it degenerates into a listing of grievances. If there is time after the discussion to move onto basic skills, the skills bear no relation to the grievances;
- Even with more prescriptive methods, the way in which the methods are taught defeats the intentions of those who made the workbooks. Some of the methods themselves are a travesty of the educational approach of their founders.
- There are often complaints about the lack of material for learning. The reasons could be that teachers fail to order the materials on time from ABET organizations or seem unable to organize their own material to overcome the lack thereof.
- Learners are passive and depended as their teachers. A resourceful visitor to such a literacy class would see ample learning resources in nearby shops, post offices, churches, or in the learners' own talking and writing. But even if these potential resources are pointed out, they are unlikely to be used.
- Another noted barrier that is very common in ABET literacy classes is the difference in levels of proficiency and learning needs among the learners. The differences that teachers have to cope with in one class can range from learners who cannot write their own name, to learners who can read newspapers and who have come to class in the hope of improving their

reading. Some teachers use material that some of the learners are not ready to handle (Hutton, 1992:80).

3.6.2 Language of learning and teaching (LOLT)

Section 6(1) of the South African Constitution (South Africa, 1996) recognises eleven official languages, Section 9(3) prohibits the state from unfairly discriminating against anyone on the grounds of, *inter alia*, language and Section 29(2) states the right of every person, “to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable.” In the landmark Constitutional Court case of *Ex Parte Gauteng Provincial Legislature*, Judge Mahomed (1996:4) refers to the Interim Constitution of 1993 and states in his judgement: “It is a clear constitutional right of every person to be instructed in the language of his or her choice in terms of s 32(b). The only qualification is that it must be 'reasonably practicable'. If it is, it can be demanded from the State.” Judge Kriegler (1996:14) states in his concurring judgement that from a cultural or language point of view, there is no clear majority population in South Africa against which minorities need to be protected. “Linguistically and culturally speaking, there are only minorities in our country.” In his concurring judgement Judge Sachs (1996:15) states that the thrust of international human rights law principles would be far more in favour of supporting the so-called 'sociological' or 'functional' minority, (i.e. the African languages: isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Sepedi, etc) than of upholding the claims of what might be termed the 'sociological' or 'functional' majority (i.e. English and Afrikaans). Not in the least could English (8,7%) be considered a numerical majority language in South Africa but in the form of a “sociological” or “functional” majority (Sachs, 1996:15) and as a dominant “lingua franca” English represents a threat to the development of the other official languages (Vermeulen, 2001: 65). In this regard Mamaila (2004:1) states: “It must be a curse to be African. I cannot think of any other people who get penalised for communicating in their own language. So, we are told that if we

want the economy to grow, we should master the language of commerce and trade, meaning English. If that is the case, why is it that the Germans, the French, the Japanese and the Chinese are running thriving economies while they still promote their own languages? It must be a curse to be African”.

The Constitution (SA, 1996) further stipulates that the indigenous African languages should receive special attention so that they can develop to their full potential. A recent study of language in the public domain shows that, over the last ten years, the exact opposite has been happening, partly through government policy. The language scene, it says, is characterized by “favouring” English, “disempowerment” Afrikaans and “neglect” the other languages.” These tendencies are not coincidental, but part of a disguised strategy by which a small new elite occupy the seats of the old, without any real structural change being effected in society. It is clear that access to schools, higher education, jobs, legal empowerment and political influence is controlled by a formidable language barrier.

3.6.3 Budget constraints

Budget is an estimate of the amount of money to be received and the amount to be spent for various purposes in a given time. A budget can be a barrier if government provides less money than budgeted for. ABET is normally allocated a small budget. That small allocation normally have a negative impact on the operation and implementation of the plan and objectives an ABET Centre has set to achieve. Van der Stoep (1984:128) in his analysis of budget allocation worldwide has the following to say based on an OECD research project:

- There is normally little information regarding financing of ABET worldwide.
- In general authorities that are also responsible for financing formal education make provision for ABET. In this case a separate budget for ABET seldom exists.

- The budget is combined with general educational provision in such a way that it is difficult to differentiate between them.
- On the local level it is assumed that expenses for ABET are small, that authorities do not regard it as feasible to provide a separate audit.
- More often than not ABET is controlled and organized by personnel who have other responsibilities as well and as a result they deprive ABET of the necessary financial allocation.

The achievement of these objectives necessitates a revision of the current post establishment model. Such a revision will focus on the development of an appropriate post-establishment model. Such a revision will focus on the development of an appropriate post distribution mechanism, guidelines for post utilization and structural and organizational arrangements to ensure flexibility in the development of posts White Paper 6 (2001:40). Particular attention will be given to optimising the expertise of specialist support personnel, such as therapists, psychologists, remedial educators and health professionals. White Paper 6, (2001:40) clearly indicates that no real increase in the fiscal envelope is envisaged in the staffing strategy in the short to medium term. What is being proposed is a much more cost-effective use of specialized educators than is currently the practice. The previous Minister of Education (Asmal, 2000c:2) stated: "State spending on Adult Education increased from R248 million last year to R822 million for the current year. By 2004 this is planned to grow to R1.2 billion – a five-fold increase since 1998".

3.6.4 Location and buildings

Sutcliffe, (1998:176) claims that the way buildings are constructed institute a serious barrier. Here she refers to ABET centres that have no ramps, suitable bathrooms and lifts as a result that they become barriers towards adult learners with physical problems. She says centre buildings may require adaptations to

enable access by adult learners with learning difficulties who have additional physical disabilities or sensory impairments.

Equipment and resources are lacking in institutions. It is therefore necessary that equipment and resources must be developed and adapted, such that it would be user friendly for the learners, e.g.: furniture, learning support material and toilet facilities (DoE, 2002a:208).

3.5.3.2 Infrastructural Barriers

Existing structures are not functionally inclusive. These structures need to be functionally and inclusively upgraded (SA. 1995). Appropriate transport is not accessible, available and where it is available it is not subsidized.

3.6.5 Facilitation

Rogers cites unnecessary arguments, domination of discussions, bullying others, showing favouritism of more knowledgeable learners by tutors, boredom of learners, proving tutors wrong as issues that discourages learners from participating (Rogers, 1997:189). Rogers (1997:190) furthermore says some of the aspects that are obstacles to learner participation could be attributed for example a waste of time with rambling anecdotes, with harangues, or simply with information too difficult for the rest of the group to understand.

The facilitator could create immense barriers if he or she fails to understand the role of facilitating learning especially for adults. The facilitators need to make learning effective. The nature of effective teaching has been widely explored (Wray et al., 2001:1). In the report on the teaching practices of effective facilitator of literacy, the following points were regarded as important:

- The effective facilitator is that one who provides learners with the maximum opportunity to learn. Educators who fail to do this will be creating learning barrier for learners;
- The facilitator has to use a combination of whole class, group and individual teaching to prevent barriers from occurring;
- Effective facilitators demand engagement with the task, prepared.
- The biggest gain will occur when the facilitator maximizes instruction time, spend much time instructing and monitoring learner work.
- Material is paced according to the capabilities of learners.
- They model what they want to inculcate in learners. Turn into appropriate pace, interaction with learners, monitoring and giving feedback.

The facilitators need to learn how to facilitate. The facilitator must be able to match the task to the abilities of learners. The facilitators must provide sufficient time to assist learners. Institutions need to develop facilitators so as to make facilitators more efficient and effective. Edwards et al., (1993: 40) says institutions should put a day aside per week for facilitator development. To add to this development it was decided to add 'personal change' to the curriculum. Facilitators must engage in skills exchange. Facilitators need to be disciplined at all times. Regular absenteeism of facilitators will discourage learners. Eventually they will loose trust and confidence in the facilitator then they will attend irregularly as well. The facilitators need to be always present and punctual for their classes at all times.

3.7 Summary

The objective of this chapter was to identify and discuss possible barriers to ABET as it is reflected in the literature. These barriers do not refer to individuals' inabilities to learn but rather to barriers that impede their participation in ABET. The discussion started of with a discussion of a number of theories on

participating in ABET like the hierarchy of needs theory and the life-transition model.

The possible barriers (also referred to as blockages, constraints, deterrents, impediments or obstacles) were classified into three categories: situational, institutional, and dispositional. Although the classification has been described as oversimplified, they provide a useful starting point for considering the problem of non-participation (Cross in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:17).

- Situational barriers: These are barriers that are found in an individual's situation for example lack of transport, childcare giver, lack of family support, and a lack of money.
- Institutional barriers: These are barriers that are found in an institution or ABET centre and it could refer to high fees, lack of skilled facilitators, difficult language of instruction, and awkward times of instruction.
- Dispositional barriers: These are barriers within the learner self for example the attitude the learner has about learning, about the institution, about peer-learners or facilitators. This category is also related to the learner's health, living conditions, and lack of confidence.

In the following chapter the empirical research will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4 THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter various barriers affecting adults learners were explored from a theoretical perspective. This was done through a literature study of both local and international resources. The literature study and the experience of the researcher within an ABET practice showed that there are various barriers that prohibit adult learners from taking part in ABET. In South Africa as in the rest of the world politician and other stakeholders are concerned with the low levels of participation and the high dropout rates in ABET practices (Asmal, 2000:4; Pandor, 2004a:2).

The reasons for non-participation in ABET are complex and multi-dimensional and often not reducible to a single obstacle. Most explanations of non-participation involve the interaction of external (situational, institutional, environmental, social, cultural, financial) and internal (personal and dispositional) factors. In Chapter 3 several possible barriers to participation in ABET were identified.

The aim of the empirical study is to determine barriers that prohibit adult learners in the Sedibeng East and West education districts from participating in ABET programmes. Empirical research is therefore needed to prove these assumptions and identify the actual barriers to participation in ABET programmes in Sedibeng East and West. In this chapter the empirical study undertaken by the researcher will be described. This chapter proposes then to present the research design with regards to the researched problem, research approach, methods, the population, sample and the data analysis.

There is a concern that there are various barriers that inhibit adults' participation in ABET programmes. It is assumed that these barriers have subjected a high rate of adults to no schooling, or to not completing their schooling and finally to

non-participation in ABET programmes and to illiteracy. The exposure of these barriers would help facilitators and education planners in ABET to take note of these impediments when they plan for ABET programmes, develop ABET learning programmes and recruit adults to ABET centres.

4.2 Research problem, objectives and research questions

As stated in Chapter 1 Adult Basic Education (ABET) is a constitutional right (SA, 1996a) and the Government and private sector spent millions of Rand in the last decade on ABET. Still about 4 to 6 million South Africans cannot read or write and 10 million do not have a general education (Grade 9) qualification (Asmal, 2000:1; Blaine, 2004:1). According to the current Minister of Education (Pandor, 2004b:2) the number of illiterate adults in South Africa is still too large. "Even though significant strides have been made in reducing the absolute number of adults with no education at all, there are still too many adults with no education at all, there are still too many adults who only have a primary school education".

4.2.1 The research problem

In Chapter 1 the research problem of this study was stated as referring to the low participation levels and poor retention rates of illiterate and semi-literate adults in ABET activities. For Merriam and Caffarella (1991:35) the biggest mystery is why more adults, especially those who might benefit the most, are not involved in ABET and also why so many adults drop out at ABET centres. In this regard the primary objective of this study is to identify possible barriers that prevent adults in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education to participate in ABET. It will also help to make recommendations for the more efficient implementation of ABET policies in the area by means of addressing the barriers to ABET participation. One of the objectives is to develop measures to enhance the understanding of facilitators and ABET institutions of how learners are affected by a variety of barriers and to be sensitive to those barriers. The

aims of this research can be formulated as follows: To investigate the types of barriers affecting adult learners from learning. To direct attention to barriers in ABET that will have to be avoided if ABET is to play any significant part in the lives of the adult learners’.

In order to find a solution for the problem of non-participation in ABET activities it is necessary to determine the nature of ABET in South Africa and to identify possible barriers to participation. In this regard the primary objective of the empirical research is to identify possible barriers that prevent adults in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education to participate in ABET.

4.2.2 The objectives of the research and the research questions

In order to find a solution for the problem of non-participation in ABET activities it is necessary to determine the nature of ABET in South Africa and to identify possible barriers to participation. In Chapter 1 these aspects were operationalised into the following objectives:

- The first objective of the study is to investigate the general principles and policies of ABET in South Africa;
- The second objective is to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices;
- The third objective is to investigate the ABET opportunities that exist in the two districts;
- The fourth objective is to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices in the two districts; and
- The fifth objective is to make specific recommendations with regard to the ABET practices in the two districts.

With regard to the set of objectives this study attempted to answer the following questions:

- What are the general principles and policies of the national Department of Education with regard to ABET in South Africa?
- What are the possible barriers to participation in ABET practices that have been identified in the literature?
- What are the ABET opportunities that have been offered by the Gauteng Department of Education in the two districts?
- What barriers to participation in ABET practices have been identified in the two districts?
- What can be done to increase the participation of learners in ABET programmes in the two districts?

4.3 Research Approach

In this research a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques were used. Qualitative data was obtained by means of information gained from the literature study and informal interviews held with adult learners and their facilitators in the Sedibeng East and West districts. This information was then used to compile a questionnaire that was then administered to a representative sample of adult learners and facilitators in the two districts. The information collected from the questionnaires provided quantitative information on the biographical characteristics of the adult learners and facilitators, their perceptions about adult learning, and their perceptions about the possible barriers that both the learners and the facilitators experience.

4.3.1 Qualitative-Quantitative dimension

In this research a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques were used. The informal Interviews with the ABET facilitators at the ABET centres,

with principals and supervisors at the different ABET centres, provided qualitative information on the types of barriers affecting learner participation in ABET programmes. This information together with the information gathered by the literature study was then used to compile a questionnaire which was then administered to the ABET learners and facilitators. The information collected from the questionnaire provided quantitative information on the types of barriers affecting learner participation.

Leedy (1993:139) argues that all research methodology rests upon the principle that the nature of the data and the challenge dictate the research methodology. Leedy (1993:139) identified qualitative research methodologies as dealing with data that are principally verbal and quantitative research methodologies as dealing with data that are principally statistical. Mouton and Marais (1990:169) argue that phenomena that are investigated in the social sciences are so entangled that a single approach can most certainly not succeed in encompassing human activities in their full complexity. De Vos *et al.* (1998:359) argue that: "It would therefore be futile to behave as though one approach should be canonised and another excommunicated". Posavac and Carey (1989:242) agree that although purists from both camps would object, the best approach is to mix qualitative and quantitative research methods. Webb (as quoted by Bryman, 1995:131) has suggested that social scientists are likely to exhibit greater confidence in their findings when these are derived from more than one method of investigation. By combining qualitative and quantitative research in the examining of the same research problem, the validity of conclusions can be enhanced if they can be shown to provide mutual confirmation.

According to Bryman (1995:98) quantitative research tends to adopt a structured approach. By contrast, qualitative research tends to be more open. Webb as quoted by Bryman, (1995:131) has suggested that social scientists are likely to exhibit greater confidence in their findings when these are derived from more

than one method of investigation. By combining qualitative and qualitative research in the examining of the same research problem, the validity of conclusions can be enhanced if they can be shown to provide mutual confirmation.

4.4 Population and sampling

The population includes all ABET learners (N = 1 945) and facilitators (N = 246) involved with the five ABET centres run by the Gauteng Department of Education within the boundaries of the Sedibeng East and West districts of the province. The region can be characterized as an urban and as a highly industrialised area and is more commonly referred to as the Vaal Triangle. Sedibeng East includes towns and townships such as Vereeniging, Meyerton, Heidelberg and Sharpeville. Sedibeng West includes Vanderbijlpark, Sebokeng, Bophelong and Boipathong.

From both the adult learner and facilitator population representative samples were selected by means of stratified random sampling using a table of random digits. The sample is considered to be large enough to be representative of the five ABET centres situated in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education. No claims are being made that the sample is the representative of all adult learners and facilitators in the Gauteng Province or South Africa.

Representative samples of 389 (20% of 1 945) adult learners and 130 (52,8% of 246) facilitators were selected from the five ABET Centres within the Sedibeng East and West districts (See Table 4.4). Representative samples from each one of the five centres were selected by means of stratified random sampling using a table of random digits. The samples represented respectively 20% and 52,8% of the total population of each group and both the samples of the adult learners and the facilitators are considered to be large enough to be representative of the

adult learners and facilitators in Sedibeng East and West Districts. Stoker (in De Vos *et al.*, 1998:192) indicated the following percentages: for a population of 500 (20%) and for a population of 200 (32%) as sufficient to draw a conclusion. From the five centres the following numbers of adult learners and facilitators were included in the sample and responded to the questionnaires:

Centres	Learners			Facilitators	
	Level 1-4	Gr. 10-12	Sample	Number	Sample
Sharpeville	466	263	93	42	21
Tswinyane	459	172	92	37	21
Sebokeng	700	203	140	131	65
Boipatong	150	77	30	19	11
Bophelong	120	56	24	11	8
SANLI*	50		10	6	4
	1 945	771**	389 (360)	246	130 (123)

*SANLI – South African National Literacy Initiative group

** FET Phase – Not included in population of ABET learners for the purpose of this research.

4.5 Research instruments

The aim of the empirical study was to obtain information from both the adult learners (the clients) and the facilitators (the providers) with regard to their perceptions about ABET and the barriers that may lead to non-participation. The dual nature of the empirical research and especially the fact that the literacy skills of the adult learners range from illiterate to at the most only semi-literate compelled the researcher to use a form of highly structured interviews to obtain the data. The sample was drawn from a population of adult learners level 1 - 4 who have just registered at the centres for the first time and it included a total of 50 adults who had totally not attended school. They were registered within the recent South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) project.

A second factor that prohibited the use of straightforward questionnaires was the inability of the adult learners to answer the questions that were formulated in English. The majority of the adult learners do not understand English and they

were still learning to read and write. Permission was obtained to select a total number of 36 facilitators from all the ABET centres and to train them to conduct the structured interviews with the adult learners at the ABET centres, at the learners' homes and places of work. The interviewers were able to translate the questions into the various African languages (especially SeSotho), to explain the questions and to conduct the interviews in the relevant vernacular.

4.5.1 Structured interviews: The adult learners

Interviews range along a continuum from highly structured interviews, which permit no deviation to largely unstructured, undirected exploratory interviews. Camel and Kahn (as quoted by Chadwick *et al.*, 1984:103) defined the research interview as "a two-person conversation, initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation". Interviews may range from casual conversation or brief questioning to more formal, lengthy interactions (Marshall & Rossman, 1991:82).

Highly structured interviews usually contain a series of specific questions that are to be read to the respondent, along with a set of predetermined response categories. Few or no open-ended questions are asked (Chadwick *et al.*, 1984: 104). The highly structured interviews are best suited for more specific hypothesis testing and for quantification of results. This format also assumes extensive information about the subject and about the respondents. The unstructured format, on the other hand, is best suited for exploratory studies and when detailed information is needed on more complex and detailed issues. Between the two extremes are a variety of other combinations. The interviews conducted in this research can be characterised as highly structured with the added provision that it was expected of the interviewers to translate and/or explain the questions to the semi- or illiterate adult learners.

4.5.2 Questionnaires: facilitators

Separate questionnaires were also completed by a total of 130 facilitators. The objective of this was to determine if facilitators were aware of possible barriers that could affect the participation of the adult learners. Questionnaires were issued to them and they completed the questionnaires. A representative sample of 130 facilitators was randomly selected out of a total of 246 facilitators from all the centres. The responses from the facilitators were essential for this research to obtain data about their experience, qualifications, in-service training and to gauge their perceptions of possible barriers that affect ABET participation.

4.5.2.1 The questionnaire as research instrument

The use of questionnaires for learners and facilitators to illicit information about the barriers affecting participation were found to be the best suited measuring instruments. With a questionnaire, a respondent completes and returns to the researcher a self-administered survey or "interview" in which the questions and instructions are complete and understandable enough so that the respondent can act as his or her own surveyor.

4.5.2.2 Advantages of a questionnaire

Chadwick, et al. (1984:135) and Bailey (1982:156-7) mentioned the following advantages of questionnaires:

- The major advantage of the questionnaire survey is that it is more economical in terms of cost and time.
- The questionnaire may be completed at the respondent's convenience and with a mailed questionnaire the respondents are not forced to complete all the questions at a single session.
- Greater assurance of anonymity, since there is no interviewer present, the respondent may feel more willing to provide honest answers or

undesirable answers. It is thus a useful way to collect sensitive information.

- There is no interviewer bias. There is no opportunity for the respondent to be biased because of an interviewer.
- Securing of information. The mailed questionnaire allows the respondent to consult his or her records, confer with colleagues or conduct research before answering the questions.
- Accessibility. Respondents who are widely separated geographically can all be reached.

4.5.2.3 Disadvantages of the questionnaire

Chadwick et al. (1984: 138), Singleton et al. (1988:248) and Bailey (1982:156) mentioned the following disadvantages of questionnaires:

- The questionnaire should be relatively brief or respondents may not take the time to complete them.
- Another problem is that somebody else may be asked to complete the questionnaire (Chadwick et al., 1984: 138).
- Lack of flexibility with no interviewer present, there can be no variation in questions asked and the interviewer doesn't have the opportunity to probe or follow-up on interesting leads.
- Low response rate. Mailed responses rates to be much lower than interview studies.
- There is only Non-verbal behaviour. There is no interviewer present to observe non-verbal behaviour.
- No control over environment. In a mailed questionnaire study there is no assurance that the respondent will have the necessary privacy.
- Many answers may remain unanswered.
- A complex questionnaire format may not be used.

- The question and the question formulation in a mailed questionnaire must be simple to understand.
- Question wording may be made simple enough for the most poorly educated persons to understand (Bailey, 1982:156).
- Singleton *et al.*, (1988:248) states that a mailed questionnaire yields the most reliable information when closed questions are used, when the order in which questions are answered is unimportant, and when the questions and format are simple and straightforward.

4.6 The research process

Permission to conduct the research was obtained in writing as well as orally from the different ABET centre principals. Questionnaires were distributed to the different ABET Centres in the Sedibeng East and West district for completion by ABET learners and facilitators. A covering letter was enclosed (Appendix A). The covering letter was aimed at orientating the respondents to the questionnaire and to assure them of confidentiality and anonymity.

4.7 Data-analysis

The statistical consultancy service of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus in Vanderbijlpark was approached for assistance in the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The SAS-programme was employed to the process data by computer.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter the empirical research process was discussed. The research problem and research aim were stated and they were operationalised into five research questions that the literature study and the empirical study are suppose to answer. The objective of the empirical study was to obtain information from

both the adult learners (the clients) and the facilitators (the providers) with regard to their perceptions about ABET and the barriers that may lead to non-participation. The dual nature of the empirical research and especially the fact that the literacy skills of the adult learners range from illiterate to at the most only semi-literate compelled the researcher to use a form of highly structured interviews to obtain the data.

In this research a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was used. The population includes all ABET level 1 – 4 learners (N = 1 945) and facilitators (N = 246) involved with the five ABET centres run by the Gauteng Department of Education within the boundaries of the Sedibeng East and West districts of the province. From both the adult learner and facilitator population representative samples were selected by means of stratified random sampling using a table of random digits.

CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a report of the empirical investigation conducted through questionnaires completed by means of highly-structured interviews by the adult learners (ANNEXURE A) and the questionnaires completed by the facilitators (ANNEXURE B). The objectives of the empirical research were to answer the following two research questions as stated in Chapter 1 and 4:

- What are the ABET opportunities offered by the Gauteng Department of Education in the two districts?
- What barriers to participation in ABET practices have been identified in the two districts?

To put the findings into context data on the following aspects will also be discussed in this chapter:

- Biographical data on the adult learners.
- Biographical data on the ABET facilitators
- Attendance patterns at the ABET Centres

5.1.1 Responses

A total of 389 questionnaires were distributed to ABET learners of which a total of 309 (79,43%) were received back. 130 questionnaires were distributed to ABET facilitators of which 123 (94.61%) were received back. The response rate could be regarded as highly sufficient as Landman (1980:112) regards a response rate of 70% as adequate to make reliable and valid conclusions.

5.2 Biographical data on the adult learners

Section A of the questionnaire was designed to gather biographical information on the respondents. Frequencies and percentages were used in interpreting the data of the learner respondents.

5.2.1 Age groups

The adult learners were representative of the following age groups: 16-19 years – 6%; 20-29 Years – 21%; 30-39 years – 26%; 40-49 years – 25%; 50-59 years – 14%; and 60 years and older 8%. Contrary to popular belief in ABET that often emphasises the learning disabilities of older learners the average age of the adult learners in the region is well below 40 years of age. The largest percentage of learners are in their thirties and second largest group in their forties. With regard to possible physical barriers that are often associated with the older learner the following table rather reflects the relatively young average age of the ABET learners in the area:

	Facilitators %		Learners %	
	No/mild problem	Problem	No/mild problem	Problem
75. Lack of Intellectual ability	58	42	74	16
76. Loss of long-term memory	58	42	67	33
77. Loss of short-term memory	69	29	69	29
78. Retrieval of information	65	35	75	25
79. Slow speed of processing	60	40	69	31
80. Poor vision (eye-sight)	67	33	65	35
81. Hard of hearing	84	16	80	20
82. Chronic illnesses	83	17	74	24
83. Fatigue, lack of energy	84	17	25	25
84. Arthritis	84	16	70	30

In comparison with the facilitators rating the learners perceived more problems with regard to vision (eye-sight); hearing-loss; chronic illnesses, and arthritis. The responses of the facilitators indicate more problems than the learners with the following aspects: intellectual abilities; long-term memory; retrieval of information; and slow speed of processing.

5.2.2 Gender

The majority of the respondents are female (65%). The majority of women in the respondents is also contrary to the popular belief that women are a marginalized and disadvantaged group (DoE, 2004a:1), and that women are powerless and have a lack of funds to attend ABET (Hedoux, in Edwards *et al.*, 1993:21).

5.2.3 Marital status of the adult learners

From Table 5.1 we can infer that the majority of the learners are in a permanent relation (married (48%) and living together (3%) and that 30% are single.

	Frequency	Percentage
Married	144	48
Single	79	26
Unmarried with children	39	13
Living together	10	3
Single in parental home	12	4
Other	16	6

5.2.4 Stages at which the respondents left formal schooling

Table 5.2 indicated that the majority of adult learners left school at the end of the Intermediate Phase (Grade 6). The large number of respondents who indicated that they left school in the Further Education and Training Phase (25%) is an indication that some of the ABET centres in the area are also used as FET (Grades 10-12) Centres. In this regard these respondents are actually not engaged in basic education because they are already in possession of a GETC equivalent or (Grade 9) certificate.

	Frequency	Percentage
Never attended school	81	30
Grade 1-3	56	18
Grade 4-6	36	12
Grade 7-8	46	15
Grade 9-10	58	19
Grade 11-12	18	6

5.2.5 Current ABET level, repetitions and possible dropout rate

It is clear from the responses that most of the learners are on Level 4 (34%) and the second most learners are on Level 1 (32%). The large number on Level 1 (32%) and who have never attended school (26%) is a result of the inclusion of a total of 50 adults who had not attended school and that were registered within the recent South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) project. The large percentage on Level 1 is an indication that participation in ABET might increase in future. Table 5.3 indicates that the majority of the respondents have never repeated an ABET level. It could also be the result of the large number of new entrants that were included in the sample; or of a high dropout rate, or of a high pass-rate in the ABET levels. Out of a total of 301 respondents only 14% indicated that they have repeated an ABET level.

	Frequency	Percentage
No	229	76
Level 1	27	9
Level 2	17	5
Level 3	13	4
Level 4	18	6

5.2.6 Employment status

The vast majority of the respondents were unemployed (60%) and only 18% were in full-time employment. The others were employed part-time (14%) and 8% were running their own businesses. With regard to employment sectors the

majority were employed in the services sector (37%) and the rest in industry (25%), the government sector (23%) and self-employed (15%). From Table 5.2.6 we can infer that the majority of the respondents (51%) had less than 10 years of work experience.

	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	57	35
6-10 years	29	17
11-15 years	19	11
16-20 years	14	8
21-25 years	22	13
26-30 years	11	7
30+	15	9

5.2.7 Home languages and languages of learning and teaching (LOLT)

	Frequency	Percentage
English	19	6
Afrikaans	2	1
Sesotho	167	54
SeTswana	7	2
IsiZulu	86	28
IsiXhosa	23	7
Another language	5	2

	Frequency	Percentage
English	219	59,3
Afrikaans	8	2
Sesotho	90	25
SeTswana	1	0,3
IsiZulu	44	12
IsiXhosa	4	1,1
Another language	1	0.3

	Frequency	Percentage
English	226	65
Afrikaans	6	2
Sesotho	70	19
IsiZulu	44	12
Other	8	2

	Frequency	Percentage
English	225	67
Afrikaans	4	1
Sesotho	85	25
IsiZulu	19	6
Other	3	1

The official language of learning and teaching (LOLT) at all the centres is English. Although the majority of the respondents indicated that SeSotho (54%) is their home language and only 6% regarded English as their home language only 25% regarded SeSotho and the majority (60%) regarded English as the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) of the ABET centres. The fact that English (65%) and SeSotho (19%) were both regarded as languages of teaching by the respondents and that English (67%) and SeSotho (25%) were both regarded as languages of learning is an indication that the learners are not sure about the language issues in education. It could also be an indication that the ABET centres are practicing a dual-medium of education policy in the classrooms although the official LOLT at all the centres is supposed to be English. As it is the case in the Foundations Phase of schools the vernacular (mostly SeSotho) is often used at ABET Level 1 where learners often have absolutely no understanding of English.

It is not surprising that the majority (67%) of the respondents indicated that they experience problems to communicate in English. Only 32% of the respondents mostly from Levels 3 and 4, indicated that they have no problem with English

communication. Table 5.10 gives an indication of how the respondents rate their proficiencies in three of the eleven official languages:

Language	Excellent	Good	Poor	Very poor
Home language (Q16)	43%	34%	14%	9%
English (Q15)	16%	45%	23%	16%
Afrikaans (Q16)	6%	23%	29%	42%

5.3 Biographical data on facilitators

A total of 130 questionnaires were distributed to ABET facilitators at the five centres in Sedibeng East and West of which 123 (94,61%) were received back. Section A of the questionnaire was designed to gather biographical information of the respondents. Frequencies and percentages were used in interpreting the data of the learner respondents.

5.3.1 Age-groups

The data received (N=123) indicated that the majority of respondents are in the age group 30-39 years (48%), followed by the age group 20-29 years (36%) the age group 40 - 49 (13%) and lastly the age group 60-68 years (3%). The average age of the facilitators is 33 years.

5.3.2 Gender

The gender representation in the group of facilitators was: Male – 16% and female 84%.

5.3.3 Employment status

The majority of the respondents (79,1%) were appointed in a part-time temporary post, 11% in a part-time permanent post, 9% in a full-time temporary

post and only one facilitator (0,9) in a full-time permanent post. The majority of the respondents were facilitators (68%) and 32% indicated that they were acting as supervisors and centre managers.

5.3.4 Facilitators: Qualifications and teaching experience

At the three centres of the Sedibeng East district have a total of 46 facilitators that service a total of 330 learners (ratio 1:7) and the three centres in Sedibeng West have 78 facilitators serving 700 learners (ratio 1:9). These very low facilitators to learner ratios are in stark contrast to the prescribed ratio of 1:35 for primary school teaching. Due to the delay in the provision of FET centres the ABET centres are also involved with the provision of FET training on Grade 10 to 12 levels. Further education on this level is not part of the basic education as indicated by the acronym ABET.

The majority of the facilitators (68%) indicated that they are in possession of at least a 3 years teaching qualification. A large number (32%) of the facilitators are under- and unqualified teachers (minimum of a 3 year qualification) and 27% have no teaching qualification. The majority of the facilitators (63%) have experience as teachers in pre-primary and primary schools and 36% in secondary schools. The majority of the respondents (57%) have less than 10 years experience in ABET.

	Frequency	Percentage
Grade 10	2	2
Grade 12	27	25
Teacher Certificate	6	5
Teacher Diploma	53	47
Higher Diploma	6	5
B.Degree	12	10
Postgraduate	7	6

	Frequency	Percentage
Pre-primary	17	15
Primary School	55	48
High School	41	36
Tertiary training	1	1

	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	54	46
6-10 years	13	11
11-15 years	15	12
16-20 years	17	14
21 years	19	17

5.3.5 ABET specific training

In response to Question 6 only 20 of the respondents (16%) indicated that they have received formal ABET training at a college or university and these respondents indicated that they have received a 1 year (13) or a 2 year (3) certificate and 5 indicated that they have received a 3 year diploma. Table 5.3.3 indicates the areas of specialization of the facilitators. The three main learning programmes offered by an ABET centre at especially Levels 1 and 2 were under-represented: English Literacy (21%); Mathematical Literacy (19%) and Life-skills (5%). The majority (23%) of the facilitators have specialized in an African language. With regard to their ability to teach the three main learning programmes the following percentages of respondents rate their abilities as excellent or good: English (96%); Mathematical literacy (70%) and Life-skills (90%).

With regard to in-service training (INSET) for ABET the majority of the respondents (56%) indicated that they received training but a large percentage (44%) indicated that they have received no INSET for ABET. Of the respondents that indicated that they have attended some form of in-service training, 22% had initial training of between 1 and 5 days and 4% had initial training of 6 to 15

days. Almost 42% of the respondents attended regular workshops and 2% attended seminars. From this group 28% indicated that they had no form of in-service training.

5.3.6 Languages of learning and teaching (LOLT)

The majority of respondents indicated that the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) at their ABET Centre is English (66%). SeSotho (21%), Afrikaans (6%); IsiZulu (5%) and IsiXhosa (2%) were also indicated as LOLT. The majority of the respondents indicated that their ability to use English as LOLT were excellent (50%) or good (46%). In contrast they indicated their abilities to use an African language as LOLT as excellent (63%) and good (36%).

5.3.7 Summary of biographical data

The information given by respondents indicates that most of the ABET facilitators employed by the centres are employed in temporarily positions and on part-time basis. There are more female facilitators than male facilitators employed by the state. The majority of facilitators employed are in the age group 30-39 at 48%.

5.4 Motivational and demotivational factors

5.4.1 Motivational factors

Questions 26-32 of the questionnaire deal with the factors that motivate adult learners to become involved with ABET. Table 5.6.1 sets out the responses of both the adult learners and the facilitators on the motivational factors for ABET learners:

Table 5.14: Factors that motivate adults to attend ABET classes		
Mean: 1 = Not important; 4 = Most important and also indicated are the percentages that consider it as "Most important"	Facilitators	Learners
26. to learn how to read	3.67; 71%	3.58; 70%
27. to learn how to write	3.74; 71%	3.59; 77%
28. to read newspapers	3.38; 60%	3.46; 44%
29. to be able to complete forms	3.54; 72%	3.65; 57%
30. to read the Bible	3.50; 62%	3.49; 55%
31. to improve my job situation	3.43; 64%	3.35; 55%
32. to further my studies	3.15; 68%	3.47; 68%

From Table 5.6.1 we can infer that there is a great deal of congruence between the motivational factors as indicated by the mean score of the learners and facilitators. With regard to the percentages of the groups that regard a factor as "Most important" much less of the facilitators rate the abilities "to read newspapers"; "to complete forms" and "to read the Bible as most important. This could indicate that the adult learners are more concerned about satisfying the lower needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Chapter 3.1.2)..

5.5 Objective 1: What are the ABET opportunities in the districts?

Within the borders of Sedibeng East there are two Adult Education Centres (Sharpeville and Tswinyane) and of Sedibeng West three centres (Sebokeng, Boiphatong and Bothelong). Each of these centres could have one or more satellite campuses or venues where ABET is supplied. To complicate matters some of these centres also serve as after-hours Further Education and Training Centres and offer classes for Grades 10-12 learners. The largest centre is Sebokeng Centre (430 learners and 61 facilitators) that has nine satellite centres at Botebo-Tsebo, Khutlo-Tharo, Esokwazi, Ubuhle, Thuto-Tiro, Ntsele, Sizanani, Tokelo and Modishi. The administration facilities and the full-time principal are located at Modishi Primary School in Zone 13. The biggest cost consumption of the centre is to replace fluorescent tubes and to repair the lights. Boipatong and

Bophelong are also classified as satellite centres because of smaller learner populations.

5.5.1 Location of the ABET centres and costs

Most (81%) of the ABET centres are situated at existing local primary and secondary schools and church buildings (8%) and other buildings like community halls (9%) are also used. For example in Kliprivier (a Satellite centre of Tswinyane ABET centre) there are classes that operate from a shack. With the South African National Literacy Initiative Project of the Department of Education, volunteer educators use their homes as venues for literacy classes. Most centres charge R50 per annum, which one would say, is affordable to many learners. However there are 36% of respondents who indicated that paying fees is for them a mild or serious problem. Due to the fact that a large number of adult learners are unemployed the fees could be a barrier.

5.5.2 Lecturing hours and attendance rates at ABET centres

The majority (54%) of the respondents indicated that they attend classes daily. Other indications were: two days a week (20%), once a week (19%) and once a month (4%). The hours of attendance were indicated as during office-hours in the week (14%); late afternoon (54%); after 18.00 on weekdays (26%); and on weekends (5%). With regard to the duration of classes the majority indicated from 2-3 hours (91%) per day. Other indications were: 1 hour (2%); 3-4 hours (6%) and 4-5 hours (1%).

5.6 Objective 2: What are the barriers to ABET

In Chapter 3.2 the barriers that could prevent adult learners from participating in ABET activities were classified as:

- Situational barriers

These are barriers that are found in an individual's situation for example lack of transport, childcare giver, lack of family support, and a lack of money.

- Dispositional barriers

These are barriers within the learner self for example the attitude the learner has about learning, about the institution, about peer-learners or facilitators. This category is also related to the learner's health, living conditions, and lack of confidence.

- Institutional barriers

These are barriers that are found in an institution or ABET centre and it refers to high fees, lack of skilled facilitators; difficult language of instruction, and awkward times of instruction.

5.6.1 Situational barriers

With regard to more personal and situational barriers that learners experience that prevent them from regular attendance of the ABET classes the following table gives an indication of those aspects that both groups perceive as problem areas:

Possible barriers	Facilitators %	Learners %
64. Illness	93	83
73. Marriage and related problems	52	82
65. Working conditions	85	75
112. Lack of community support	70	66
105. Job-related responsibilities	75	60
101. Mothers: Problems with child-care	78	55
99. Job responsibilities	67	53
66. Poor motivation	44	53
98. Time-constraints	64	52
113. Lack of family support	63	51
100. Shift work	77	51
104. Lack of privacy at home	79	51
67. The high crime rate	57	46
69. Financial difficulties (transport, class-fees)	47	46

102. Overcrowded living conditions	57	46
103. High incident of crime	49	42
68. Transport problems	53	40

Table 5.6.1 indicates the barriers that were identified as problem-areas. It is indicated as the biggest problems as indicated by the learners. Both groups rate absenteeism as a result of illness as the biggest problem. Marriage and related problems, a lack of family support and job-related responsibilities are rated by the learners as the second, third and fourth biggest problems that they experience. Both groups indicated that a lack of community support is a problem. The facilitators rate a lack of privacy; a lack of motivation and transport as relatively bigger problems in comparison with the learners. The facilitators also consider the high crime rate and safety issues as a larger obstacle than the learners. With regard to the different ratings for marriage and related problems, shift work and lack of privacy at home we can infer that the facilitators are not aware of the real situational problems that their learners are facing.

5.6.1.1 Possible financial barriers that learners experience

The following table indicates that in general the facilitators foresee many more financial problems that could prevent learners from attending ABET classes than the learners themselves. Especially the financial obligation for learners to purchase books and learning material is rated by more facilitators (72%) than learners (49%) as a financial burden or barrier.

Areas of financial barriers	Percentages of problems	
	Facilitators	Learners
85. Payment of class fees (R50 per year)	50	36
86. Payment for transport	34	27
87. Purchase of books and learning material	72	49
88. Family responsibilities	54	43
89. Loss of payment for over-time	59	36

In general the inferences of this table indicate that the majority of learners do not perceive the financial obligations created by ABET as a financial burden. The possibility arises that the facilitators projected their own financial needs on the learners, as most of them are full-time teachers that are also moonlighting as ABET facilitators.

5.6.2 Dispositional barriers

Dispositional barriers are barriers within the learner self for example the attitude the learner has about learning, about the institution, about peer-learners or facilitators. This category also refers to the learner's self-concept, life-view; general attitude towards learning; and to the expectations and ideals of the adult learner.

5.6.2.1 Attitudes towards learning

The majority of the learners (77%) indicated that they attend the classes regularly and punctually but only 49% of the facilitators indicated that the learners attend regularly. Both the facilitators (80%) and the learners (80%) indicated that they are prepared for the classes. The majority of both the facilitators (84%) and the learners (92%) indicated that they enjoy their ABET studies and perhaps this is all that matters.

5.6.2.2 Possible psychological barriers of learners

Table 5.6.2.2 indicates that nearly a third (31-33%) of the learners experience feelings of a lack of confidence; an idea that they have previously failed; a perception that schools are for children; that they are the objects of negative stereotypes; and that they are discouraged by relatives, friends and colleagues. Their facilitators do not share these perceptions and the reason for this could be

a lack of proper training in especially the social and psychological needs of the adult learner.

Possible problem areas	No or mild problems		More serious problems	
	Facilitators	Learners	Facilitators	Learners
90. Lack of confidence	72	68	28	32
91. Unsuccessful previous attempts	80	68	20	32
92. School is for children	74	67	26	33
93. Loss of interest	77	76	23	24
94. Negative stereotypes	78	68	22	32
96. Discouragement by relatives	72	69	28	31
97. ABET is waste of time	78	73	22	27

5.6.2.3 Expectations and ideals of the learner

The majority of the facilitators (55%) and the learners (54%) indicated that course content meets with their needs (Q41).

5.6.3 Institutional barriers

The most distressing findings of this study were with regard to institutional barriers to ABET in this region. These findings are related to organizational issues; the lack of facilities; resources, prescribed and controllable learning and teaching programs; and the attitudes and work ethics of part-time facilitators. It is distressing that regardless to high claims of improvement in the delivery of ABET the inequalities of the past are not only perpetuated but also becoming more obvious.

5.6.3.1 Organisational issues

In response to both Questions 62 and 106 the majority of both facilitators (55/51%) and learners (51/49%) indicated their dissatisfaction with organizational aspects regarding timetables, venues, schedules and syllabuses. The following table refers specifically to the facilitators' and the learners' perceptions of institutional barriers:

Respondents had to indicate if they experience the following as institutional barriers	Problem %	
	Facilitators	Learners
106. Inconvenient locations, time-tables, schedules	51	49
107. Inappropriate learning and teaching material	74	62
108. Lack of facilities	78	78
109. Lack of teaching material	82	69
110. Lack of learning material	87	71
111. Lack of information about programs, examinations, etc.	76	56

Table 5.19 gives an indication of the extent to which other organizational and supply problems were experienced by both facilitators and learners as problems:

Respondents had to indicate if they experience the following as institutional barriers (Percentages – Yes)	Problem %	
	Facilitators	Learners
114. Lack of textbooks	97	64
115. Lack of teaching and learning material	68	64
116. Absenteeism of colleagues/facilitators	86	28
118. Disciplinary problems	27	29
119. Security problems	35	35
120. Union or political problems	17	26

From the responses in Table 5.19 both the facilitators (97% and 68%) and the learners (64%) experience the non-availability of textbooks and teaching and learning material as a serious barrier. Facilitators also experience the absenteeism of colleagues/facilitators as a serious problem. From both groups 35% experience the lack of security as a problem.

With regard to teaching resources and facilities the majority of the facilitators (71%) and the learners (75%) indicated that they do not use teaching aids in the classes (Q45). Also in Questions 56-59 both facilitators and learners reported problems with the availability and use of teaching facilities (84%; 70%), textbooks (79%; 80%), teaching material (91%, 81%) and leaning materials (94%, 81%). The majority of both the facilitators (88%) and the learners (77%) indicated that they do not use audio-visual material in the classes. The majority of the facilitators (72%) and the learners (66%) indicated that they do not have sufficient copying facilities available at their centres. With regard to the provision

of learning material the majority of both the facilitators (54%) and the adult learners (60%) indicated that they have not received it timeously.

5.6.3.2 Skills and attitudes of facilitators

It was already indicated that a large percentage (32%) of the facilitators are under- and unqualified teachers (less than a minimum of a 3 year qualification) and 27% have no teaching qualification. In response to Question 6 only 20 of the respondents (16%) indicated that they have received formal ABET training at a college or university. With regard to in-service training (INSET) for ABET the majority of the respondents (56%) indicated that they have received training but a large percentage (44%) indicated that they have not received INSET for ABET.

As a result of the total responses of the facilitators in this study on a variety of questions there is a general feeling of dissatisfaction, unhappiness and poor moral. In contrast to the learners that are in general satisfied (86%) with their assessment only 59% of the facilitators were satisfied. In contrast to only 47% of the learners, the majority of the facilitators (71%) were of the opinion that the government does not give attention to ABET.

5.6.3.3 Languages of instruction

As indicated in paragraph 5.2.6 the official language of learning and teaching (LOLT) at all the centres is English. Although the majority of the respondents indicated that SeSotho (54%) is their home language and only 6% regarded English as their home language only 25% regarded SeSotho and the majority (60%) regarded English as the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) of the ABET centres.

Table 5.20 gives an indication of the responses of both the learners and facilitators with regard to the use of English as Language of Learning and Teaching in (LOLT) in the ABET classrooms.

Table 5.20: Perceptions on the languages of learning and teaching		
Respondents who answered YES	Facilitators	Learners
33. Do you use English as LOLT in your classes?	92	85
34. Is it discriminatory not to be able to use your home language?	34	34
35. Do you experience problems to communicate in English?	85	68
36. Does your facilitator explain concepts in your home language?	89	76
95. Are you familiar with the use of English?	23	39
117. Do you experience language and communication problems	64	56

As in the Foundation Phase of the formal school the problem of communication is a serious problem for adult learners at Levels 1 and 2. The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-3 for Schools (DoE, 2002a:18) states: "It is recommended that the learner's home language should be used for learning and teaching wherever possible. This is particularly important in the Foundation Phase where children learn to read and write. Where learners have to make a transition from their home language to an additional language as the language of learning and teaching, this should be carefully planned". For a person to master a second or third language it is essential that he/she must first master the basic language (literacy) skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in his home language. In Question 34 the majority of the respondents (60%) said they regard the use of English as LOLT as discriminatory and the majority of the respondents (60%) also indicated that they prefer to be taught in their home language.

5.6.3.4 Outcomes-based learning and teaching strategies

Almost all the facilitators (98%) and the learners (91%) indicated that the learners are encouraged to use learner participation in the classes and for the use of role-play, debates and teaching games the affirmative answers were 68% by the facilitators and 65% by the learners. A majority (98%) of both the facilitators and learners indicated that the learners are assessed on a continuous basis. In line with the universal complaints about the outcomes-based approach

(albeit before the first implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2004 that tried to remedy the problem) the majority of the facilitators responded that they do not receive proper guidelines and syllabuses from the state departments.

5.7 Summary

In this chapter the data from the empirical research was presented. Special attention was given to the biographical data on both the adult learners and the facilitators. Attention was also given to the perceptions of both groups about factors that could motivate adult learners to participate in ABET. In the final instance data were given about the stakeholders perceptions of possible situational, dispositional and situational barriers. In the next and last chapter specific findings with regard to the five objectives of this study will be formulated.

CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study and will focus on the important findings of the literature study as well as the empirical study. The research problem of this study was stated in Chapter 1 as the low participation and retention rates of illiterate and semi-literate adults in ABET activities.

ABET is seen as both a Constitutional right and as a functional economic necessity in a changing society which requires a citizenry engaged in a lifelong process of learning. The national Department of Education (DoE, 1997:6) states that some 9,4 million adults in South Africa have less than 9 years of schooling and despite all the efforts less than 6% were enrolled for ABET (Asmal, 2000:4). For the current Minister of Education (Pandor, 2004a :2 15 July) the retention rates of ABET learners in the education sector is notoriously problematic.

For Merriam and Caffarella (1991:35) the biggest mystery is why more adults, especially those who might benefit the most, are not involved in ABET and also why so many adults drop out at ABET centres. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982:136-141,145,146) classify the possible obstacles to participation in the following four categories: situational, institutional, informational and psychosocial barriers. In order to find a solution for the problem of non-participation in ABET activities it was necessary to determine the nature of ABET in South Africa (Chapters 1-2) and to identify possible barriers to participation (Chapters 3 and 5).

In this regard the primary objective of this study was to identify possible barriers that prevent adults in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education to participate in ABET. The identification of the barriers

helped to make recommendations (Chapter 6) for the more efficient implementation of ABET policies in the area by means of addressing or developing measures that will make facilitators and institutions to understand that learners are affected by a variety of barriers and to be sensitive to those barriers.

The aim of this study was operationalised into the following objectives:

- 1.1.1 The first objective of this study was to investigate the general principles and policies of ABET in South Africa.
- 1.1.2 The second objective was to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices.
- 1.1.3 The third objective was to investigate the ABET opportunities that existed in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education.
- 1.1.4 The fourth objective was to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices in the two districts.
- 1.1.5 The fifth objective was to make specific recommendations with regard to ABET practices in the area.

6.2 Summary

In Chapter 1 the concept of Adult Basic Education (ABET) and the provision of ABET in South Africa were discussed. The chapter then briefly outlined the research design with regard to the problem statement, the research aim, the research methodology, the research population and sampling; and an explanation of the research process. The chapter concluded with a statement of the feasibility of the study, a description of core terminology and a proposed chapter division. The main objective of this study was to identify the barriers that leads to learners' non-participation in ABET programmes.

Chapter 2 dealt with the first objective of the study to investigate the general principles, policies and state of ABET in South Africa. It started off with a description of the concept of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and the adult learner. The concept of ABET was clarified and the relationship between ABET and literacy was explained. This was followed by a description of legislation that has an impact on the provision of ABET in the Republic of South Africa. In the second part of the chapter the adult learner and the barriers associated with his endeavours were highlighted.

The original focus of adult literacy, which was on reading and writing, was later extended to a broader concept of adult basic education (ABE), which refers to literacy as well as numeracy and life-skills. In this sense literacy is commonly used as a term to cover three basic cognitive skills: reading, writing and calculations as the basic skills upon which programmes of education must be built. For the Department of Education (DoE, 1997:7) ABET subsumes both literacy and post-literacy training as it seeks to connect literacy with basic adult education and with training for income generation. Due to national policy commitments to the integration of education and training, the acronym ABE was replaced by ABET. The "T" in this acronym represents the vocational training aspect.

Chapter 3 focussed on the second objective that was to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET and how these barriers affected learner participation. The chapter started off with an investigation of ABET practices in South Africa. For the Department of Education (DoE, 2000b:5): "Education (including ABET) is an essential component of the reconstruction, development and transformation of South African society". The department further states that the governments of the past put in place policies designed to limit access to education for blacks and paid very little attention to literacy. This resulted in a legacy of some 9,4 million adults with less than 9 years of schooling" (DoE, 2000b:33). Since 1994 the new democratic government put in place a new framework and policy to treat ABET

as a coherent system of teaching and learning. In 1995/6 a total of 335 481 adult learners were participating in ABET programmes throughout the country (DoE, 2000b:7). In the EFA Report (DoE, 2000b:33) the department reported that in 1996, interim curricula were developed and "an ABET campaign which reached 90 000 adult learners were launched". This report also states: "More than 2 000 centres and nearly 300 000 learners were involved in 1999 in the ABET programme" and the report indicates a decrease in numbers since 1995/6. In 2000 six years after the demise of apartheid Asmal (2000:4) mentioned that only 387 000 adults were enrolled for ABET courses and in 2004 Pandor (2004a:2) stated that the retention rates of ABET learners is still notoriously problematic.

In the second part of Chapter 3 the barriers normally affecting the learners were discussed. This was done through a literature study of both local and international resources. These barriers do not refer to individuals' inability to learn but rather to barriers that impede their participation in ABET. The discussion started with a number of theories on participating in ABET like the hierarchy of needs theory and the life-transition model.

The possible barriers (also referred to as blockages, constraints, deterrents, impediments or obstacles) were classified into three categories: situational, institutional, and dispositional. Although the classification has been described as oversimplified, they provide a useful starting point for considering the problem of non-participation.

In Chapter 4 the empirical research process was discussed. The research problem and research objectives were operationalised into five research questions. The two more specific objectives of the empirical research was to investigate the ABET opportunities that existed in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education and to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices in the two districts. The empirical study has to obtain information from both the adult learners (clients) and the facilitators

(service providers) about the ABET activities and the possible barriers to participation. This dual nature of the research project compelled the researcher to use two sets of questionnaires. Due to the high levels of illiteracy of the adult learners the researcher had to use a form of highly structured interviews to obtain the data.

In the research process a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques were used. The population includes all ABET learners (N=1 945) and facilitators (N=246) involved with the five ABET centres in the region. From both populations representative samples were selected by means of the stratified random sampling technique.

In Chapter 5 the data obtained from the empirical research was presented in terms of the stated objectives of this study. Special attention was given to the biographical data on both the adult learners and the facilitators. Attention was also given to the perceptions of both groups about factors that could motivate adult learners to participate in ABET. In the final instance data were given about the stakeholders perceptions of possible situational, dispositional and situational barriers. What became clear from the empirical research is that the institutional barriers in this region is the most important factor that prohibits participation in ABET activities.

6.3 Findings and interpretations

In order to conclude and make recommendations for the in-service training for and the implementation of an outcomes-based curriculum the findings of this study will be classified in terms of the following stated objectives and the derived research questions (Chapter 1.3) of this study:

- The first objective of this study was to investigate the general principles and policies of ABET in South Africa.

- The second objective was to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices.
- The third objective was to investigate the ABET opportunities that existed in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education.
- The fourth objective was to identify possible barriers to participation in ABET practices in the two districts.
- The fifth objective was to make specific recommendations with regard to ABET practices in the area.

6.3.1 Findings with regard to the general principles and policies of ABET in South Africa.

6.3.1.1 The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:15) is committed to provide ABET to adults and out-of-school youth with inadequate or no formal schooling and that their policies and basic principles are in line with global trends (Chapter 1.2).

6.3.1.2 Despite these efforts some 9,4 million adults in South Africa still have less than 9 years of schooling and despite all the efforts less than 6% of the adults without a GETC were enrolled for ABET (Chapter 1.4).

6.3.1.3 Although the new democratic government put in place a new framework and policy to treat ABET as a coherent system of teaching and learning there is a steady decline in the numbers of adults participating in ABET activities and the retention rates of ABET learners is still notoriously problematic (Chapter 3.1).

6.3.2 Findings with regard to the possible general barriers to participation in ABET practices.

6.3.2.1 The barriers refer to barriers to participation in ABET rather than barriers to learning. The barriers do not refer to individuals' inabilities

to learn but rather to internal and external barriers that impede their participation in ABET (Chapter 3.1).

- 6.3.2.2 The reasons for non-participation in ABET are complex and multi-dimensional and often not reducible to a single obstacle. Most explanations of non-participation involve the interaction of external (situational and institutional) and internal (personal and dispositional) factors (Chapter 3.2).
 - 6.3.2.3 In South Africa there are serious external or institutional factors such as budget constraints that may be regarded as barriers to full participation. Only two (Mpumalanga 2,2% and Gauteng 1,1%) of the nine provinces spent more than 1% of their overall education budget in 1995/6 on adult education (Chapter 1.3; 3.1).
- 6.3.3 Findings with regard to the ABET opportunities that existed in the Sedibeng East and West districts of the Gauteng Department of Education.
- 6.3.3.1 Within the borders of Sedibeng East there are two Adult Education Centres (Sharpeville and Tswinyane) and of Sedibeng West three centres (Sebokeng, Boiphatong and Bothelong). Each of these centres could have one or more satellite campuses or venues where ABET is supplied.
 - 6.3.3.2 There are indication that the number of adult learners enrolled at the five centres shows a steady decline that poses questions about the ability of the ABET centres to attract and retain adult learners (Chapters 5.3.4; 5.5).
 - 6.3.3.3 The average facilitator to adult learner ratio is 1:8 for the five centres in the two districts which poses serious questions about the affordability of the ABET centres (Chapter 5).

- 6.3.3.4 To complicate matters some of these centres also serve as after-hours Further Education and Training Centres and offer classes for Grades 10-12 learners (Chapter 3.5.4).
- 6.3.4 Findings with regard to the possible barriers to participation in ABET practices in the two districts.
- 6.3.4.1 The average age of the adult learners in the two districts are well below 40 years of age and physical disability often associated with old age such as hearing loss or hearing problems cannot be regarded as a major barrier to participation in (Chapter 5.2.1).
- 6.3.4.2 Contrary to the popular belief that women are a marginalized and a disadvantaged group the majority (65%) of the respondents are female (Chapter 5.2.6).
- 6.3.4.3 The vast majority of the respondents were unemployed (60%) and only 18% were in full-time employment (Chapter 5.2.6).
- 6.3.4.4 The fact that English (65%) and SeSotho (19%) were both regarded as languages of teaching by the respondents and that English (67%) and SeSotho (25%) were both regarded as languages of learning is an indication that the learners are not sure about the language issues in education. It could also be an indication that the ABET centres are practicing a dual-medium of education policy in the classrooms although the official LOLT at all the centres is supposed to be English (Chapter 3.6.2; 5.2.7).
- 6.3.4.5 As it is the case in the Foundations Phase of schools the vernacular (mostly SeSotho) is often used at ABET Level 1 where learners often have absolutely no understanding of English (Chapter 3.6.2; 5.2.7).
- 6.3.4.6 The majority (67%) of the respondents indicated that they experience problems to communicate in English (Chapter 3.6.2; 5.2.7).
- 6.3.4.7 Although the majority of the respondents (80%) were appointed in a part-time temporarily post, there is a very favourable facilitator to

learner ratio of 1:8 at the five centres that raises questions of affordability (Chapter 5.3.4).

- 6.3.4.8 Most of the centres are also involved with further education courses (FET, Grades 10-12) and it raises the question of what percentage of the staff at an ABET centre is involved with basic education (Chapter 5.3.4).
- 6.3.4.9 A large number (32%) of the facilitators are under- and unqualified teachers (minimum of a 3 year qualification) and 27% have no teaching qualification (Chapter 5.3.4).
- 6.3.4.10 Only 16% of the respondents indicated that they have received formal ABET training at a college or university and a large (44%) percentage indicated that they have not received in-service training for ABET (Chapter 5.3.5).
- 6.3.4.11 With regard to motivational factors most (71%) rate the opportunity to learn how to read and write as the most important factor (Chapter 5.6.1).
- 6.3.4.12 With regard to situational barriers both groups rate absenteeism as a result of illness (83%) as the biggest problem followed by marriage and related problems (82%) and working conditions (75%) in the second and third position (Chapter 5.6.1).
- 6.3.4.13 The most distressing findings of this study were with regard to institutional barriers to ABET in this region. These findings are related to dissatisfaction with organizational issues (55%); teaching (82%) and learning (87%) material; lack of textbooks (97%); copying facilities (72%); teaching (71%) resources Chapter 5.6.3).
- 6.3.4.14 With regard to the provision of learning material the majority of both the facilitators (54%) and the adult learners (60%) indicated that they have not received it on time. The majority of both the facilitators (88%) and the learners (77%) indicated that they do not use audio-visual material in the classes. With regard to teaching resources and facilities.

the majority of the facilitators (71%) and the learners (75%) indicated that they do not use teaching aids in the classes (Chapter 5.6.3).

6.3.4.15 The skills and attitudes of the facilitator have a determining effect on the success or failure of an ABET activity. As a result of the total responses of the facilitators in this study on a variety of questions there is a general feeling of dissatisfaction, unhappiness and poor moral. In contrast to the learners that are in general satisfied (86%) with their assessment only 59% of the facilitators were satisfied. In contrast to only 47% of the learners, the majority of the facilitators (71%) were of the opinion that the government does not give attention to ABET (Chapter 5.6.3.2).

6.3.4.16 As in the Foundation Phase of the formal school the problem of communication in English as the language of learning and teaching is a serious problem for adult learners at Levels 1 and 2. For a person to master a second or third language it is essential that he/she must first master the basic language (literacy) skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in his home language. In Question 34 the majority of the respondents (60%) said they regard the use of English as LOLT as discriminatory and the majority of the respondents (60%) also indicated that they prefer to be taught in their home language (Chapter 3.6.2; 5.27; 5.6.3.3).

6.3.4.17 Almost all the facilitators (98%) and the learners (91%) indicated that the learners are encouraged to use outcomes-based learning and teaching techniques. In line with the universal complaints about the outcomes-based approach (especially before the implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement in 2004 that tried to remedy the problem) the majority of the facilitators responded that they do not receive proper guidelines and syllabuses from the state departments (Chapter 5.6.3.4).

6.4 Recommendations for the ABET practice

The fifth objective of this study was to make specific recommendations with regard to ABET practices in the area. The following recommendations are offered to the stakeholders:

- 6.4.1 Serious consideration should be given for the appointment of dedicated full-time facilitators for the ABET centres. There are serious doubts about the commitment and dedication of part-time facilitators who after a day at their schools are also moonlighting as facilitators.
- 6.4.2 The appointed facilitators should receive initial and in-service training in the learning and teaching techniques applicable for adult learners and in the general organisation of the ABET centres.
- 6.4.3 Most of the ABET centres also act as Further Education and Training Colleges that complicates matters such as time-tables and budgets. It is not the task of ABET centres to take over the responsibilities of FET colleges.
- 6.4.4 A serious campaign to attract illiterate adults and out-of-school youth should be launched. Research indicate that many of the illiterates are not aware of the ABET opportunities and this could be a reason why less than 6% of the illiterate enrol at ABET centres.
- 6.4.5 Textbooks and other learning and teaching material should timeously be supplied.
- 6.4.6 Counselling and guidance should be able to address dispositional barriers about ABET and to enhance the self-confidence of adult learners.
- 6.4.7 It is recommended that further research should be done on especially the institutional barriers that are affecting the participation in ABET practices.

6.5 Conclusion

The research problem of this study was the low participation and retention rates of illiterate and semi-literate adults in ABET activities. The phenomena of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and the possible barriers to participation

were discussed and researched. ABET is both a Constitutional right and a functional economic necessity in a changing society which requires a citizenry engaged in a lifelong process of learning. It was found that some 9,4 million adults in South Africa have less than 9 years of schooling and despite all the ABET efforts less than 6% are currently enrolled at ABET centres. For Merriam and Caffarella (1991:35) the biggest mystery is why more adults, especially those who might benefit the most, are not involved in ABET and also why so many adults drop out of the ABET programmes. The possible barriers to participation were classified as situational, institutional and dispositional barriers. As the department cannot do much about the situational and dispositional barriers care should be given that especially the institutional barriers with regard to the organisation and management of the centres do not constitute the primary barrier to participation in ABET.

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**POTCHEFSTROOM UNIVERSITY FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION
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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE NEEDS OF ABET FACILITATORS IN SEDIBENG EAST AND WEST DISTRICTS OF THE GDE

Dear ABET facilitator

I am currently doing research for a M.Ed degree at the Potchefstroom University for CHE (Vaalpukke, Vanderbijlpark) on the possible barriers to participation in ABET projects.

The aim of the research is to determine possible barriers to full participation in ABET projects. Without your contribution the aim of the research project cannot be attained.

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE TREATED AS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND USED ONLY FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. YOU MAY THEREFORE EXPRESS YOUR OPINIONS HONESTLY AND SINCERELY. YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH WILL ALSO IN NO WAY REFLECT ON YOUR SPECIFIC CENTRE, INSTITUTION OR DEPARTMENT.

You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

HJ Matjeke
Researcher

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ABET FACILITATORS

Mark the correct response with an X

1. Your current position/post at the ABET centre?

Facilitator	Head	Other
-------------	------	-------

2. The conditions of your appointment?

Full-time permanent	Full-time temporarily	Part-time permanent	Part-time temporarily
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3. Your age?

20-29	30-39	40-49	50-51	60-68
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4. Gender?

Male	Female
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5. Your highest academic qualification?

Grade 10	Grade 12	Teacher Certificate	Teacher Diploma	Higher Diploma	B-Degree	Postgraduate
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6. Did you receive any official training for ABET at a college or university?

Yes	No
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7. If your answer for Question 6 was YES please specify your ABET training

1 year certificate	2 year certificate	3 year diploma	3 year degree	4 year Higher Diploma	Postgraduate degree
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8. Have you specialised in any of the following areas?

English Second Language	Afrikaans Second Language	An African Language	Mathematics	Life orientation	Foundation Phase Studies	Not any of the aforementioned
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9. Teaching experience?

Pre-primary	Primary school	High Schools	Tertiary training
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10. Experience as an ABET facilitator?

1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15years	16-20 years	21 years and more
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11. What is the language of learning and teaching in your ABET classes?

English	Afrikaans	SeSotho	SeTswana	isiZulu	isiXhosa	Another African language
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12. What learning areas and at what levels are you currently teaching? (INDICATE WITH AN X)

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Mathematics/Numeracy				
English/Literacy				
Afrikaans/Literacy				
An African language				

13. Did you receive any IN-SERVICE training in ABET?

Yes	NO
-----	----

14 Please specify the type of in-service training that you have received?

1-5 days	6-15 days	Regular workshops	Seminars	None
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Please rate your abilities to teach the following aspects of ABET:

	Excellent	Good	Poor	Very poor
15. Literacy in English				
16. Literacy in Afrikaans				
17. Literacy in an African language				
18. Mathematical literacy / Maths				
19. Life Skills				

20. At what type of venue is your centre located?

School	Church	Community hall	College	Other (Specify)
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21. How often do your learners attend ABET classes?

Daily	Twice a week	Weekly	Twice a month	Monthly
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22. At what time of the day or week do the learners attend classes

Office hours on weekdays	Late in afternoon on weekdays	After 18.00 on weekdays	08.00 – 18.00 over weekends	After 18.00 over weekends
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23. Duration of the classes on a specific day

1 hour per day	2-3 hours per day	3-4 hours per day	4-5 hours per day	Longer per day
----------------	-------------------	-------------------	-------------------	----------------

24. What is the language of teaching at your centre?

English	Afrikaans	Sesotho	IsiZulu	Other
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25. What is the language of learning at your centre?

English	Afrikaans	Sesotho	IsiZulu	Other
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How do you perceive that the following aspects motivate your learners to complete their ABET training:

PLEASE MARK WITH AN X	Not important	Less important	Important	Most important
26. They want to learn how to read				
27. They want to be able to write				
28. They want to read the newspapers				
29. They want to be able to fill in forms				
30. They want to be able to read the Bible				
31. They want to improve their job situation				
32. They want to further their studies				

PLEASE INDICATE YES OR NO	Yes	No
33. Do you use English as Language of Learning and Teaching in your classes?		
34. Are you of the opinion that it is discriminatory to teach your learners basic literacy through the medium of English?		
35. Are you of the opinion that the ABET learners experience problems to communicate in English?		
36. Do you make use of code-switching (explain the difficult concepts in an African language) in your classes?		
37. Do your learners receive learning material timeously at the start of the programme?		
38. Do your learners have excess to audio-visual material at your centre?		
39. Do you have sufficient copying facilities at your centre?		
40. Do your learners find the learning material easy to use?		
41. Does the course content meet with your learners' needs?		
42. Do your learners attend classes regularly and punctually?		
43. Do they come to the classes prepared?		
44. Do you encourage participation in your classes?		
45. Do you employ teaching aids in your classes?		
46. Do you expose your learners to role-play, debates and teaching games?		
47. Do you supply the necessary support with assignments and projects?		
48. Are you able to teach basic reading and writing skills?		
49. Do you practice continuous assessment of learners' performance?		
50. Did you receive training in continuous assessment?		
51. Are you familiar with the outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning?		
52. Are you able to teach numeracy (Basic Mathematics)		
53. Are you of the opinion that the Government / GDE gives enough attention to ABET?		
54. Do you receive proper guidelines and syllabuses from the State departments?		
55. Do you enjoy your work as an ABET facilitator?		

SECTION B – BARRIERS THAT YOU AS A FACILITATOR EXPERIENCE IN ABET TRAINING

Please indicate the degree in which YOU experience the following problems in your ABET practice

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problem	Mild problems	Serious problems
56. Lack of proper teaching facilities in the classrooms / venues			
57. Lack of textbooks for learners			
58. Lack of teaching materials			
59. Lack of learning materials			
60. Administrative problems – appointments, salaries, leave			
61. Absenteeism of colleagues			
62. Organisational problems – timetables, venues, syllabuses			
63. Lack of copying machines and paper			

Please indicate the seriousness of the following reasons (barriers) for the absentee rate of your learners

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problem	Mild problems	Serious problems
64. Absenteeism of learners due to illness			
65. Absenteeism of learners due to working conditions			
66. Absenteeism as a result of poor motivation			
67. Absenteeism as a result of a high crime rate			
68. Absenteeism due to transport problems			
69. Absenteeism due to financial difficulties (transport, class fees, etc)			

Please indicate the seriousness of the following barriers that your learners may experience

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problem	Mild problems	Serious problems
70. Language problems – communication in English			
71. Disciplinary problems			
72. Unrelated learning content			
73. Marriage and/or relationship problems			
74. Learning material is not real life related			

SECTION C: BARRIERS THAT THE ABET LEARNERS MAY EXPERIENCE

PHYSICAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOUR LEARNERS experience the following possible barriers to learning:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
75. Lack of intellectual ability				
76. Loss of long-term memory				
77. Loss of short-term memory				
78. Problems with the retrieval of information				
79. Slow speed of processing of information				
80. Poor vision (eye-sight)				
81. Hard of hearing				
82. Chronic illnesses				
83. Fatigue, lack of energy				
84. Arthritis				

FINANCIAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOUR LEARNERS experience the following possible barriers to learning:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
85. Financial difficulties – payment of class fees,				
86. Financial difficulties – payment for transport				
87. Financial difficulties – purchase of books and other learning materials				
88. Financial difficulties – family responsibilities				
89. Financial difficulties resulting in over-time or extra work				

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOUR LEARNERS experience the following possible barriers:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
90. Lack of confidence in own learning abilities				
91. Unsuccessful previous attempts				
92. An attitude that school is for children				
93. Loss of interest				
94. Negative stereotypes about the learning abilities of adults (too old)				
95. Unfamiliarity with English as language of learning				
96. Discouragement and ridicule by family, friends, colleagues				
97. Regard ABET as a waste of time				

SITUATIONAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOUR LEARNERS experience the following possible barriers:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
98. Time-constraints				
99. Job responsibilities				
100. Shift work makes it impossible to attend classes on a regular basis				
101. Mothers experience difficulty with child-care				
102. Over-crowded living conditions				
103. High incidence of crime restricts movement to classes				
104. Lack of privacy for studies at home				
105. Too many job-related responsibilities				

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOUR LEARNERS experience the following possible barriers:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
106. Inconvenient locations and time-tables – schedules				
107. Inappropriate and irrelevant teaching and learning material				
108. Lack of facilities				
109. Lack of teaching material				
110. Lack of learning materials				
111. Lack of information about programmes, examinations, etc				
112. Lack of community support				
113. Lack of family support				

114. Who is your employer as an ABET facilitator/practitioner?

GDE	A private firm	A church organisation	A private organisation	Other:
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115. Do you have regular contact with the ABET co-ordinator and/or facilitator at your GDE District Office?

Yes	No
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Do YOU experience problems with the following aspects?

INDICATE YES OR NO WITH AN X	YES	NO
116. Lack of textbooks		
117. Lack of teaching and learning material		
118. Absenteeism of colleagues		
119. Language and communication problems		
120. Disciplinary problems		
121. Security problems		
122. Union and political problems		

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME. YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED!

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APPENDIX B (ABET LEARNERS)

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE NEEDS OF ABET LEARNERS IN SEDIBENG EAST AND WEST DISTRICTS OF THE GDE

Dear ABET Learner

I am currently doing research for a M.Ed degree at the Potchefstroom University for CHE (Vaalpukke, Vanderbijlpark) on the possible barriers to participation in ABET projects.

The aim of the research is to determine possible barriers to full participation in ABET projects. Without your contribution the aim of the research project cannot be attained.

YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE TREATED AS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND USED ONLY FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES. YOU MAY THEREFORE EXPRESS YOUR OPINIONS HONESTLY AND SINCERELY. YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH WILL ALSO IN NO WAY REFLECT ON YOUR SPECIFIC CENTRE, INSTITUTION OR DEPARTMENT.

You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

HJ Matjeke (430 9334, 083 333 4513)
Researcher
GDE Sedibeng-East District Office

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ABET LEARNERS

Mark the correct response with an X

1. Your current ABET level?

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level
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2. At what stage (Grades) did you leave school?

Never attended school	Grade 1-3	Grade 4-6	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-10	Grade 11-12
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3. Your age group?

16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-
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4. Gender?

Male	Female
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5. What is your employment status?

Unemployed	Employed part-time	Employed full-time	Running own business
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6. In what sector are you employed?

Government	Local Government	Industry	Services	Self-employed
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7. Marital status

Married	Single	Unmarried with children	Living together	Single in parental home	Other (Specify)
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8. How long ago did you start working?

0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21-25 years	26-30 years	More than 30 years
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9. Have you repeated an ABET Level in the past? If so please indicate the Level?

No	Yes, Level 1	Yes, Level 2	Yes Level 3	Yes Level 4
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10. Did you previously drop out from the ABET Centre?

Yes	No
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11. What is the language of learning and teaching in your ABET classes?

English	Afrikaans	SeSotho	SeTswana	isiZulu	isiXhosa	Another African language
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12. What is your home language?

English	Afrikaans	SeSotho	SeTswana	isiZulu	isiXhosa	Another African language
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13. Do you experience problems to communicate in English?

Yes	NO
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14. Would you prefer to learn basic literacy (reading and writing) firstly (initially) in your home language?

Yes	No
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Please rate your performance in the following aspects of ABET:

	Excellent	Good	Poor	Very poor
15. Literacy in English				
16. Literacy in Afrikaans				
17. Literacy in an African language				
18. Mathematical literacy / Maths				
19. Life Skills				

20. At what type of venue is your centre located?

School	Church	Community hall	College	Other (Specify)
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21. How often do you attend ABET classes?

Daily	Twice a week	Weekly	Twice a month	Monthly
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22. At what time of the day or week do you attend classes

Office hours on weekdays	Late in afternoon on weekdays	After 18.00 on weekdays	08.00 – 18.00 over weekends	After 18.00 over weekends
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23. Duration of the classes on a specific day

1 hour per day	2-3 hours per day	3-4 hours per day	4-5 hours per day	Longer per day
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24. What is the language of teaching at your centre?

English	Afrikaans	Sesotho	IsiZulu	Other
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25. What is the language of learning at your centre?

English	Afrikaans	Sesotho	IsiZulu	Other
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Please rate the following aspects that may motivate you to attend ABET classes:

PLEASE MARK WITH AN X	Not important	Less important	Important	Most important
26. I want to learn how to read				
27. I want to be able to write				
28. I want to read the newspapers				
29. I want to be able to fill in forms				
30. I want to be able to read the Bible				
31. I want to improve my job situation				
32. I want to further my studies				

ABET LEARNER: PLEASE INDICATE YES OR NO	Yes	No
33. Do you use English as Language of Learning and Teaching in your classes?		
34. Are you of the opinion that it is discriminatory not to use your homelanguage for basic literacy?		
35. Do you experience problems to communicate in English?		
36. Does your facilitator explain difficulty concepts in your home language?		
37. Did you receive learning material timeously at the start of the programme?		
38. Do your lecturers use audio-visual material in your classes?		
39. Do you have sufficient copying facilities at your centre?		
40. Do you find the learning material easy to use?		
41. Does the course content meet with your needs?		
42. Do you attend classes regularly and punctually?		
43. Do you come to the classes prepared?		
44. Does your facilitator encourage participation in his/her classes?		
45. Does your facilitator employ teaching aids in your class?		
46. Are you exposed to role-play, debates and teaching games in your classes?		
47. Do you get the necessary support with assignments and projects?		
48. Have you mastered the basic reading and writing skills?		
49. Are you assessed on a continuous basis?		
50. Are you satisfied with the assessment of your abilities and knowledge?		
51. Are you familiar with the outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning?		
52. Do you experience problems with numeracy (Basic Mathematics)		
53. Are you of the opinion that the Government / GDE gives enough attention to ABET?		
54. Do you receive proper guidelines and syllabuses from the State departments?		
55. Do you enjoy your ABET studies?		

SECTION B – PROBLEMS THAT YOU AS A LEARNER MAY EXPERIENCE IN ABET TRAINING

Please indicate the degree in which YOU experience the following problems in your ABET experience

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problem	Mild problems	Serious problems
56. Lack of proper teaching facilities in the classrooms / venues			
57. Lack of textbooks			
58. Lack of teaching materials			
59. Lack of learning materials			
60. Communication problems – i.e. classes, venues, examinations			
61. Absenteeism of facilitators			
62. Organisational problems – timetables, venues, syllabuses			
63. Lack of learning materials and textbooks			

Please indicate the seriousness of the following reasons (barriers) for the possible absentee rate of ABET learners

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problem	Mild problems	Serious problems
64. Absenteeism of learners due to illness			
65. Absenteeism of learners due to working conditions			
66. Absenteeism as a result of poor motivation			
67. Absenteeism as a result of a high crime rate			
68. Absenteeism due to transport problems			
69. Absenteeism due to financial difficulties (transport, class fees, etc)			

Please indicate the seriousness of the following barriers that you may experience

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problem	Mild problems	Serious problems
70. Language problems – communication in English			
71. Disciplinary problems			
72. Unrelated learning content			
73. Marriage and/or relationship problems			
74. Learning material is not real life related			

SECTION B: BARRIERS THAT THE ABET LEARNERS MAY EXPERIENCE

PHYSICAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOU experience the following possible barriers to learning:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
75. Lack of intellectual ability				
76. Loss of long-term memory				
77. Loss of short-term memory				
78. Problems with the retrieval of information				
79. Slow speed of processing of information				
80. Poor vision (eye-sight)				
81. Hard of hearing				
82. Chronic illnesses				
83. Fatigue, lack of energy				
84. Arthritis				

FINANCIAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOU experience the following possible barriers to learning:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
85. Financial difficulties – payment of class fees,				
86. Financial difficulties – payment for transport				
87. Financial difficulties – purchase of books and other learning materials				
88. Financial difficulties – family responsibilities				
89. Financial difficulties resulting in over-time or extra work				

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOU experience the following possible barriers:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
90. Lack of confidence in own learning abilities				
91. Unsuccessful previous attempts				
92. An attitude that school is for children				
93. Loss of interest				
94. Negative stereotypes about the learning abilities of adults (too old)				
95. Unfamiliarity with English as language of learning				
96. Discouragement and ridicule by family, friends, colleagues				
97. Regard ABET as a waste of time				

SITUATIONAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOU experience the following possible barriers:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
98. Time-constraints				
99. Job responsibilities				
100. Shift work makes it impossible to attend classes on a regular basis				
101. Mothers experience difficulty with child-care				
102. Over-crowded living conditions				
103. High incidence of crime restricts movement to classes				
104. Lack of privacy for studies at home				
105. Too many job-related responsibilities				

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS: Please indicate to what extent YOU experience the following possible barriers:

PLEASE INDICATE WITH AN X	No problems	Mild problems	Problems	Serious problems
106. Inconvenient locations and time-tables – schedules				
107. Inappropriate and irrelevant teaching and learning material				
108. Lack of facilities				
109. Lack of teaching material				
110. Lack of learning materials				
111. Lack of information about programmes, examinations, etc				
112. Lack of community support				
113. Lack of family support				

Do YOU experience problems with the following aspects?

INDICATE YES OR NO WITH AN X	YES	NO
114. Lack of textbooks		
115. Lack of teaching and learning material		
116. Absenteeism of facilitators/teachers		
117. Language and communication problems		
118. Disciplinary problems		
119. Security problems		
120. Union and political problems		

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME. YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED!

